

## All, or Not a all

Luke 14:25-35

What does “Look before you leap!” mean?

When is that really good advice?

What does “He who hesitates is lost!” mean?

When is that really good advice?

Which advice is more appropriate for someone thinking about following Jesus?

### The Setting for this Passage

**Jesus just finished a feast in a religious leader’s house**

A man at the feast stated a common assumption: Everyone wants to be at the feast in the Kingdom of God

Jesus said: Actually, not every does want to be there

Parable: All the invited guests chose not to come

Why wouldn’t they want to come?

What’s the harm in just taking the risk to come?

### Luke 14:25-35

**25-27: Being Jesus’ disciple requires total commitment**

“Hate” can me to “Put in second place”

Genesis 29:30-31; Luke 16:13

Love & Hate are actions, not emotions

For **some of us**, choosing Jesus brings a radical break from family, community, and ancestors

It can easily be seen as “hate” or treating relatives as though they are not valued

For **some Christians**, losing life is a real issue

For **every Christian**, being a disciple of Jesus means a radical change in priorities and direction

Cross: a very shocking expression

“Their” is singular:

If you do not carry your cross, you cannot be...

“Your cross” is both common and unique

*Common: obey God first, put others before self*

*Unique: Forgive and love your enemies (or relatives), or give up your money, or lose your family, or leave your career, or endure your hardship, or give up your dream, or...*

“Follow me”: we must walk the same road as Jesus

Which led to His total sacrifice at the cross

Following Jesus requires dying to self

**28-30: Parable: Don’t start without counting the cost to finish**

Construction was often to bring honor to the builder

Herod the Great

Failed construction projects brought great shame

So: no one would start a public project without taking seriously whether it could be completed

The point: don’t start following Jesus without taking seriously the whole journey

Which will certainly include letting go of what we hold most dear

**31-33: Parable: War is either “all in” or stay out of it**

War is all-or-nothing

If you aren’t willing to give all you have to win, you are much better off settling before it starts

So: no one should enter war who hasn’t calculated the whole journey

The point: There cannot be partial discipleship

Take seriously the call to total discipleship with all that is under my control

**34-35: Parable: Partial discipleship is as bad as none**

Salt that doesn’t do what salt should do is worse than no salt at all

What salt should do: season, preserve

Unsalty salt: can't be 're-salted', can't mix in to soil, can't even put on a manure pile!

Like 'lukewarm water' of Revelation 3:15-16: "I am about to spit you out of my mouth."

## The Big Idea

**Jesus' genuine disciples join the lifelong journey that will eventually change every priority in our lives as we follow Him to the cross**

Sometimes we want to add Jesus to our other valuables

Sometimes we expect Him to help us with our other valuables: more success at work or school, more peace in our family, more healing of our bodies, more healing of my pain, less need for patience and perseverance, ...

If we choose to follow Jesus...

The cross must be the center of our lives

Everything else is second place: "hated"

Some of our valuables will be lost or abandoned

Our connection with every valuable will be only through Jesus: → they are not our own

Jesus invited all people to come to Him, especially the sick and sinners

"Jesus said to them, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.'" Mark 2:17

This is Radical grace: Jesus welcomed sinners and the unworthy

For those who came, Jesus demanded full submission

This is Radical obedience: All who come must put Jesus before everything else

Both are essential for Christian community



### **Core Value Proposal: Radical Grace and Radical Obedience**

We are committed to building a community that practices radical grace while calling our people to radical obedience to Christ. In radical grace, we welcome people to come as they are, and we are committed to building relationships with people as Jesus did, including with those who are often judged by others, just as Jesus welcomed sinners, prostitutes, and tax collectors (Luke 5:29-32). We also call our people to radical obedience to Jesus in all parts of our lives, conforming to His call to holiness and to sacrificial service (Luke 5:27-28; 9:23-26). And we recognize that this road to radical obedience is lifelong and requires grace, patience, perseverance, and mutual encouragement (Hebrews 10:23-25; 12:7-13).

## Application

### **Recognize the never-ending need to turn my life toward Jesus**

Repeatedly turning the same areas back to Jesus

Most battles are won through perseverance rather than one victory

Learning new areas that I need to turn over to Him

"Q" in Chinese

You have to learn: It is like the English "ch"

Then you have to learn that it isn't

When we become Christians

We don't know every area where we need to submit to Jesus

*We can't know!*

We should know and accept that we will never be done turning parts over to Jesus, and some will be very hard to do

*It is likely that the harder areas will come later in life*

This is true for EVERY Christian

From the first day you have new life in Christ

To the last breath you take on earth

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Romans 12:1-2a

### **Put into His hands what He is asking for today**

YOUR cross is unique to you today

Listening to the words of the Bible

Listening to the words of the Holy Spirit

Put Jesus before family, friends, and possessions

Pursue the call to holiness, purity, submission, and service

Obey the call to forgive those who hurt us and to love our enemies

Obey the call to pursue His calling and priorities instead of my own

We must **abandon completely** some things we deeply value

We must **abandon our claim** to some things that stay in our hands

The choice is not between Jesus and the devil

It is the choice between Jesus or what I hold most dear / what shapes my life most

We want to help each other in this journey

Sometimes our spirit is willing but our flesh is weak

“Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; say to those with fearful hearts, “Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you.” Isaiah 35:3-4

Know that we will eventually lose it all anyway!

And nothing is worth having if it means losing the Author of life

“I say to the Lord, “You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing.” Psalm 16:2

Whatever we entrust to Him, we will eventually receive something worth far more in return

“That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.” 2 Timothy 1:12

**Jesus said: “Whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.”**

Do you accept the never-ending need to turn your life toward Jesus?

What is He asking you to put into His hands today?

“Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you.” Isaiah 35:3-4

Trust Jesus who gave up everything so you could truly live

Will you trust Him today?

### Reflection Questions for later today or this week...

1. What is ‘your cross’ today? That is, what is the thing in your life today that does not want to be loved less than you love Jesus? What makes it hard to submit this part of your life to Jesus?
2. Why would it be utterly foolish to hold on to this thing rather than submit it to Jesus? Read Psalm 16:2 and consider the worth of this thing in contrast to Jesus. And then recall that you will eventually lose this thing anyway.
3. Read Isaiah 35:3-4 again. What might it look like for us as a church to help each other by strengthening feeble hands and steadying the knees that give way?
4. What are the stories, in your own life, in the lives of others, and in the stories of the Bible, of people who abandoned their claim to things that were so valuable, only to find something far more valuable from Jesus?