

Title: REALITIES OF DISCIPLESHIP, LUKE 14:25 – 33
(Chatham, NJ; 9/4/16, AM) [Pc – Four Pages Outline]

Theme: The reality of discipleship is that something has to be given up for something to be gained.

Purpose: To explain the gains and losses and to build a bridge that people might accentuate the gains and not mourn the losses.

Introduction:

1. There is no way to ease the demands of these challenging words.
2. Remember three things.
3. One, Jesus has turned his attention to the crowds that have followed him.
4. Two, he is on his way to Jerusalem to face the cross, and the crowd must see that the way to life is through the cross.
5. Three, despite the challenge of these things, a lot of “sinners” hung on his words, 15:1.
6. In any of life’s endeavors we must give up something to gain something; discipleship is no different.
7. Jesus demands complete loyalty, and that means loyalties to other things will take second place.

I. A Conflict of Loyalties, 26-27

A. Family ties

1. Hate family = not the emotion-filled “I hate you” with slammed doors, etc.
2. A hyperbole to mean to turn away from our allegiance to them or to detach ourselves from them as a first line of loyalty
3. Matthew softens it to “love them less”
4. The impact must not be lessened: God comes before family
5. Where family solidarity and honor can be thought of as the highest good, Jesus challenges us with a new loyalty

B. Even our own lives

1. Loyalty to Christ will create tensions in our souls when our impulses push us to do things against Christ’s commands.
2. The choice is between following him or following our sinful ways
3. Society tends to smooth out these tensions by legitimizing the individual conscience; we become our own gods.
4. Both with family and with our lives, unless we hate them we cannot be Christ’s disciple.

II. This Resonates with Tension

A. A difficult challenge

1. We chafe at the prospect of putting family and self in second place.
2. Yet Jesus does not ask anything more than the first commandment: “You shall have no other gods before me.”
3. Deep inside, beyond our resistance to it, something about this rings true
4. That is probably why the “sinners” flock to him.

B. Two parables reinforce the feeling (explain each)

1. Counting the cost – this in nothing that we haven’t done in other areas of life
2. Two kings going to war – you can’t win against God
3. For the third time: Unless you renounce all that you have, you cannot be my disciple, 33

4. Most life experiences teach you that you have to give up something to gain something else; you can't "have it all"
5. What does it profit if we gain the whole world but lose our souls?

III. Sit Down, and Think It Through – The Good News in the Conflict

- There is no softening the challenge
- Jesus is on the way to his cross, and we must take up ours as well, 27
- We can't just follow on impulse
- Even considering the grace of God, anything worth having demands thoughtful, resourceful effort
- That Jesus takes us through the process tells us that this is a worthwhile endeavor

IV. The Bridge between the Conflict and the Good News

- Luke 9:24, the paradox of self-denial: give up your life to gain your life
- Jesus is addressing a crowd that must make a profound choice
- The road sign at a crossroads: one way is paved, level, and travels through safe territory, the other way leads over a mountainous path through dangerous paths
- The sign points to the second way: you have to trust the sign in order to get to your destination
- The way is hard that leads to life, Mt. 7:14
- You struggle with something to gain something worthwhile

Conclusion:

1. This rough way cannot be smoothed out.
2. Self-denial comes before self-fulfillment.
3. Unless you hate family and friends, even your own life, and renounce all that you have, you cannot be Christ's disciple.
4. See this as a stepping stone not a stumbling block, and you will experience the way that is both meaningful and rewarding.
5. Anything worth having is worth the effort it takes to get it.
6. Choose Christ today.