

The Total Commitment of Discipleship

Luke 14:25-35

Introduction: A pig and a chicken were talking one afternoon about the farmer's breakfast the next morning. The chicken was bragging about her many daily *contributions* to the farmer's previous breakfasts, when the pig interrupted, "Look," said the pig, "You make a *contribution*- for me it's a *sacrifice*." That ended the discussion, and the chicken's bragging!

In Luke 14:25, "*great multitudes*" were "*going along with*" Jesus as long as such required only a *contribution* of their time, energy, and resources. But Jesus' words of vv.25-26 bring the *contribution* vs. *sacrifice* issue to the forefront in a very personal way.

Even a *casual reading* of the New Testament (or the Bible as a whole) forces one to an obvious conclusion: Being a *disciple of Christ* requires the **total commitment** of **complete sacrifice** rather than just **convenient contributions**. Perhaps nowhere is this conclusion more obvious than the text of our lesson.

The Text:

v.25- Jesus was more interested in *true* and *total commitment* than big numbers of followers. Big crowds/following are great, if and when they are *truly committed* rather than just *going along* for whatever they can get out of it, cf. Matt.3:5-12; John 6:2,26,66.

v.26- The *total commitment* of *true discipleship* requires **true** and **unparalleled love**. Obviously, Jesus did not "hate" His own parent(s)- either in heaven or on earth, in the sense of bearing ill-will or malicious intent toward them, despite such being the literal meaning of *miseo*. Instead, He is requiring the *total commitment* of the *heart to God* in a way that gives the absolute *priority of our affections* and their incumbent actions to Him rather than them, cf. Mark 12:30; John 14:15; Matt.12:46-50.

v.27- Too often, in my opinion, we look at this verse like the chicken did in the introduction, rather than as did the pig. Jesus

isn't talking about *convenient contributions* of discipleship, but the *complete sacrifice*. He isn't suggesting that His disciples should be willing make *a sacrifice*, or even *daily sacrifices*, but ***the sacrifice!*** Imagine for a moment that crucifixion was still commonly practiced as a means of capitol punishment- that every time you entered or left town, the major roadways were literally lined with the rotting corpses of those who had been crucified, the shame and disgrace of these "offenders" plainly visible for all to see. Every one of them is on public display- each upon *his own* cross. Such was a *common* scene throughout the Roman Empire, including Jerusalem and its environs. The Romans didn't invent crucifixion, but they surely perfected the public spectacle, the horrific pain and tragedy of it, and the sheer humiliation of it.

Jesus *willingly* went to, bore to Golgotha, laid upon, and was nailed to *His* cross, where He suffered and died, Heb.12:2. He didn't hide, run, or have to be forced to lie upon it. Think about that- to *willingly* go to and lie upon a wooden cross knowing that you were to be literally nailed to it, and then suspended between earth and heaven for all to see....when you had the complete power to **not** to do so.

Between the time of our text and the actual crucifixion of Jesus, He told them what would happen to Him, Luke 18:31-33 (Matt.20:19 says "*crucify*" instead of "*kill*"). On the night of His betrayal, the disciples *said* they were willing to die *with Jesus*, Matt.26:30-35. When the time came, they all *fled*, Matt.26:56. But after the events of Matt.26:69-75, and the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, they were *changed* men. Tradition says that Peter requested that he be crucified upside down, feeling unworthy to die as did His Lord.

Now think about these things. Do you really think that Jesus was just talking about *living a sacrificial life* for Him in Luke 14:27? Or, was He indicating that *true disciples* must "*come after Me*" by "*carrying his own cross*" and be willing and able to *die* for Him? Yes, Gal.2:20 includes the ideas of *daily sacrifices* for Christ and *putting to death* the *old man of sin*, but is this what that Jesus meant? His *direct* audience on the occasion of

the words was well-familiar with the process of crucifixion, and the instrument of it- they were not yet familiar with the concepts Paul expressed in Gal.2:20 or all of the symbolism we (today, in hindsight) attach to the *cross of Jesus*. Of these things, they had **no** concept. But they **did** understand crucifixion as a means of death, horrible, slow, painful, humiliating death. Jesus went to and *carried His own cross*. If we are to be His *followers*, surely no less is required of us. This means being ready *to die for Jesus every day*, rather just making a *convenient contribution of self-denial* for the Cause (pigs rather than chickens!), Luke 9:23-24.

vv.28-33- These verses include several integral aspects of *true discipleship*:

(These points are important considerations for *everyone*, but especially so for *youngsters* contemplating baptism- they need to realize that such includes *discipleship*, and therefore these factors.)

- Cost-Counting, vv.28-29; the *potential* disciple must be willing to give up *everything* and *everyone*, cf. Luke 9:57-62;
- Strength Assessment, vv.31-32; *potential* disciples must also have the maturity to do proper self-assessment (to see if they are ready/able now, cf. John 16:12,25; Acts 1:3; and,
- Total Asset Commitment, v.33; if you can't be *all in*, you can't be *in* at all, cf. Luke 18:18-30.

All of these require: an honest and true view of oneself, Jas.1:22-25; endurance, Heb.10:36; and of course, *complete commitment* of everything we are and have to Christ!

vv.34-35- Finally, Jesus speaks of *Useful Service*. *Salt*, then, had two primary functions (and neither of them had to do with *frozen roads*!)- to *flavor* and to *preserve*. But if was not *useful* for either of these purposes- the *impure* salt of that time quickly lost its *saltiness* when exposed air, it became *worthless* and *irredeemable*. The lesson for *discipleship* should be obvious- a

disciple who has lost its power to *flavor* or *preserve* is *useless* and summarily *cast out* as such, cp. John 15:1-6.

Conclusions (in a *big-picture* kind of way):

True Discipleship requires:

- True and Unparalleled Love, v.26;
- Self-Sacrifice born of Real Desire, v.27;
- Genuine Commitment and Endurance, vv.28-33; and,
- Useful Service, vv.34-35.

It will cost: (these must be *surrendered*)

- Your *family*, v.26;
- Your *life*, v.27;
- Your *possessions*, v.33;
- Your *time, energy, and resources* (to be *useful*), vv.34-35.

Jesus wants, more than anything else, your discipleship. But He also wants you to know *going in* what it costs. The price is *total commitment*!