

Scripture Reading:

Luke 14:25-35 “25 Now great multitudes went with Him. And [Jesus] turned and said to them, 26 'If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. 27 And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it-- 29 lest, after he has laid the 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 to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation & asks conditions of peace 33 So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. 34 'Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? 35 It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!'”

"The Cost of Discipleship"

This morning we continue our journey through the Gospel of Luke and once again I have included some notes in the order of worship that will help us understand where we have been and where we are going in Luke's orderly account. I will include this for the next few weeks as we now study various messages from Jesus

Messages that Jesus has for:

- His disciples
- For the religious leaders who are hardening their hearts against the Messiah
- And for the multitudes: Those who have followed Jesus, mostly out of a desire to “see the show”

The text in Luke tells us which of these groups Jesus is directly addressing and it is important that we remember this to learn the right lessons. For example, this morning we are discussing the cost of discipleship, but it is a message that Jesus delivers to the crowds. This is a model for how we should evangelize those who show an interest in Jesus and His Kingdom

As we go through the text this morning, we may often think it a strange way to approach someone not yet born again, but this is how Jesus approached them... And so should we!

In verse twenty-five we clearly see that Jesus is addressing the crowd:

“25 Now great multitudes went with Him. And [Jesus] turned and said to them...”

What Jesus now says is not aimed directly at His disciples, but to these crowds that are following Him... Now we must remember that Jesus has taught many things in the presence of these same people, so this is not an opening line, but Jesus does point out very clearly that they must be serious about following Him if that is their desire...

- **They must count the cost and Jesus begins with a statement that clearly shows how high that cost really is!**
- **Jesus does not soft-pedal the Good News or make it seeker-friendly and neither should we!**

Jesus says in verse 26, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." It is interesting that we come to this portion of Luke on a Sunday when we have both a baptism and a signing of our membership covenant:

We all saw those adoring parents bring little Mitchell this morning and now if he is going to be faithful to his baptism, Jesus says he will have to hate those same parents... Ken and Carol have enjoyed many years of marriage, but Jesus says that to be His disciples they must hate each other.

Obviously, many have tried to find ways to explain what these verses mean and often they simply end up ignoring what Jesus said or watering it down to where it is not relevant...

- **I think we can all agree that it is not a good idea to ignore something that Jesus said, especially when it involves being His disciples!**
- **However, if we argue that this passage simply means we must love Jesus more than we love a parent or spouse, this can be just as bad because again we miss the point of what Jesus is saying...**
- **And remember, Jesus is saying this to those He is inviting to be His disciples!**

So what is Jesus saying? The word hate is a strong word and one we see used often in the Bible. In Psalm 5 we hear the Psalmist proclaim, "4 For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness, Nor shall evil dwell with You. 5 The boastful shall not stand in Your sight; You hate all workers of iniquity."

- **The Lord hates all workers of iniquity...**

Again we read in Psalm 45: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. 7 You love righteousness and hate wickedness"

And again we see in Psalm 101 that we are to have the same attitude, "I will sing of mercy and justice; To You, O Jehovah, I will sing praises. 2 I will behave wisely in a perfect way. Oh, when will You come to me? I will walk within my house with a

perfect heart. 3 I will set nothing wicked before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not cling to me.”

And finally, we see in Hebrews chapter one that this principle applies to Jesus as well, “But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. 9 You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness”

- OK, so we are to hate wickedness just as God does, but why does Jesus say we must hate mother & father, or wife & children?
- Again the answer takes us back to the Book of Beginnings as do all things important!

When Adam sinned it not only destroyed his relationship with God, leading to his death, but his disobedience ruined all of mankind.

- The secular humanists of our day and even some inside the church want to highlight the importance of man’s choice or man’s free-will

Here in Genesis we see how significant real choice can be... OF course believing all men & women are born dead in trespasses and sins because of Adam’s bad choice is not what they had in mind...

The folks within the church who want us to be able to “choose” God are quick to say that the doctrine of original sin is not fair... even though it is the result of a man’s free-will choice!

BUT this is the state of all men, even the cute little ones like Mitchell!

Paul summarizes all of the Old Testament references to man’s sinful state in Romans chapter three: “For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. 10 As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; 11 There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. 12 They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one." 13 "Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit"; "The poison of asps is under their lips"; 14 "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." 15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood; 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways; 17 And the way of peace they have not known." 18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes.'”

Paul removes all doubt that this condition applies to ALL including Christians when he says in Romans chapter seven, “14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.” Paul goes on to describe this conflict and then asks an important question and immediately gives the right answer!

“24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 I thank God--through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

- Jesus draws the same conclusion here in Luke as He reaches out to the multitudes
- Jesus says we must hate sin, all sin, including the sin nature that clings to all mankind, our fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, spouses and children... AND US!

BUT then Jesus says:

“27 And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”

- Yes man is born under sin, but we are learning from the Gospel of Luke that Jesus has come to save His people from their sins.

