

# The Cost of Discipleship

## Աշակերտութեան Գինը

**Luke 14:25-33**

**Robert Turner** told a story about a hen and a pig who became very good friends. One seldom saw them apart. One day the hen suggested to have breakfast together.

The pig agreed and asked, “What will we eat?”

The hen said let each of us contribute something. The pig agreed.

The hen said: “let us have ham and egg. I’ll provide the eggs and you the ham.”

“Hold on,” said the pig,

“What you offer to contribute is the **fruit of your labor**, but what you’re asking of me **requires total commitment!**”

Imagine, there is an election for a political leader. And this person is addressing the crowd saying: “If you vote me, you will lose your father mother, children, home, self... you should lose yourself to be my follower... so go ahead and vote for me...Who is on my side?” (Illustration taken from NT Wright)

Welcome to our passage today. **It is not hard to understand, but it is hard to apply**, because following Jesus, being a disciple of Jesus is **serious commitment**. Yes, salvation is **by the grace alone**, by faith, but when we embrace the grace of Jesus, it is costly to keep it... oh yes it is costly...

Our topic is **the cost of discipleship**. You can read a book by this title written by **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**. He stood against the evil regime of Nazism and Hitler. It was highly costly; it cost him his life.

Let us go to our passage.

**<sup>25</sup> Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, <sup>26</sup> “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. <sup>27</sup> Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. <sup>28</sup> For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? <sup>29</sup> Otherwise, when he has laid a**

foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, <sup>30</sup> saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' <sup>31</sup> Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup> And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. <sup>33</sup> So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:25–33 ESV)

-We all know that Jesus will eventually move **toward Jerusalem**. His ultimate goal is bearing the sins of humanity on the cross. His goal is the redemption and the freedom of humanity from death and sin. That is costly. Because Jesus will pay our debt.

What about us, the followers of Jesus?

We cannot pay that debt. Only Jesus can do that. **What is our role?**

We are called to **be disciples of Jesus**.

a. The Greek word for **"disciple"** is **"learner"**.

b. The root word of **"discipline"** is **"disciple,"** which comes from the Latin word ***discipulus*** meaning **"student."**

c. Here is my definition of disciple: someone who is **student, in the discipline of learning**.

**Let us examine the passage:**

Luke writes that there were **"great crowds accompanied him..."**

**-Are all these followers seriously following Jesus? Are they disciples?**

I don't know, but I assume what Jesus' teaching will make difference if they follow a leader like this.

Luke says: **"Jesus turns around and starts teaching."**

**-What is required to become a disciple?**

Jesus makes **three statements** that all end with the same exact phrase:

**"cannot be my disciple."**

In between the second and third statements Jesus gives two parables, two stories; these parables encourage one to assess the cost of discipleship; before you start a project, you assess, you evaluate and then you act.

**-The first statement:**

one must **hate father and mother, brothers and sisters, wife and children, self.**  
**(Luke 14:25-27)**

What? What about honoring your father and mother?

Listen to what Paul says to Timothy:

**“If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”** (1 Tim 5:8)

Of course, we should honor our parents, and take care of them. It is a biblical command.

-In this context the word **hate** is not an **emotional expression or feelings of hating someone with anger and frustration.** No, watch out...

**I HATE you!...** No

Jesus loved and honored his mother his father (he became a carpenter) ...

- **Jesus’ statement is rhetorical, not literal.**

If you had to choose between two things, which one comes first... Family? Jesus?

**Don’t answer quickly please...**

“Jesus is not denying the importance of close family, and the decency of living in supportive harmony with them. But when there is an urgent task to be done, as there now is, then everything else, including one's own life, must be put at risk for the sake of the Kingdom.” <sup>1</sup> N.T. Wright

Jesus is saying we should put God above everything, including family members. To be a disciple of Jesus means we give Jesus the highest priority, and it will be costly.

**-Do we give him the highest priority?**

-You know what I see often, people “worship” their kids; people worship their parents, their job, their position, and their possessions. Unfortunately, I find Christians do that...

**Illustration:** I don’t know if you have faced this kind of situation in your life. In the Middle East, I know some Muslim friends who accepted Christ, and had to make choices. They were rejected and expelled from their family. This does not mean their hated their families. They continued praying and supporting their families... but it was costly...

-Maybe you did not face a radical choice like this. But I am afraid we have **compromised** Jesus when it comes to priorities.

For example, **priorities of raising children** (tennis lessons, soccer games, ballet, gymnastics, piano lessons, violin lessons,... church life? if there is time left). Please evaluate yourself, your income, your expenditures, your time... Which one comes first?

-In Gospel of Luke, in **chapter 5**, we read about **the calling of Peter**. Jesus enters the boat of Peter and his friends; tells them where to fish. Peter gets frustrated, he is tired, and he has fished all night. But he obeys Jesus and fishes, and the result is a great catch, a big catch. I expect from Peter words like this:

“Wow, this is good business. We can make a lot of money from this.”

