

Counting the Cost for Jesus

Luke 9: 57-62

We have read a portion of Scripture that is hard for many to receive. At first glance it seems as if the Lord is being cold and insensitive to the needs of those who would follow Him. After all, who would not want to have a part in the burial of their father? But we must look deeper into the text, rather than making an assumption of what is seen merely on the surface.

We know that Jesus cares for us like no other. He proved His sacrificial love on the cross as He died for our sin. The context of this passage is not to abandon or deny our obligations to family or friends. Here Jesus wants those who will follow Him to fully understand that He must come first; Jesus must be the priority of our lives if we are to follow Him!

He has already given the conditions of discipleship in [V.23](#) – [And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.](#) Jesus expounds on that thought in the verses we've read today. Salvation is a free gift of God. We are not expected to work in order to merit our salvation, but if we are to be a follower of Christ, it will cost us something. Take a moment to consider [Luke 14:26-27](#). The Lord isn't implying that we are to literally hate our families, but that our love for Him must exceed any desires of this life. We must be willing to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him! Anything that stands between you and the Lord must be forsaken. With these thoughts in mind I want to look at the [observations](#) in these verses and preach on: [Counting the Cost for Jesus](#). First of all:

I. We Must Count the Cost ([57-58](#)) – As I've already said; it will cost you to serve the Lord. If we serve Him as we should, we must count the cost.

A. The Intention Revealed ([57](#)) – [And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.](#) As Jesus went in the way, a man came unto Him revealing his intention to follow Him. It is very likely that the man had heard of Jesus. He had probably heard of the miracles that Jesus had performed, and the wisdom that He possessed. This man had a desire to learn of Jesus and to follow Him. No doubt this man had good intentions.

- It ought to be the desire of each of us to follow the Lord. This man made a bold statement. [He wanted to follow Jesus wherever He went.](#) This all sounded good, it was honorable to desire to follow Jesus, but the man hadn't stopped to count the cost. Serving the Lord will cost you something! Serving the Lord involves much more than receiving Christ in salvation and finding a seat on the "glory train" to heaven and reaping your rewards.

- I'm sure that everyone here today intends on following the Lord. You have good intentions in your heart today, but have you stopped to count the cost? Many will follow Christ until they are expected to give of themselves or sacrifice for His cause. Jesus said we are to **deny ourselves**. If we intend to follow Him, we must want His will more than our own. If all you have are good intentions, you won't follow the Lord very far.

B. The Investment Required (58a) – **And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.** Jesus knew the man hadn't taken the time to count the cost. He had only heard and seen the glamour of the Lord's ministry, but he wasn't aware of all that following Jesus involved.

- Here is the only begotten of the Father; He who stood in glory surrounded by angels. Jesus humbled Himself and became a man to live upon this earth in poverty. He wasn't surrounded by servants who attended to His every need. He didn't live in a palace enjoying the finest of accommodations. He walked upon this earth with no place to lay His head. He didn't own a home or have wealth to enjoy.

- Jesus wanted the man to know that he must want to serve the Lord more than he wanted the treasures of life. Jesus had to come first, even above financial gain and prosperity.

- There is an investment required today. Where is Jesus on your list of priorities? Simply making a profession and having a desire to follow Jesus isn't enough. Serving the Lord will cost you something! Are you willing to abandon the desires of the flesh to follow the Lord? Many want to serve the Lord, but He is nowhere near the top of the list. He falls behind the need for earthly possessions. Is Jesus the priority? Are you willing to surrender your life to His service?

C. The Identity Represented (58b) – In their conversation, Jesus makes a profound statement. He refers to Himself as the **Son of man**. This reveals who He is. Jesus came to live that holy, sinless life that we never could. He came to become the sacrifice for the sins of men. Jesus wanted the man to know Him as more than a miracle worker or great teacher. He wanted him to know that He was the Messiah. The man had to be willing to identify with the Lamb of God. He had to be willing to embrace Jesus as Savior of the world.

- Serving Jesus will cost you something. He must be more than One who is taught about in church on Sunday. He must be the Lord of your life. You must be willing to identify with the Savior, His sufferings, and ridicule from the world because of Him. Serving the Lord is an everyday affair.

- We are expected to identify with the Lord, **V.26 – For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.** Are you willing to be counted among those who serve the Lord in a generation where most have no desire to be associated with Christ? Have you counted the cost? Counting the cost isn't all. Also:

II. We Must Pay the Price (59-60) – Once the cost has been counted, there must be a willingness to follow through. You must be willing to pay the price to serve the Lord. Keep in mind that salvation is a free gift. Don't leave here today thinking that I have taught that we can buy our way into heaven, but there is a price to pay to serve the Lord. This is seen in the conversation with the second man that Jesus encountered.