The cross of Christ is where the penalty of our sin was paid and it is that cross that we must bear if we are to be the disciples of Christ. Anyone who clings to their own sin, failing to hate what God hates, cannot be the disciple of Jesus... As Jesus explains in John's Gospel, we must be born again. When we become born again, we are born into a new family... Freed from the sin of Adam and brought into new life in Jesus

Jesus explains the new family in Matthew 12, “46 While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him. 47 Then one said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You." 48 But He answered and said to the one who told Him, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" 49 And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! 50 For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.”

- So yes, we must hate, brother and sister, mother and father, husband, wife or children as those born under Adam's curse
- BUT in Christ we are all brothers and sisters in the new family and the new creation.

This is also why we must be honest about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus, telling those who would follow Jesus that they must hate their sin nature and their sins, taking them ONLY to the cross of Christ!

- It is a VERY great cost, but it is a cost that was born by Jesus!

As Jesus declares in Matthew's Gospel, “11: 28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

- If someone desires to have eternal life, they must trust Jesus to accomplish ALL the work of salvation from beginning to end!

- Otherwise the task is overwhelming as the examples that Jesus now gives are to demonstrate:

28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it-- 29 lest, after he has laid the 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.'

- Those of us who live here in Sacramento certainly have a great example of this downtown...

Remember those towers? The TWO condominium towers that were to run 56 stories advertised with gusto. The old building was cleared, the foundation begun, and then the money ran out... This developer and the city council that supported him, are subject to ridicule and much mocking!

The important thing to remember here, is that Jesus is applying this principle to salvation, so it would be like one of our young men setting out with his box of Legos planning to finish those towers or some other picture of something beyond the possibility of finishing.

The second example drives home the same point if we think that we can defeat Satan in our own strength...

31 “Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation & asks conditions of peace.”

Of course we know that Satan can offer no peace that we would want! Unfortunately we have far too many examples around us today of people who have tried such compromises in the hopes of finding peace.

Jesus confirms that this is what the examples are intended to teach when He says in verse 33:

- “So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.”
- We must look to Jesus and Jesus alone – NOT our self, not our family, not to experts, not even to the church, but to Jesus!

Anyone who thinks they can bring anything to the table or play any part in their salvation has not forsaken all, as Paul tells the Ephesians, even the faith we are given is a gift of God so there is no human boasting!

- Jesus confronts these potential followers with some pretty straightforward talk!

He is demonstrating to us what it means to be salt in the proper Biblical sense: Jesus says in verse 34 "Salt is good"

- **Yes salt brings much needed flavor to tasteless foods and acts as a preservative to food that would rot if it was not present.**

BUT to do its job it must be salty, having the strong flavor of salt. Such is the case with the Gospel: The Good News brings new life to those who are lost, it preserves those who would otherwise spend an eternity in hell paying for their sins

To serve this purpose, what we present must be the true Gospel and not a watered down Jesus who is presented as just another option for having a happy life...

- **That is a false Gospel: Salt that has lost its savor**

As Jesus warns, "but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? 35 It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out."

- **A Gospel that does not have the Cross at the center is as worthless as salt that has no taste!**

And finally, Jesus then reminds the multitudes and us that it is important to listen to what He is teaching: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

We are to present the true Gospel and trust that God the Holy Spirit will open the ears of those who are listening. IF He does not, nothing that we can add or subtract will make any difference. This is also part of the warnings or judgments that Jesus has begun to pronounce against the nation of Israel who these people in the crowds were a part of, carrying in their flesh, God's covenant sign of circumcision!

They were to be the salt of the earth, those who would be a blessing to the nations of the earth as promised to Abraham...

- **Jesus is warning them to not be among those who have lost their saltiness and will face judgment in AD 70, being trampled underfoot by the Romans.**

Jesus said, I am the way the truth and the light, no one comes to the Father except through Me!

I am sure that many in these crowds who Jesus told to count the cost, were also present in Jerusalem weeks later when the Holy Spirit was poured out and Peter preached the Gospel with power, convicting those who were present causing them to cry out, "men and brethren what shall we do" to which Peter answers "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

The promise is to them, their children and all those whom God will call!

In closing I want to return to the words that Mike spoke to little Mitchell after he was baptized this morning because of that promise: Words that remind us that little Mitchell is totally dependent on God for his salvation, as are his parents and as all of us gathered here today in Christ's name:

- **And yes, as are those whom God calls to respond to our preaching of the Gospel:**

“Little Child, for you Jesus Christ has come, He has fought, He has suffered. For you, He entered into the shadows of Gethsemane and the terror of Calvary; for you He uttered the cry ‘it is finished.’ For you He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, and there for you He intercedes. For you, even though you do not yet know it, little child, but in this way the Word of the Gospel is made true, where it says, ‘We love Him because He first loved us!’”

Communion Meditation:

Psalm 4:5 "Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, And put your trust in the Lord.

6 There are many who say,

"Who will show us any good?" Lord, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us.

7 You have put gladness in my heart, More than in the season that their grain and wine increased. 8 I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; For You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety."