

THE PARABLES OF JESUS, #029
A Chronological Study

**"To Him who opened His mouth in parables and
uttered things hidden since the creation of the world."
Psalm 78:2 [1]**



"The Cost of Discipleship"
Luke 14:25-35

SUMMARY INTRODUCTION:

Every believer needs to know the place that finding salvation in that Jesus Christ places you into, for the cost of your salvation was enormous. We come to this parable as Jesus talks with His followers near the end of His journey to the Cross. He will tell them, and us, a parable about that cost. Their and your response to that salvation also has enormous responsibility.

In order to fully understand this parable we'll first deal with the "**Therefore**" **conclusion** to the chapter Luke 14:34-35

34 "Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned? 35 It (the tasteless salt) is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

If you've been following this parable series from the beginning, you will remember those words from the first lesson about Faith titled "The Salt of the Earth." Here's part of the introduction to that lesson. [2]

"Important to the background of all of the lessons Jesus taught and all the dialogues that He had with the Jewish leadership of His time, is the remembrance of the angels of heaven. We know from the Scriptures that at some distant time in the long ago past there was a war in heaven. One third of God's angels (many of them who's responsibility was to stand in the very presence of God Almighty) sided with the evil one and were cast down from heaven with no chance of forgiveness or salvation – ever. Why, because of their extreme high calling and their refusal to trust their Holy God. The breaking of this extreme high calling and honor warranted a no-forgiveness **ever** status."

As believers in Christ Jesus we hold a better position as the unfallen angels. The time will come when we who are alive will die and go into the very presence of God Almighty - and that only through the agency of the work of Jesus on the Cross. So, what changes you from sinner disqualified to person forgiven and welcome as a Child of God and allowed into the presence of an absolutely Holy God? The answer, of course, is the **absolute** forgiveness given to you when you placed your absolute faith in God through Jesus. I emphasize the word **absolute**, because believing in Christ and His death is the **COST** of forgiveness and eternal life in heaven with God.

So Jesus' "Therefore" statement here at the end of the chapter in Luke, about "*Salt with no flavor is worthless,*" tells us that if your

faith is not absolute In-Christ, then your faith is worthless. You cannot "sit on the fence" in the issue of Faith (Belief) in Jesus as God, man, and Savior being the one who has paid the price of Salvation for you. There are only two answers, and only one of them is effective and efficient for Salvation. The only two answers possible are "Yes, He is who He says He is and I absolutely believe this," or "No He is not." Any answer besides "Absolutely Yes"... is a "No" answer.

John 3:18 [KJV]

"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

If you are absolutely forgiven through your faith to enter into an eternal "Child of God" **relationship** with the God who created the universe, **then that relationship is worth the giving-up of all other earthly things and relationships to acquire and keep it.**

This does not mean that you have to give-up your earthly things and relationships, but if you are called upon to do so in order to follow the desires and commands of Almighty God, you may be required to do so.

THE CONTEXT

Who, Where, when, what, and why?

I. Who

Luke 14:25 Now large crowds were going along with Him [Jesus]; and He turns to them and said to them,...

We've looked at the context and we see that Jesus is traveling and there are literally "large crowds," sometimes thousands, following along with Him. We're on that last trail traveling down through Perea. He's on His way to Jerusalem and "Palm Sunday" or, as we would also call it, "The Triumphal Entry." The crowds are largely

expecting this new Rabbi to gather together his army and free them all from the Roman occupation. In anticipation of the days ahead they may be laughing, singing, and, maybe even, learning to march like soldiers. They are full of fun and joy about their possible role in his new army.

We who live now in the latter days can look back at this moment and understand how Jesus is feeling. The crowd that is following Him doesn't have a clue as to why He has really come and why He is on His way to Jerusalem. Their Rabbis and religious leaders had taken the Word of God away from them and replaced it with their oral traditions. As you read and study His words, consider His righteous frustration that most all those who follow behind Him do so for their own political reasons - only some follow because they have found their savior.

Where?

Jesus has moved on from the house of one of the Pharisees where they tested Him about healing a man on the Sabbath. Now He's back "on the road again" with His disciples and a mass of followers. In our last couple of Parables we have been following Jesus on His journey from Capernaum by the Sea of Galilee to Jerusalem. It would seem that He may have crossed the Jordan into Judah.

When?

Jesus is about a week or so away from Jerusalem and His triumphal entry.

What?

BENEFITS VS COST

Just about everyone at some time has to weigh the benefits versus cost of an offer or purchase. So whether it has been vacation VS staying home, or old car VS new car, these can be major decisions. Some have had to face the life VS death decision when facing a major health issue.

Now Jesus is telling those who are following along with Him about stopping and weighing the cost of following Him. I'm going to take you down two roads to explore this topic. The First road will be an example to demonstrate benefit VS COST.

Road Number One: War with the Romans Considering the Cost of Israel's Freedom from Rome

Road number one will be Jesus asking His followers what their cost will be if He is the one who will be taking them to war with Rome. If Jesus is going to be the one who does this... then **they must be willing** to lose their possessions, their families, and their own lives in their war with the Romans.

Jesus would be saying, *"So you, my followers, need to stop and consider the Cost of the **benefit in acquiring Israel's freedom.** In loving your nation more you must hate your own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even your own life, **or** you cannot be in my army and win the war," **for that is the cost.***

Why?

BENEFITS VS COST

Road Number Two:

Luke 14:25-33

25 Now large crowds were going along with Him [Jesus]; and He turned and said to them,

26 "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."

In "Road Number One" we, hopefully, saw the importance of what Jesus was saying to those who were following Him. That story is, of course, possible but that may or may not be the true context of the

moment. The importance of understanding "benefits VS cost" is the master message. "Road Number Two" is all about faith in, and believing in Jesus the Christ - and the "benefits (blessings) VS the COST to YOU."

So, once again we'll take this passage one statement at a time.

THE TEXT:

WHO AM I? - Requirement #1

Luke 14:26

26 "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.

Hate is such a very strong word. It's used 163 times in the scriptures and in almost every book. Both Josephus and Philo, serious historical and philosophical writers of the past Jewish cultures, both used this Greek word for hate (μῦσει - musei) in terms of a "Test." (i.e., Love VS Hate, Good VS Bad, Regard VS Persecute, Responsibility VS Cost). That may help us to get past how strong the English word's popular definition strikes us. If we take and TEST the Love of God expressed in the sacrifice of His Son, for all of humanity and the forgiveness of all of our sin... versus our individual love for a member of our family, we may then see what Jesus has to say and the great strength of His statement.

Some of us have some age on us and if we've been called of the Lord for much or most of our lives and been faithful (as much as humanly possible) to Him then we have begun to understand the harsh reality that who Jesus is--God--and what He has done for us, and the difference between a single life time (100 years or so) versus eternity (forever+)... we can more clearly see why Jesus chose this strong word to "test" His following.

WHO AM I? - Requirement #2

Luke 14:27

27 Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

While everyone in that Roman based culture would have seen criminals hanging on a cross as their punishment against the state, it would be my guess that those following along after Jesus wouldn't have a care about Jesus' use of the word "cross." They would have maybe paused in their minds for a moment, but the thought of themselves carrying a cross to be hung upon... would have been only frightening on someone who has seriously violated Roman law.

Now for we who are in Christ and sensitive to His story should be fully aware of the trial, beatings, whippings, and the sentence of not only being hung on a cross, but carrying that cross out of the city, enduring also the shame of scoffers along the route to the location where he was to be hung upon it. And then, of course, to die there. This was the COST of OUR liberation.

His own disciples were already feeling the pressures of being followers of Jesus. These pressures came from family, friends, neighbors, Pharisees, Sadducees, Jewish legalists, and Romans. His disciples and followers were feeling the COST of following Jesus, and many would suffer death as part of that Cost.

Now, the question asked of you is: What does Faith in Jesus **COST YOU?** Each and every true believer, called of God to represent Jesus here on earth... truly has a Cross to be carried. We live in a sin-sick world, under the despot evil one. If we're not under any pressure to stop being Christlike, stop witnessing to family, friends, neighbors - stop going out to the nations of the world... then it would seem like there is **no COST to YOU** for what you have gained through your salvation. Jesus may be telling you, "You cannot be my disciple."

CALCULATE THE COST - Requirement #3

Luke 14:28-30

28 For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, 30 saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'

Here we find some information that we seldom hear in a bible classroom, sermon, or call to the altar. "You, calculate the cost before you decide." This message is largely lost these days. This offer of salvation from Jesus may have great costs to you during your lifetime. My thoughts at this time go to places like North and Eastern Africa, East Europe, Russia, Southern Asia, South America, Haiti and many more, where Christians are losing their homes, children, and their own lives as the evil one motivates religions, governments, and gangs to exterminate Jesus loving people. Christians are also not free from sickness, family problems, or death.

As unbelievers, if you are reading this, please calculate who you are and if the Holy Spirit of God is calling you to Jesus. Are you willing to possibly lose the love of your unbelieving family, the circle of all those around you who may turn against you... for choosing Jesus and the life He offers you, and giving up the life you have planned for yourself. This doesn't mean you will suffer in a Christian life just because you choose Him - but you must calculate the possible cost of choosing Him in a world like ours.

My own story as both an unbeliever for 24 years and a believer for an additional 53 years has been remarkably full of blessing and largely empty of pain and suffering. But as an unbeliever facing Jesus and His salvation, I was unaware of the changes that would take place in my life. From being a successful broadcaster to going back to college, a Bible college. From the 1960's and drugs and alcohol abuse to the 1970's watching those things disappear from

my life. Gaining a Christian wife, starting a family that has become 2 daughters and 6 grandchildren. Taking on life-long changes: starting as a pastor, being led back into broadcasting. Ministries of teaching, encouraging, and physical helping - always ready, always willing, always His. This was my cost thus far - totally unexpected pre-Christ.