A. The Invitation (59a) – **And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.** Jesus gives a personal invitation, **follow me.** It is apparent that Jesus desired the man to come after Him. There was something special about the man that Jesus wanted him to be of service. This should come as no surprise. This man was no different than us. Jesus came that all might be saved. He wants all to follow Him.

- Remember the conditions of discipleship. We must count the cost, denying ourselves, and pay the price, take up the cross if we are to follow Jesus. Many view this as being willing to bear the burdens of discipleship, but it goes much deeper than that. The cross is an instrument of death. We must be willing to die to ourselves, placing the Lord's will above our own.
- Jesus is inviting those who will come and follow Him to bear their cross, to die out to the flesh and live in Christ the Lord. Bearing our cross is the price we must pay if we are to follow Jesus!

B. The Hesitation (59b) – **But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.** The man seems to make a reasonable request. We don't know if the man's father has already died or is at the point of death, but either way the man feels an obligation to be there. He is hesitant to follow the Lord because there seems to be a more pressing matter that needs attending to.

- Many times in our lives we have those situations that arise that are very reasonable, but the question remains about the priorities of life. We have not been asked to neglect our responsibilities, but to give Jesus the preeminence in our lives. We must always be ready to follow the Lord and make Him the priority.

- What is it that has caused hesitation in your life? Have you given other things, maybe even good things, the priority? I know there are things we must take care of in this life, but Jesus must be the main focus of our lives. If He is in the position of preeminence, everything else will fall in place. **Mat.6:33 – But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.**

C. The Obligation (60) – **Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.** This seems a very harsh and inconsiderate statement by the Lord, but He is teaching a great truth. There will be times in life when we must involve ourselves with earthly cares, but they cannot dictate our lives. There is a greater work to be done than the simple accomplishments of this life. Jesus didn't want the man to be insensitive to the needs of his family, but the most important task was to share the glorious gospel of Christ. Jesus wanted the man to see past the physical death of his father and consider the spiritual death of all men.

- We have the opportunity to make a difference in a physical sense, but the greater opportunity lies in the spiritual realm. The dead will continue to bury their dead unless we share the gospel so that they might live! This life yields the only opportunity to accept the Lord. The works and treasures of this life will burn up and pass away.

III. We Must Continue the Course (61-62) – In His conversation with the third man Jesus reveals that those who wish to follow Him must continue the course. Service unto the Lord isn't a once in a while affair; it isn't something that we can do for a season and then seek something else.

A. A Decisive Affection (61a) – **And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee;** This 3rd man had a desire to follow the Lord. It was in his heart to be of service to Christ. Running the race for Jesus will never be done without a genuine affection for Him. We must decide whole-heartedly to follow Him.

- If the passion and desire is not there, we will never continue to be of service. Living for the Lord will have its seasons of drought and difficulty. Our love for the Lord and desire to serve Him must exceed the difficulties of life! Continuing also involves:

B. A Determined Allegiance (61b) – **but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.** The man had a desire to follow the Lord, but he was torn between two allegiances. He was troubled with the decision of what to do. He wanted to serve Christ, **but** there were things he felt

he must do **first**. As we've already discussed, Jesus must be the priority. Our lives must be completely devoted unto Him.

- We will never be what the Lord desires us to be or realize our full potential if there are other things that we must do before we can serve the Lord. Our lives must be kept free of sin, but we cannot put Jesus on the "back burner." One who serves the Lord must make the commitment to serve Him above all else. The call of Joshua remains for each of us today: **choose you this day whom ye will serve!** Where is your allegiance today? Whom have you chosen to serve? Will it be the Lord or are there other desires that have come first?

C. A Divine Assessment (62) – **And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.** Here Jesus makes a definitive statement for all who would follow Him. This is a difficult statement for many to accept. Jesus declares that those who will follow Him must never look back to what has been left behind. There is nothing to look back to. The world has nothing to offer and there is nothing more important in our lives than being of service to our Lord!

- Sadly many have taken hold of the gospel plow, making a profession and starting out strong, but the lure of the world enticed them to return. They never reached the place where Jesus was their sole desire. There is nothing wrong in enjoying this life, but we cannot return to the ways of the world. It is impossible to plow a straight row looking back. Jesus dealt with those who were looking back in **Rev.2:4 – Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.**

Conclusion: Jesus must be the priority! Have you counted the cost? Are you willing to pay the price to serve the Lord? Christian are you committed to continuing the course? Serving Jesus will cost you something!

Maybe you are here and the Lord has spoken to you concerning salvation. If so are you willing to obey His voice and come to Him by faith? If He is leading you, I urge you to come today and receive salvation. He is the only way of forgiveness and eternal life!