No, he said to Jesus:

**“he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”** (Luke 5:8 ESV)

Why? What happened here? You see when you face the **Holiness of God**, when you face how sinful and small you are in the presence of God, nothing, nothing, even your family, nothing can be put first. **Peter experienced the holiness of God**, he realized who he is: he is a sinner, and he is facing the LORD Jesus. This is a serious thing, depart from me...

or I will come to you Lord, teach me how to follow you... teach me how to be your disciple...teach me...

It is not automatic...don't put your faith journey on automatic pilot ...

### **The second statement:**

**“Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.”** (14:27 ESV)

In chapter 9 Jesus says the same statement:

**“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me”** (Luke 9:23 ESV).

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote:

**“When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die”.**<sup>2</sup>

You see early church this literally faced this. People lost family members; people lost their lives, people lost their possessions, to remain Christian.

-What does it mean for us now?

Like Peter, do you know yourself? Do you know that you are a sinner, and you need to bring your egocentric life under the cross every day?

Yes, we are saved by grace alone. But work out your salvation. We don't earn salvation, but we should remain in daily walk with Jesus by putting our old self under the cross.

There are two phrases expressed in this passage that are related:

**If anyone comes to me and does not hate....**

**Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me....**

In Greek they are same words followed by a different preposition.

We come to Jesus first. We enter in a relationship with Him. You accepted Jesus as personal Savior.

Then come after me ...we need to follow Him, ...Instead of following "idols" you follow Jesus as your LORD and Savior. **This is process of sanctification.** It is discipleship... it is taking off your old clothes, nature and giving them up to Jesus who will give you a new identity and new clothes.

**-Two parables in the middle:**

**The tower builder and the king who goes to war.**

No one will build something without calculating the cost.

No one goes to war without assessing the cost of the war. You have 10,000 soldiers and the enemy 20,000. You will assess, "I cannot win." One arranges a peace treaty while the enemy is still far.

The two parables are similar, but they make slightly different points. The builder of the tower is free to build or not as he chooses, but the king is being invaded; He must do something. Both are saying you need to calculate.

They are saying **before you say yes to Jesus**, know that **this is a costly journey**.

Jesus does not want followers who rush into discipleship without thinking of what is involved.<sup>3</sup>

**-The Third statement:**

<sup>33</sup> **So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:33 ESV)**

Again, the idea behind this image, watch out don't be attached to anything on this earth. "Idols"

David Benner says, "I am that to which I am most strongly attached".<sup>4</sup>

Jesus said: "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matt 6;21NIV)

It does not mean we should not have homes, business, bank accounts...That is not the point.

The point is **nothing should** separate us from serving God.

#### Illustration:

Someone gave me \$2500 check to buy a Yamaha DX7 synthesizer in 1987. I bought this to use it in the church worship band. Man, I slept with it. I held it tight. Some friend asked me to borrow it. He was great musician as well. I did not give it... No way, that was mine. In the name of Jesus that was mine...

What is mine? What do you think you won anything?

I learned my lesson and eventually I learned that I should share, and nothing belonged to me.

**any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.**

Paul expresses this concept like this:

**<sup>10</sup> always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. <sup>11</sup> For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. <sup>12</sup> So death is at work in us, but life in you.** (2 Cor 4:10-12 ESV)

It is a daily process to surrender our earthly body to Jesus, so that Christ will give us new life. Whatever I do, I want Jesus to be manifested.

Check yourself, how valuable God is for you?

Check yourself, whatever you do, your family, your work, your church, your car, your sport....do they manifest Jesus?

1. NT Wright, *Luke for Everyone*. P 181-1812

2. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, cited February 2014. Online: <http://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/2723088-nachfolge>.

3 The builder of the tower is free to build or not as he chooses, but the king is being invaded (the other *comes against him*). He must do something. Cf. A. M. Hunter, 'In the first parable Jesus says, "Sit down and reckon whether you can afford to follow me." In the second he says, "Sit down and reckon whether you can afford to refuse my demands."' <sup>15</sup> Both ways of looking at it are important. V3, Luke Tyndale Commentary Leon Morris P 255

4. Dr. David G. Benner, "Transformation, Christ Consciousness Identity-2". cited February 2014. Online: <http://www.drdauidgbenner.ca/transformation-christ-consciousness-identity-2/>

I have decided to follow Jesus;  
I have decided to follow Jesus;  
I have decided to follow Jesus;  
No turning back, no turning back.

Որոշած եմ ես Փրկչիս հետեւիլ  
Որոշած եմ ես Փրկչիս հետեւիլ  
Որոշած եմ ես Փրկչիս հետեւիլ  
Ետ դարձ չկայ ետ դարձ չկայ

The world behind me, the cross before me,  
The world behind me, the cross before me;  
The world behind me, the cross before me;  
No turning back, no turning back.

Աշխարհն ձգած եմ, խաչն վերցուցած եմ  
Աշխարհն ձգած եմ, խաչն վերցուցած եմ  
Աշխարհն ձգած եմ, խաչն վերցուցած եմ  
Ետ դարձ չկայ ետ դարձ չկայ