

COUNTING THE COST

Luke 14:25-33

I. A WARNING TO CLUELESS CHRISTIANS

- A. “Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:27).
- B. Are You Listening? Really Listening?
 - 1. Imagine the scene. A crowd of people are following a popular preacher who tells great stories, and feeds hungry people.
 - 2. Each time he goes through a village their number grows, but most never intend to travel all the way to Jerusalem.
 - 3. Jesus turns and talks to them, and in ten verses he manages to demolish the American Dream – the perfect family, the pursuit of happiness, and a profitable life lived in peace.
- C. Are You Willing ...
 - 1. To *hate* your family? The word “hate” means *detach* or to *let go of*. It’s not a violent or mean word.
 - 2. To carry your cross? This is to be taken seriously but not literally. Jesus is asking if we are willing to take risks for his sake? Are we willing to pick up the burdens and responsibilities of ethical and loving living?
 - 3. To be like Stephen? He was stoned to death for teaching about Jesus. Or like Paul, who was killed for being a follower?

II. THE DEVIL TAKES VISA

- A. “So therefore, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:33)
- B. Why Are You Following?
 - 1. Are you in it for what you can get out of it?
 - 2. Let’s blend in, play it safe, behave ourselves, and don’t rock the boat.
- C. Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s *Temptation*.
 - 1. “Joy in God is in danger of being extinguished in us and we seek all our joy in the creature ... The only reality is the devil.”
 - 2. “Satan does not here fill us with hatred of God, but with forgetfulness of God ...”
- D. The Master’s Card.
 - 1. God forgives when we can not. God loves when we would not. God gives when we are emptied out.
 - 2. We must forgive when we feel like condemning, accept when we feel like blaming, love when we feel like hating, give more when we feel like quitting, and to return when we feel like running.
 - 3. “Simply put, if you’re not willing to do that, you can’t be my disciple.”

Prayer Concerns: Members – Burney Biesel, Sarah Clark, Alton Creasy, J.W. Davis, Marie Davis, Donna Edwards, Leona Evans, Dan R. Fowlkes, Ruth Hobday, Irene Kiefer, Fay McDowell, **Dorothy Miles**, Carolyn Perkins, Jim Prince, Carol Webb ... **Friends** – Melinda Banks, **Meryl Broussard**, Pat Bryan, Alma Jo Churchill, Doyle Davis, John Fumbanks, Brandon Funderburk, **Ed Hinson**, Gary Hinson, Judy Malaquias, Violet Stout, Durward Webb ...

Christian Sympathy is extended to *the family of Mrs. W.I. (Ann Cox) Thornton* who died on Wednesday, October 3, and to *Bubba Cobb and family* in the death of his aunt, *Virginia Cobb* on Sunday, October 7.

PASTORAL PRAYER

Holy God, you are the same yesterday, today, and forever. You are unlike anything, unlike anyone we have ever known, always faithful and always loving. We ask to be filled with your spirit, so that we will become like you – you, whose presence cheers our souls when the cares of our hearts are too many, whose dreams inspire our souls when the burdens of our hearts are too heavy, whose words enlighten our souls when the eyes of our hearts are too blind, whose deeds humble our souls when the intentions of our hearts are too proud. You are so good to us, God!

Yet we are tempted to keep you at a safe distance, so that when you call, we can pretend not to hear; when you point to where we are needed, we can seem preoccupied; when you grip our arm, we can pull away. As if you might get tired of troubling us with tasks we don't want, and turn to someone else for help – someone with more time, more money, more power, more personality, more talent, more status, more reason, more something! Devotion is costly, and we are not sure we really want to pay that price. Devotion is the bearing of a cross, and we are not sure we really want to carry that cross.

Forgive us for seeking far more from you than we are willing to give in return – not only to you, but to all those to whom you would have us give. Fill our hearts with an unwavering faithfulness and an unceasing love. Help us to risk everything as we labor in your vineyard. This is our prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray ...

THE LORD'S PRAYER: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

LUKE 14:25-33

Now great multitudes accompanied him; and he turned and said to them, "If any one 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. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple. 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? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build, and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends an embassy and asks terms of peace. So therefore, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple."

SERMON SCHEDULE

In the Sanctuary:

October 21	<i>How to Get Rich</i>	Mark 10:17-31
	Stewardship Season	
October 28	<i>When Less Is More</i>	Mark 11:38-44
	Youth Sunday	
November 4	<i>Giving the Best</i>	Luke 15:1-10
	All Saints' Sunday	
November 11	<i>It's Not About the Money</i>	Luke 16:1-13
	Commitment Sunday	

On the Radio (1450 AM):

October 21	<i>What's Worth Wanting?</i>	Luke 12:13-21
October 28	<i>Searching for Satisfaction</i>	Luke 12:22-31
November 4	<i>The Demands of Discipleship</i>	Mark 10:17-27
November 11	<i>It's Never Enough</i>	Ecclesiastes 5:10-20