

Counting the Cost

Lesson # 40 (Lk. 14:27-33; Mk. 12:41-44; Lk. 18:22)

The central theme of our lesson today has to do with counting the cost before we choose to follow Jesus. The Gospels make it crystal clear that the cost of becoming Christ's disciples is not cheap. In actual fact, following Jesus is the most expensive proposition of our lives because it costs us all that we have. We will find in the course of our study that many people accept Jesus on the spur of the moment without realizing what their decision will cost them. For this reason many professed followers of Jesus fall by the wayside. It is because of this danger that Jesus told the parables of the man who builds a tower and the king who goes to war.

Christ's Audience

1. To whom did Jesus address the passage of Luke 14:27-33? "And there went great _____ with him; and he turned, and said unto them. . . ." (Lk. 14:25)
2. Why did the multitudes frequently follow Jesus? "And a _____ multitude followed him, because they saw his _____ which he did on them that were diseased." (Jn. 6:2)

Note: Many followed Jesus because they saw Him as a great miracle worker. While there were miracles and loaves and fishes the crowd was filled with excitement. But when the tough times came, most of these people forsook Him (Jn. 6:66) They did not count the cost of discipleship. We might call them "fair weather Christians".

Hating Father and Mother

1. What did Jesus say about family relations and discipleship? "If any man come to me, and _____ not his father, and mother, and wife and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own _____ also, he cannot be my _____." (Lk. 14:26)
2. What did Jesus mean when He spoke about his disciples **hating** their relatives? Was he using the word "hate" in its normal sense? "He that loveth father or mother _____ than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter _____ than me is not worthy of me." (Mt. 10:37)

Note: Jesus is not saying that we must hate our relatives when we accept Him. What He is saying is that our relatives cannot occupy first place in our lives. If our relatives stand between us and Jesus, we must choose Jesus first (see, Mt. 10:34-

3. What did Jesus mean in Luke 14:26 when He said that we must hate our own life? "For whosoever will _____ his life shall _____ it; but whosoever will lose his life for my

_____, the same shall save it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose _____, or be cast away?” (Lk. 9:24-25)

4. What did the apostle Peter tell his listeners on the Day of Pentecost? “We ought to _____ God rather than _____.” (Acts 5:29)

Note: The apostle Peter was not saying that we should not obey the legitimate authority of men. What he was saying is that we should never place the will of man above the will of God.

Bearing the Cross

1. According to Jesus, what must His true disciples be willing to do? “And whosoever doth not bear his _____, and come _____ me, cannot be my disciple.” (Lk. 14:27)
2. How frequently must the cross be borne? “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross _____, and follow me.” (Lk. 9:23)
3. According to the apostle Paul, what must we do after we have borne the cross? “I am _____ with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ _____ in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the _____ of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” (Gal. 2:20)
4. What must the Christian crucify with Jesus? “And they that are Christ’s have _____ the _____ with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” (Gal. 5:24-25)
5. How frequently must this crucifying of self take place? “I die _____.” (I Cor. 15:31)

Two Illustrations

1. According to Jesus, what must be done before a tower is built? “For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and _____ the cost, whether he have _____ to finish it?” (Lk. 14:28)

Note: Success in the Christian life depends upon four things: **1)** Counting the cost, **2)** Developing a plan, **3)** Being willing to pay the price, **4)** Looking forward to the reward. The *Tour de France* is a vivid illustration of these three principles. For example, Lance Armstrong, who has won the *Tour* for five consecutive years, maps out his strategy for months before he begins to ride. When the race begins, he rides his bicycle with relentless perseverance being willing to brave sun, rain, falls and excruciating pain. It is standing on the victor’s podium which drives him to excellence!!

2. What might happen if the tower cannot be finished because of a lack of resources? “Lest haply, after he hath laid the _____, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to _____ him, Saying, This man _____ to build, and was not able to finish.” (Lk. 14:29-30)

Note: In the city of Caracas there is an impressive building which was erected in the early 1960's. Its name is “El Helicoide”. It was supposed to be a fancy shopping center for the rich. The basic structure is still there many decades later, but the building was never finished. In fact, today it is a haven for the homeless. What happened? The answer is that the builders miscalculated the cost of the project and didn't have enough money to finish it. I once heard a Venezuelan friend call this building “el monumento de los idiotas” (the monument of the idiots) Every time I pass by El Helicoide, I am reminded of the parable of Jesus. Is it just possible that many Christians begin to build their characters upon Jesus but then fail to allow the Holy Spirit to finish the work?

