

SERMON FOR SEPTEMBER 4, 2022

TEXT: LUKE 14:25-35

THEME: COUNTING THE COST

Now great crowds accompanied him, 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. **27** Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. **28** For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? **29** Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, **30** saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ **31** Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? **32** And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. **33** So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple. **34** “Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? **35** It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

In the name of Jesus:

Counting the cost is something that we all do at some point in our life.

If you are buying an automobile you will determine how much you can afford and what the monthly payments will be. In doing so, you are counting what the car will ultimately cost you. The same holds true if you are doing any type of remodeling for fixing up projects at home. You will sit down, determine exactly what you need, how much of it you will need, and then you will either purchase the materials to complete the project or you will readjust your goals

for the project in order to fall within your budget. There are many ways that you will count the cost in your life before you make a decision on the matter that is before you.

Jesus is telling us the same thing in our Gospel lesson for today. He lays out what exactly the expectations are for those who will follow Jesus. Up to this point in His ministry, Jesus is drawing crowds of people who are genuinely interested in Him. They have seen the feeding of the multitudes, they have witnessed the lame walking and the blind receiving their sight, even the dead have been raised! People are gathering around Jesus and ready and willing to follow Him. So Jesus spells it out, for them, and for you and me, telling us in no uncertain terms that there is a cost, a price to be paid, for being a Christian and a follower of Jesus.

The ultimate cost that is to be paid was paid by none other than Jesus Himself. He paid the ultimate price, by setting aside His glory for a time and becoming like us in every way yet without sin. He came down from heaven, not to be worshiped or adored, but to give His life as the perfect payment for the forgiveness of all sin. There is a real cost to following Jesus, and Jesus is that cost. His will was to do that which the Father sent Him to do, loving the Father first and foremost above all else and then showing that love for the Father in showing mercy to those who were in need. In each of the healing

miracles and in each of the miracles of provision Jesus is reaching out to help those in need, showing mercy to those who are in need of mercy.

Jesus reaches out to you today in love, showing mercy and love to you, even though you don't deserve it. You have knelt asking God to forgive you, and He has, all on account of Jesus! You have asked the Lord for mercy, and He is merciful and gracious, washing your sins away in Baptism, and proclaiming to you that you are His precious child. Your faith has been fed and will be fed by the Lord Jesus Himself, giving you His very body and blood for your forgiveness, life and salvation. You have been saved by a free gift of God's love in Jesus, who lived, died, and rose again for your forgiveness and eternal salvation. The Lord has sent you His Holy Spirit, giving you faith in Jesus, a faith that is to be lived out each and everyday of your life.

As Jesus has saved you, as He has given you faith by the power of the Spirit, he now also gives you a dose of reality. He tells you what this ultimately means in your life, and what it will look like. You may not have heard it put this way before, but what Jesus is telling you is that the road ahead, while it is blessed by Him, is a hard road. The Christian life is a life of trial, turmoil, and tribulation. There are crosses that Jesus is going to place before you and crosses that will be placed on you. Christianity and the Christian

faith is a hard road. It is a difficult journey ahead. But it is a worthwhile journey because it is blessed by Jesus.

In your Baptism you were marked by the cross of Christ, and it is the cross of Christ that you carry with you throughout your life. You are a marked man, marked woman, marked child, for while you have been saved by God's grace through faith in Christ, you are now seen and viewed as an enemy of Satan, and Satan works overtime in order to draw you away from Jesus. And yet, all the while, God has blessed you in Baptism, giving you eternal life, here and now. Eternal life doesn't begin when you die, it really just continues. God has made you into His new creation in Baptism, giving you a new life to live. Jesus, who is the Resurrection and the Life, gives new life by the power of His Spirit, and as His own baptized child, He now calls you to follow Him throughout your life.

In doing so, Jesus explains and expands upon what that looks like in the Gospel lesson for today. Be certain that you count the cost, so to speak. Jesus gave His life for you unto death, so that now as His child you can live your life for Him. And what does that look like? Jesus says point blank that if you love anything or anyone in this world more than Him you are not worthy of Him. Jesus demands first place in your life. He says to have no other gods beside Him. Fear, love and trust in Him first and foremost and above all things. This

is what you are getting into and this is what true discipleship looks like. True discipleship costs the entirety of your being, it is nothing less than a total and complete commitment to Him, it is a complete breach with the things of this world. You can't serve Jesus and the world. There is no compromise and no middle ground. Jesus calls you to take your faith seriously, not just on Sundays, not just when you feel like it or when you want to, but to take your faith seriously each and every moment of your life.

When you do this, Jesus warns that there will be consequences. Persecution comes from following Jesus. There will be discord in some of your relationships when you take a stand with and for Jesus. Others will reject you for following Jesus.

And so when you follow Jesus, Jesus wants you to recognize the cost. He paid a great price by laying down His life for you, in exchange for you now living your life in thanks to Him.

That is why Jesus concludes His teaching in today's Gospel with the example of the saltiness and purpose of salt. There is no in between with salt, salt is either salty, or it isn't, and if salt isn't salty, then it really isn't salt and it should be thrown away for it has no useful purpose.

In the same way, God has made you His child by the blood of Jesus. He has forgiven you all of your sins and has given you new opportunities to live

for Him. You are either a disciple of Jesus, or you aren't a disciple of Jesus. There is no such thing as a person who is sort of a disciple of Jesus, sort of a follower of Jesus, or kind of disciple of Jesus. You either are or you aren't. And you are either living for Jesus or you aren't. So look to Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of your faith. For the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross and shame, He died and rose for you so that you can now live for Him. And make the most of your moments to live for Jesus, to whom be all glory, honor and praise.

Amen