

Counting the Cost

By Brent Paschall – brent@brentnrachel.com

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- I. Introduction
 - a. The Tower of Babel (Gen. 1:1-9)
 - i. They wanted to “make a name” for themselves
 - ii. They had pretty big plans, but God wasn’t a part of them.
 - iii. Though it seemed like nothing could stop them (v. 6), they were unable to complete their tower
 - iv. One verse summary - (Ps. 127:1)
 - b. Gideon v. Midian (Jud. 7:7, 12, 16-22)
 - i. Gideon’s forces were hopelessly outnumbered
 - ii. No rational person would have expected them to succeed
 - iii. With God’s help, the Midianites were defeated
 - iv. One verse summary - (Rom. 8:31)
 - c. Counting the Cost (Luk. 14:25- 33)
 - i. In the business world, whenever a transaction is being considered, the wise investor asks two things
 - 1. What am I getting out of this deal?
 - 2. What is it going to cost me?
 - ii. It is the same when a person is considering becoming a Christian
 - 1. What am I going to get
 - 2. What is it going to cost me?
 - iii. Jesus said to count the cost
- II. Key Sentence: In this scripture Jesus lists three things that are requirements in order to be His disciple
 - a. Not everyone can be Jesus disciple
 - i. That is an amazing statement to make
 - ii. We usually emphasize the universal call of the gospel
 - 1. Whoever wills let him come
 - 2. It is the power of God to save Jew and Gentile alike
 - 3. God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance
 - b. Nevertheless, Jesus says there are three criteria which, if we do not meet them, we cannot be His disciple
 - c. Only those who are willing to pay the price
- III. What is the cost? Three requirements
 - a. 14:26 – Hate father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters and your own life
 - i. We must love Jesus more than these (Matt. 10:34-37). We must give Jesus preference
 - ii. If forced to choose between God and family, God will come first
 - iii. Do you love Jesus more than any other human relationship or even your own life?

- iv. If not, Jesus says, you cannot be my disciple
 - b. 14:27 – Bear the cross and follow Jesus
 - i. What does it mean to bear the cross?
 - 1. Not wearing a WWJD bracelet
 - 2. Or a “His pain, Your Gain” T-shirt
 - 3. The significance of the cross in the 1st century
 - a. The cross had only one meaning
 - b. An instrument of execution
 - c. It would be like someone wearing a miniature electric chair or noose around their neck
 - 4. The cross in our day is a piece of fashionable jewelry
 - 5. We have lost the significance of bearing the cross
 - ii. We must be willing to suffer as Christ suffered (Luk. 9:23-24)
 - iii. We must deny ourselves
 - 1. This not just denying something to ourselves, rather, it is denial of self
 - 2. We turn from being self-centered to being Christ-centered
 - iv. Do you bear your cross and follow Jesus?
 - v. If not, you cannot be His disciple
 - c. 14:33 – Forsake everything
 - i. Everything that is ours is used to glorify God
 - ii. We treat our possessions as a stewardship from God. There is nothing that we would not give up for the service of God
 - iii. Is there is anything that is more important to us than Christ?
 - iv. If there is, then Jesus says we cannot be His disciple.
- IV. What am I going to get for this cost?
 - a. Is it worth all the sacrifice? We have looked at the costs, and the price is high. What could Jesus possible offer that would be worth it?
 - b. Being a disciple of Jesus
 - i. Disciple – learner, student, follower
 - ii. If we got an advertisement in the mail saying, you too, can enroll in Virginia Tech, your admission is guaranteed if you meet three criteria
 - 1. You leave your home and family and have no further contact with them. Virginia Tech demands all of your loyalty from now on.
 - 2. You sell everything you own and give it to the school, along with any future income you might earn
 - 3. You agree to suffer or die if directed to by the University authorities
 - 4. Would you enroll?
 - 5. That would have to be a very good school, with very special teachers
 - iii. Example: Mystery item – Price tag says EVERYTHING – what is inside?
 - iv. Jesus – the Son of God

