



Count the Cost

"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.' Luke 14:28-30

In the above passage Jesus Christ talks about the importance of a whole-hearted desire to following Jesus and the cost involved in making such a decision. He compares a person who has decided to follow Him to a man who wants to build a tower. If the builder makes a wrong estimation on the tower he wants to build, the building will be half complete and probably be abandoned. In the same way, as followers of Jesus Christ, we have set out to build a tower; a tower of righteous, holiness, and justice. Building such a tower is not easy. It costs a lot to build such a tower. The cost might be in terms of giving up selfish desires and ambitions or it might be embracing trials and tribulations with joy or it might be loving those who hate us and mistreat us or it might be standing up for what is just however tough the opposition is or it might even be giving up our one's life for the cause of the gospel. If a person does not count this cost, he might abandon his faith at some point and risk the possibility of going to heaven. This is a pretty serious matter.

Jesus said,

"Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out." Luke 14:34-35.



We have to remember that we are the salt of this earth [Matthew 5:13](#). If we lose our saltiness or our enthusiasm to follow Jesus and to know Him, we will not be fit for the kingdom of God but to be thrown out into eternal darkness. It is not enough to just know Jesus.

You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder. James 2:19

It is very important to be known by God as someone who loves well and follows his commandments. There are those who would say on the Day of Judgment,

'We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.' "But he will reply, 'I don't know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!'" Luke 13:26-27.

Jesus is talking about people who knew who he was but no effort to follow Him and to do what he had commanded. 1 Corinthians 8:2-3 says,

"The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know. But the man who loves God is known by God."



There are those who are like Martha who was so engaged in serving God but neglected the most important duty of sitting at the feet of the Lord like Mary. Jesus is making it very clear in his words, though it sounds harsh, that heaven is meant for those who are eager to know God and serve Him in his kingdom and not for those who are self-seeking and reject God.

Jesus Christ encouraged his followers to make every effort to enter through the narrow gate that leads to life [Matthew 7:13-14](#). The narrow gate directly implies that it is going to be pretty hard to push through to the other side of the gate. In the same way, following Christ will require diligence and focus in order to push through all the difficulties and hindrances that come along our way in order to enter God's dwelling place.

We have to understand that our Lord Jesus Christ has not called us to a "trouble-free" life but he said,

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." [John 16:33](#).

Jesus is not implying that His followers will have nothing but trouble or good things never happen to those who follow Him. Praise God if things are going well for you but if things are going bad, don't get upset with God. Remember that God is in control. Bad things don't happen without His knowledge. Look at the following scripture:



[Ecclesiastes 7:14](#), “When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider: God has made the one as well as the other”.

This is not to say that God is responsible for bad things but he allows difficult situations in our lives in order to test the genuineness of our faith and to develop a strong character in us. Jesus is just warning us in advance about the kind of life that he is calling his followers into. When Jesus was on this earth, he went about serving everybody. He healed the sick, raised the dead, and forgave people of their sins. Yet, the world hated him. In the same way, whoever decides to follow Him will undergo the same bad treatment from the world. Jesus has warned us very clearly in the scriptures that we will be hated because of Christ and thus experience trouble in this world.

"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. [John 15:18-19](#)

Jesus is not suggesting that we run away from the world but to face it. He wants us to overcome the world and not to be overcome by the world. Nobody calls the one who runs away from his opponent, ‘a good fighter’ but a ‘coward’. As followers of Christ, we are not cowards or victims of the craftiness of the world but fighters and people who overcome and conquer the world. [Hebrews 10:39](#) says,



“we are not of those who **shrink back** and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved”.

Although everything is permissible in this world, God does not want us to be mastered by anything [1 Corinthians 6:12](#). God wants us to seek those things that are productive and beneficial to everyone [1 Corinthians 10:23](#). This is where real discipline comes into play and I believe that this is where character building starts.

Jesus said,

"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me". Luke 9:23.

To deny one's **self** is to give up selfish desires and goals and seek the interests of God. This is what God is interested in:

God is interested in preaching the gospel to those who haven't heard it.

God is interested in healing the broken-hearted.

God is interested in releasing people from darkness.

God is interested in comforting those who mourn ^{Isaiah 61:1-3}

God is interested in feeding the poor.

God is interested in healing the sick.

God is interested in pleading the cause of the oppressed and those who are abused.

God is interested in lifting those who are downtrodden.

God is interested in taking care of widows and orphans in their distress [James 1:27](#)



If we aren't concerned about anyone, God will not be concerned about us on the day we stand before him (see Matthew 25:31-46). Judgment without mercy will be shown to those who haven't been merciful [James 2:13](#). As true followers of Christ, we have to be about the serious business of our God in heaven. Let us not forget that as followers of Christ, we are called to serve. We all know that we are not saved by works ^{Ephesians 2:9}, but we should never forget that

- every tree that does not bear fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire [Matthew 7:19](#)
- the man who is not dressed for the banquet will be thrown into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth ^{Matthew 22:13}
- the man who hides his talent in the ground will be thrown into darkness. ^{Matthew 25:30}
- the people who make excuses will not get a taste of the banquet ^{Matthew 25:30}
- or in simple words
- faith without works is dead ^{James 2:26}

Therefore, let us count the cost of following Jesus. Yes, the call of Jesus seems too hard to attain and we may feel like we are never going to be able to perfectly follow all of God's teachings. That does not mean that we have to give up trying. We have all sinned and sin continues to wage war in our hearts but that only means that we should keep trying harder. We should do what Apostle Paul did:

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers,



Weekly Devotional

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I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:12-14

Love,

VICTOR