CALCULATE THE RISK

Luke 14:31

31 Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.

The emphasis in this verse is a powerful one to contemplate. I'll demonstrate this quest with the story of Jacob and Esau from Genesis chapters 32 & 33.

There was a great rift between these two brothers. They had become divided and living in separate places. Jacob gets told that his brother is on his way to meet him and has 400 troops with him. "Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed." After speaking with the Lord about it, he gathered some of his various flocks (goats, ewes, rams, camels, cows, bulls and donkeys). He then assigned his servants (farm hands) so that each flock had a shepherd and they were to head off his brother Esau leaving a large space between each flock - so they would arrive in intervals. His servants were told, "When my brother Esau meets you and asks you, saying, 'To whom do you belong?, and where are you going?, and to whom do these animals in front of you belong', ' Then you shall say, 'These belong to your servant Jacob; it is a present sent to my lord Esau, and behold, he is also behind us.'" He did this to bless and pave the way for his brother's return, and Jacob had also pulled together 400 soldiers. So, they were equally matched, but Jacob sent enormous

blessings toward his brother to "make his paths straight" and arrive forgiving Jacob.

Why this story? A second thing for one facing becoming a Christian is the fact that the world around you is largely not willing to entertain the thought of a world made by God and to be ruled by His Son King Jesus. Each Christian needs to know how to win souls that are naturally against being won. Jacob's way to win over his brother Esau was to "smooth the way" in fixing the division.

For the believer, it is quite often the spreading of the Word of God (The Gospel) through scripture and way of life - That's your army of 400 men that will match the one coming. The Christian should be prepared to be a blessing in both word and deed to the unbeliever who is seeking Christ.

CALCULATE THE PHYSICAL COST

Luke 14:33

33 So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.

At the time Jesus spoke this, His 12 disciples had done this, some for over 3 years. They left their jobs, they left their families, they were "on the road" with Jesus nearly 24 hours a day. If God calls you to minister in this fashion... that will be the cost. You have to be willing when God calls. The possibility is always there. There are many Christians around the world who God has called to leave everything behind - The key to Christian Joy is to put your whole trust in Him who calls... always!

THE SUMMARY OF THE COST

Luke 14:34

34 "Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned? 35 It is useless

either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

We've talked in this lesson mostly about counting the COST of becoming a Christian. This last two verses are directed to those who are already believers - "The Salt of the Earth." If you are one who has joined into the "Christian movement" by doing your own thing, or by trying to "work" (doing good deeds) in order to become holy enough to be acceptable to God, or going to church because that will bring you closer to God, then your SALT as a "Christian" is either non-existent, or it has become tasteless, then you need to re-evaluate you status as a Christian. The only path to heaven and a living eternity in God's presence is to believe in what God has done for you through the graceful gift of the willing death of His Son on the Cross of Calvary. No one will go to God's Hell unloved, and no one will go to God's Heaven without Faith in His Son and what He has done.

"He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS WITHOUT ANSWERS

- 1. Why were the angels who followed the evil one cast from heaven?**

- 2. When was Jesus, in this lesson, speaking to His disciples and His followers?**

- 3. What is the overall theme of this parable?**

- 4. If those who were following Jesus were doing so looking for a King who would free them from the Romans... What would be the COST to them?**

5. If those who were following Jesus were doing so looking for a King who would forgive all their sins and guarantee them a place in heaven... What would be the COST to them?

6. How has the knowledge of the COST of your salvation changed you in your everyday walk for Christ?

7. What is the danger of as if there was no COST placed on you for your salvation?

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS

1. Why were the angels who followed the evil one cast from heaven?

They were recipients of the greatest privilege given to a created being and they rejected the one who gave it to them. They became "sinners" and could no longer stand in the presence of the Most Holy God.

2. When was Jesus, in this lesson, speaking to His disciples and His followers?

Jesus was, apparently, in, or near to, His last week before His crucifixion.

3. What is the overall theme of this parable?

Counting the COST. Both what Jesus paid, and what His loving and believing followers paid - and will pay.

4. If those who were following Jesus were doing so looking for a King who would free them from the Romans... What could be the COST to them?

They stood to lose all their property, their homes, their family members, their friends, and their lives.

5. If those who were following Jesus were doing so looking for a King who would forgive all their sins and guarantee them a place in heaven... What could be the COST to them?

They stood to lose their property, their homes, their family members, their friends, and their lives.

6. How has the knowledge of the COST of your salvation changed you in your everyday walk for Christ?

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Jeremiah 18:15

"Don't stumble from the Ancient Path"

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[1] All Scripture is taken from The New American Standard Bible, (NASB 1995)

[2] https://ancientpath.net/Bible/Resources/TheParablesOfJesus/001_TheParablesOfJesus_Salt.htm