

Treasures From Our Heritage: Discipleship Simplified

Luke 14:25-34

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Introduction

The song may seem to make it too easy: I have decided to follow Jesus!

Is it really true that it can be so simple? Resolved, Decided!

The problem of choices: woman, bitter divorce, three wishes, whatever you ask will be given twice over to your husband. Nice house, million dollars, scare me half to death.

Decisions, decisions, decisions. Our lives are the accumulation of our choices, good and bad. Some decisions are easy, some hard. Some are immediate, some are postponed. Some are made by default, some are made for us.

Decisions once made and binding provide resolution.

Resolution, resolved, beyond question, no future discussion, problem resolved, case resolved.

The most radical decision, the most fundamental decision is the decision to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. There are not two decisions—be a Christian and be a disciple.

There are not two decisions, be saved and be member of church.

To be a Christian is to be a disciple. Luke 11:23, for me or against me. All or nothing. Not whether to be disciple, but what kind of disciple will you be. Can be faithful or unfaithful, with or against, gathering or scattering.

Luke shows us the distinctive marks of discipleship: allegiance, loyalty, faith.

These issue forth in imitation which is possible because of the discipline of learning/teaching.

This is a lesson about discipleship—one’s choice to believe is a revolutionary life-commitment that affects every aspect of life. Discipleship simplified. Resolved: to follow Christ is to receive something, but to give everything.

Discipleship begins the resolution that accompanies genuine repentance. Christianity is an entire way of life, not simply a means to satisfying religious impulses. Christianity is not “a” way, but “the” way. This is a deep conviction of the rightness of Christianity and the impossibility of any other way for people to find God.

Luke makes this clear—

Jesus calls four fishermen as disciples, fishers of men (Matt 4:20, Mark 1:18, but Luke 5:11).

Matthew becomes a disciple (Luke says he left everything).

Luke says the cross must be taken up daily (9:23).

Luke understands that discipleship calls for unreserved surrender (9:57-62).

Luke makes the bold statement: 14:25-27.

This is our text today: Luke 14:25-34

Larger context contains two separate stories

First, parable of great banquet, people reject the invitation to the feast, making excuses

Then Jesus speaks about the cost of being a disciple

Note the bold statement

Choices, priorities: people, possessions, power, prestige, prominence, family, life

Parable one

Count the cost of discipleship. Farmer decides to build tower, some addition or ornamentation to his house, such a project requires that one count the cost before beginning. Otherwise, might be embarrassed.

Sit down and reckon whether you can afford to follow me.

Parable two

King gets word that another king is coming against him with 20000 soldiers, he does quick calculations, can we withstand the barrage, are they better trained, more numerous, better armed. Counts the cost, and if it seems hopeless, he sends a negotiator.

Sit down and reckon whether you can afford not to follow me, whether you can afford to refuse my demands.

Discipleship

-1-Discipleship is not easy to understand in our culture. We have been pampered too long. We do not want demands made of us. If we think much is going to be expected, we run the other direction. Discipleship out of the first century world involved leaving everything and following the teacher.

-2-Discipleship is loving the things Jesus loved, wanting, doing.

- Loving. Jesus loved the Father, the words of the Father, prayer and communion with the Father. Jesus loved the kind of righteousness that gives glory to the Father. Jesus loved people made in God's image.
- Wanting. Jesus wanted the kingdom experience of putting God before all else to be a reality among men and women on earth. He prayed for it, he died to bring it about, the ultimate demonstration of God's love.
- Doing. Jesus went where the lonely, hungry, hurting and sick were. He touched them, fed them. He was involved with them. He was caught up in their pain and problems.

-3- Discipleship is not understood, it has been stripped of its meaning. Bonhoeffer, When Christ calls a man he bids him come and die." Luke's point exactly. Discipleship is a costly decision.

Conclusion

Jesus came to call men and women to be his disciples. Simple concept: learners, followers.

Fifth Symphony, duh duh duh duh. Beethoven purportedly explained that this musical phrase means, "Thus fate knocks at the door."

Christians believe it is not fate, but Christ, that knocks at the door of every heart. He confronts, challenges, calls, cares.

He wants us to follow him and accept his call to discipleship. Are you a disciple?

- If you get that right, the Christian part will follow.
- Go make disciples, then baptize them.
- There are unbaptized disciples, but when they continue learning, they are baptized.

Make a decision

- Because you see the importance of a decision
- Because you need to decide with good information about Jesus and following him
- Because of the tragedy if a disciple loses "saltiness"