

Willing to March into Hell for a Heavenly Cause

Luke 14:25-33

There's a great song called *To Dream the Impossible Dream* from a 1964 musical called *Man of La Mancha*. There's a line in the song that's the title of this message. When you read the words of Jesus in this text it sounds impossible. "Hate your father and mother, wife and children, yes even your own life" (v. 26). "Carry your cross" (v. 27). "Count the costs" (v. 28). Jesus is more interested in how we end than how we begin.

I. Anyone can come to Christ outwardly and many do.

Jesus says, "If anyone comes to Me" (v. 26). The invitation seems very open. "If anyone comes to Me." There are many reasons we initially come to Christ. Some of us need an answer for the guilt within. Others of us are in great need, and we hear that Jesus will supply all our needs according to His riches. The crowds that followed Jesus were great in our text (v. 25). But I remind you that the crowds that greeted Jesus in the streets of Jerusalem waving palm branches soon fled when they saw a cross.

II. Not all who profess Christ are truly His disciples (v. 26-27, 33)

Jesus three times in this text gives an explanation for what it takes to be His disciple. This particular word "disciple" speaks of one "who gives full loyalty and support to another." The root of the word is also the same root for the word "discipline." Jesus' disciples discipline ourselves to do what He says.

A. To be Christ's disciple I must love no one more than Jesus Christ (v. 26).

Jesus is using the word "hate" as we commonly use it. He is not telling us to *hate* our families, or ourselves. That would be a commandment to violate his Law of love. He commands us to love and honor our families, particularly our parents. He rebuked the Pharisees for using professed devotion to God as an excuse for not honoring their parents (Mark 7:6-13). What is He saying? The parallel passage in this account in Matthew Jesus says "He who loves father or mother *more than Me* or loves his son or daughter *more than Me* is not my disciple." (Matthew 10:37).

B. To be Christ's disciple I must daily die to myself and follow Christ (v. 27).

Take up your cross and follow Me, Jesus says. The cross is an instrument of death. You do what Jesus says, no matter how it makes you feel at the time. Do you remember the game Simon Says? It's really weird how many of us who say we follow Jesus, memorize what Jesus says, study what Jesus says, invite people to discuss what Jesus says, but we don't do what Jesus says for us to do.

C. To be Christ's disciple I must give up all my possessions to Him (v. 33).

As a Christian I am a steward, not an owner; a servant, not a master; a son, not the Father.

III. Those who truly follow Christ finish well (vs. 28-32).

Jesus give us two illustrations of how His true disciples "count the cost" when it comes to life itself. There is a cross to bear and a cost to count, if we would follow Christ, if we would be his disciples. Confession is cheap. Consecration is costly. Decisions are cheap. Devotion is costly. Count the costs. Our Lord's intention here is not to discourage men and women from coming to him, but make us understand that following him involves the consecration of our lives to him. Faith in Christ is not a leap in the dark. It is a reasonable, calculated devotion to Christ. That old adage, "*Haste makes waste*," is never more true than in making a profession of faith. Religion says, "Strike while the iron is hot." Christ says, "Sit down and count the cost." When disciples count the cost, all things are possible. A community can be transformed. A torn relationship can be repaired. A body of believers can do what others would say is impossible. We need disciples of Jesus Christ willing to march into

hell for a heavenly cause. Being a Christian is not publicly confessing, it is privately committing.