1. He says, what you get for all this sacrifice, is Me
 2. The Son of God
 3. The one who loved you in spite of your sinfulness
 4. The one who died for you and rose again
 - v. He asks nothing from us that He has not already done for us
 1. Does he ask us to love him more than our family or our life?
 - a. He left His Father's side – for us
 - b. He considered the fellowship of his disciples more valuable than that of his physical mother and brothers
 - c. He loved our eternal souls more than He loved His own life
 2. Does he ask us to bear our cross?
 - a. When we take up our crosses, we are following Him,
 - b. because He already carried the cross to Calvary
 3. Does he ask us to forsake all that we have?
 - a. If we had the whole world to give up, we could not forsake more for Jesus than He already gave up for us when, as the song says, “he left the splendors of heaven, knowing His destiny was the cold lonely hill of Golgotha, there to lay down His life for me”.
 - vi. Is fellowship with such a One, now and in eternity, worth the price? YES, Yes and again Yes!
 - c. The salvation of our souls – Mat. 16:26
 - d. Citizenship in the kingdom of God – Mat. 13:44-46
 - e. Do the benefits outweigh the costs? YES – Phil. 3:7-8
- V. Counting the Cost as a Christian
- a. In the next twelve months
 - i. Some may be abandoned or betrayed by loved ones
 - ii. Some may be subjected to great shame or suffering
 - iii. Some may lose their security, or health, or home or other precious possessions
 - iv. You may have to give up more for Jesus than you have in all the previous years of your Christian life put together
 - b. We don't know what will happen, but if we have counted the cost, we are prepared
 - i. Christ before self or others
 - ii. Suffering for Christ
 - iii. Willing to forsake all for Christ
 - iv. There is nothing for which you are not prepared
 - c. But these are very high costs
 - i. Do you really want to be Jesus' disciple?
 - ii. Even if the costs are this high?
 - d. We cannot be his disciples if we will not pay the price

- i. Because if we value our family or our life more than Jesus
 - 1. All Satan has to do to take Jesus away from us is force us to choose between a friend or a family member and God
 - 2. This happens all the time
 - 3. They could not be Jesus' disciple because they loved that person more than Jesus
 - ii. If we are unwilling to suffer for Christ
 - 1. All Satan has to do is give us a heavy cross to bear
 - 2. And we will give up Jesus
 - 3. This happens all the time
 - 4. They could not be Jesus' disciple because they loved comfort more than Jesus
 - iii. If we are unwilling to forsake everything
 - 1. All Satan has to do is force us to choose between Jesus and the thing we will not forsake
 - 2. We will drop our Savior like a hot potato
 - 3. This happens all the time
 - 4. They could not be Jesus disciple because they had not forsaken everything for him
- VI. Counting the Cost as a non-Christian
 - a. Do I have to give up on all the plans I had for my life if I become a Christian?
 - i. If those plans are sinful or wasteful of our talents, yes!
 - ii. But generally, no
 - 1. But when you become Jesus' disciple, you are no longer working for yourself or some human employer, you are working for God
 - 2. "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain that build it" – Psa. 127:1
 - 3. If God had been behind the plans at the Tower of Babel, they would have succeeded. If God is behind our plans, they will succeed
 - 4. Count the cost – Luke 14:27-30 – God is the best investment partner to have if you are building a tower or a life
 - 5. No other foundation than Christ
 - b. Aren't Jesus' demands a little bit extreme?
 - i. Life is a battle – Lk. 14:31-32 – We are either on God's side or Satan's side
 - ii. "If God is for us, who can be against us?" Rom- 8:31 – No one! With his help, we can overcome great opposition just as Gideon did
 - iii. We must meet God on His terms – Conditions of Peace with God
 - 1. His terms are unconditional surrender
 - 2. Repent of your sins
 - 3. Confess Jesus as Lord of your life

4. Be baptized to have Jesus' blood wash your sins away
5. Live the life of surrender to him and his will
- iv. Or we can ally ourselves with Satan on his terms
 1. Give up nothing
 2. Have it taken from you anyway
 3. Finally surrender your soul for living in rebellion against the God who made you
- v. We cannot remain neutral in the spiritual battle that is being waged all around us
- vi. If you give everything to God, you will find that it is more truly yours than it ever would have been. But if you try to keep it all to yourself, you will finally be left with nothing
- vii. Matthew 16:25 - For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

VII. Invitation

- a. In the text we have studied, Jesus draws the line between two kinds of disciples
 - i. Disciples of commitment
 - ii. Disciples of convenience
- b. The standard is very high
 - i. Do you pass the test? If you can pass this test of discipleship, then you can pass any test of trial, persecution, disappointment, failure, or success that holds its own challenges, temptation or other reversal that the coming year may hold for you. Because you know that the Lord is building your house, and it will not be built in vain
 - ii. If you cannot pass the test, where do you fail to measure up? Build yourself up in the most holy faith, and strengthen your commitment to the Lord who bought you with His own blood, so that you can confidently face whatever the future may bring knowing that if God is for us, who can be against us?
- c. Brothers and sisters
 - i. Get rid of any hindrance to walking with Christ
 1. Cast off your besetting sins
 2. Give up your bitterness and resentments
 3. Renounce any competing loyalties
 4. Give yourself wholly to Christ for His name's honor and glory
- d. Friend outside of Christ
 - i. Begin your walk with Christ today
 1. Fully surrender to his will
 2. Comply with his conditions of peace
 3. Deny yourself, take up your cross daily and follow Him

Preaching Record

| Date | Location |
|------------|--|
| 12/22/2008 | Blue Ridge church of Christ, Roanoke, VA |
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