3. According to the Parable of the Sower, what happened with the seeds which were sown in stony places? “Some fell upon stony places, where they had not _____ earth and _____ they sprung up, because they had to _____ of earth. And when they sun was up, they were scorched, and because they had no _____, they withered away.” (Mt. 13:5-6)
4. What is represented by the “stony ground hearers”? “But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that _____ the word, and anon with _____ receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while, for when _____ or _____ ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.” (Mt. 13:20-21)
5. What did Jesus say about the need for His people to endure the tribulation to come? “But he that shall endure unto the _____, the same shall be saved.” (Mt. 24:13)
6. What awesome promise does God make to those who abide in Him? “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath _____ a good work in you will _____ it until the day of Jesus Christ.” (Phil. 1:6)
7. What other story did Jesus tell to illustrate the need to reckon the price of following Him? “Or what king, going to make war against another king, _____ not down first and _____ whether he be _____ with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace?” (Lk. 14:31-32)

Note: Ellen White once wrote a letter about a Dr. Moran in which she quoted this parable. She remarked concerning him: “Dr. Moran has in view the building of a sanitarium, but he has not taken into consideration where the funds will come from to carry on his building enterprise. It is easy to work on suppositions, but it is not best to do so. It is not wise to launch out so suddenly. The bud must develop gradually into the full-blown flower.

“In the first place, let all connected with the establishment of this sanitarium make a most thorough study of the object for which it is to be established. Is it to be in every sense a memorial for the Lord? Is it to be a means of awakening conviction in regard to the nature of sin? Is it to be as means of saving souls from death—souls who through conversion will show a reformation in the life-practice, thus answering the question, ‘What shall I do to be saved?’” (Manuscript Releases, volume 17, p. 358)

The Cost of Discipleship

1. How much does it cost to be a disciple of Jesus? “So _____, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not _____ that he hath, he cannot be my _____.” (Lk. 14:33)
2. What counsel did Jesus give the rich young ruler? “Yet thou lackest _____ thing: Sell _____ that thou hast, and distribute unto the _____, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, _____ me.” (Lk. 18:22)
3. According to Jesus, how much does it cost to acquire the treasure of the Gospel? “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto _____ hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth _____ that he hath, and buyeth that field.” (Mt. 13:44)
4. What does it cost to acquire the Pearl of Great Price? “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a _____ man, seeking goodly pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold _____ that he had, and bought it.” (Mt. 13:46)
5. How much did James and John forsake when they chose to become disciples of Jesus? “And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook _____, and _____ him.” (Lk. 5:11)
6. How much did Levi Matthew leave when he chose to follow Jesus? “And he left _____, rose up, and followed him.” (Lk. 5:28)
7. What did the believers do with their possessions when they received the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost? “And _____ their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had _____. . . . And the multitude of them that believed were of _____ heart and of _____ soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had _____ things common.” (Acts 2:44; 4:32)
8. How much was Saul of Tarsus willing to give up to gain Christ? “Yea, doubtless, and I count _____ things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of _____ things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.” (Phil. 3:8)

9. What made the donation of a widow more excellent than that of the religious leaders? “For all they did cast of their _____, but she of her want cast in _____ that she had, even _____ her living.” (Mk. 12:44)

Judas Iscariot

1. What words of warning did Jesus speak to Judas when he offered to follow Jesus? “And Jesus said unto him, _____ have holes, and _____ of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to _____ his head.” (Lk. 9:58)
2. What kind of kingdom did Judas envision? “When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by _____, to make him a _____, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.” (Jn. 6:15)

Note: The tragic story of Judas illustrates what happens when a person fails to reckon the cost of following Jesus.

3. What will we receive when we choose to forsake all for Jesus? “He that spared not his own Son, but _____ him up for us all, how shall he not with him also _____ give us _____ things?” (Rom. 8:32)

Note: Receiving Jesus is actually an investment. We give up all that we have that we may receive all that He has. The apostle Paul tells us that when we accept Jesus we become fellow heirs with Him of all things (see, Romans 8:17)

4. Is the path to the kingdom of God always a bed of roses? “Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to _____ in the faith, and that we must through much _____ enter into the kingdom of God.” (Acts 14:22)

The Salt of the Earth

1. With what does Jesus compare those who are unwilling to give up all for Him? “Salt is good: but if the salt have _____ his _____, wherewith shall it be seasoned?” (Lk. 14:34)
2. What did Jesus say elsewhere about salt losing its savor? “Ye are the _____ of the earth: but if the salt have _____ his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for _____, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.” (Mt. 5:13)
3. What happened to Lot’s wife when she lost her spiritual savor? “But his wife looked _____ from behind him, and she became a pillar of _____.” (Gen. 19:26)