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Full Price Discipleship – Luke 14:25-35

Introduction – In the previous parable (vv16-24), the invited guests are not willing to give up their land, their livestock, and their wives in order to attend the great supper. In the meantime, Luke notes that “*great multitudes went with Him*” (v25). Jesus doesn’t exactly follow the script of modern church-growth seminars, and instead demands that all who would claim to follow Him first carefully consider the cost.

Honest Disclosure – Jesus doesn’t hide the fact that He is on His way to Jerusalem to die (Luke 9:31, 13:33, 18:31-34). He will die because He will be crucified by His own people. He will be betrayed, scourged, and hung on a cross. He will do so because God loves the world (John 3:16-17) and in doing so He will bring about the re-creation of all things – Jesus will be made Lord and King of all (Psalm 2:1-9, Rev 11:15). The excitement of anticipated victory along with the healings and miracles bring greater and greater crowds. But Jesus is not interested in half-hearted, discount discipleship. He knows what Paul will later say – “*all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution*” (2 Tim 3:12).

Jesus doesn’t hide the fact that He is to be Lord of our lives, our whole lives, and right from the get-go. There is no “*inviting Jesus into my heart*” now and making Him Lord later (as though we could “make” Him Lord).

Three “Cannot Be”s – In order to be His disciple, one must be devoted to Jesus more than any other loyalty, even to oneself (v26). In order to be His disciple, one must bear the shame and death of a crucifixion and follow after Jesus (v27). In order to be His disciple, one must forsake everything else – no other gods alongside Jesus (v33). Remember, as Luke is writing this gospel, he is living in a generation where family ties are broken choosing Jesus, lives are lost for choosing Jesus, and possessions are lost for choosing Jesus.

Perfectionism? – It doesn’t make sense to see in these demands that Jesus is only interested in “perfect” disciples. His own chosen disciples will stumble in many ways. The point is to describe what happens to true disciples of Christ. “*A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you*” (John 15:20). Disciples may experience the loss of family, friends, reputation and creature comforts – even their lives, because they are associated with Jesus.

Can You Afford to Come? – While the crowds are growing, Jesus warns the new followers not to look foolish. Disciples must understand the great cost in their declaration to follow Him. But is there something else in Jesus’ words? The rebuilding of the Temple under Herod had been a massive undertaking. Would it be finished or would all of the work in the end be a testimony to the folly of the unbelieving Jews?

Can You Afford not to Come? – On the one hand, Jesus gives another example of counting the cost before entering in to the work, or in this case, the battle. On the other hand, Jesus may be calling upon unbelieving Israel to consider the cost of not coming to the King standing against them in battle (judgment) and making peace. Israel cannot afford not to come to Jesus (Luke 13:5, 24, 34-35).

Tasteless Salt – Jesus is telling Israel that she has become as indistinguishable from the other nations as salt that has no taste, and as such, she is useless, not fit for the land nor for the dunghill. God is going to throw her out. Then, Jesus ends with the apocalyptic warning, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem and Jerusalem would be destroyed before the end of that generation.

Hard, Efficacious Words and Soft Hearts – Jesus has a way of turning people away who are caught up in their idolatry. But His Word does not return void. This is why He can tell us about a kingdom that demands ultimate and complete loyalty and at the same time tell us that this kingdom will in fact grow to cover the whole earth. Jesus is not afraid to give the hard news because He knows His Word is efficacious.

Consider Two Examples – John Mark is considered in the traditions of the church to be the Rich Man who goes away sorry in Mark 10:17-22. If this is true, these hard words are used by Jesus who “loved him” to bring Mark later to Christ. Paul,

considered a Hebrew of the Hebrews, a zealot who approved of new Christians being put to death (Acts 8:1-3) was converted with the hard words of Jesus (Acts 9:3-5, 15-16) and counted all of his prideful, religious works “dung” (Phil 3:3-11).

Gospel Surrender – To come to Jesus is to see that there is no way out. We cannot come unless we renounce all hope in anything of ourselves, and so we must renounce everything about ourselves regarding ultimate matters. In the end, Jesus is my Savior; no one else and nothing else. And so I must follow Him all the way through the cross and the grave unto my resurrection life (Gal 2:20). We cannot rebel against Him or His Word and expect to win in the end. We have nowhere else to turn. And so we must forsake everything else and flee for refuge from Christ the Judge in Christ the Savior. This is the hard truth, but hard like a well-cut diamond. For it is a glorious truth indeed.

Dave Hatcher – September 17, 2006