

Introduction to the Costs and Benefits series.

- 8 weeks going through each of the Beatitudes one by one.
- Matthew 4:23 and Matt. 9:35 are two passages that, almost verbatim summarize Jesus' earthly ministry. → Sandwiched between these two summaries are chapters 5,6, 7 – which is the Sermon on the Mount and chapters 8 and 9 which are a collection of stories primarily describing Jesus' healing ministry.
- In Matthew 5 as the sermon on the mount begins, Jesus climbs a hill, his disciples follow and they sit together. So though the crowds are present and listening to Jesus, there is a disconnect. His disciples are separated from the crowds. Jesus addresses them as disciples within earshot of the crowds and is intentionally making a distinction between the two circles.
- Let me mention here that this is the way Sunday services at West London are conceived. Primarily the word is prepared to feed and strengthen and inspire the worship and lives of God's people. But we pray that more and more there will be the curious, the onlookers, the skeptical, the searchers, the doubters who come to WLA the way the crowds gathered in behind the disciples on the mount. We believe that the Spirit-anointed, authoritative preaching of the Word of God has a peculiar power to awaken unbelievers to the truth and beauty of Christ—even when it is addressed primarily to disciples.

Why the distinction? What separated the disciples from the crowd?

Luke 14:25-33

***<sup>25</sup> Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, <sup>26</sup> "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. <sup>27</sup> Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. <sup>28</sup> For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? <sup>29</sup> Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, <sup>30</sup> saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' <sup>31</sup> Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup> And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. <sup>33</sup> So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.***

- Note “hate” in this context means to be skipped over, to be less loved or to be left aside when something else is chosen.
- The two metaphors are a call to “count the cost” of what it means to truly follow Jesus.
- These are haunting words from Jesus.

What is Luke 14:25-33 telling us?

**Some come to Jesus, but fail to become disciples.**

- Just like the crowds who overheard this teaching from Jesus to his disciples, there are those who come to hear, but fail to take up the challenge.
- They are never more than someone in the crowd, never more than an onlooker.

**There is a daily cost to discipleship.**

- Jesus makes a distinction that a disciple takes up his cross daily... or bears the burden daily, or to simplify the language... focuses on their role as a disciple daily.
- The cost is the focal point of both stories: before you build, before you go to war you size it up. Is the task too great for you? Can you do it? Do you have what it takes? Will you pay the cost?
- The cost is described as the cross... it is identifying the mark of true discipleship as bearing a cross. What did Jesus face when he bore his cross? Shame? Mockery? Physical, emotional and spiritual pain.

Some definitions:

**Cheap Grace** → Cheap grace is grace without price; grace without cost! The essence of grace, we suppose, is that the account has been paid in advance and, because it has been paid, everything can be had for nothing. Since the cost was infinite, the possibilities of using and spending it are infinite.

Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.

**Costly Grace** → Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field for the sake of which a man will gladly go and sell all that he has. It is the pearl of great price to buy which the merchant will sell all his goods. It is the kingly rule of Christ, for whose sake a man will pluck out the eye which causes him to stumble, it is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows him.

Costly grace is the gospel which must be sought again and again, the gift which must be asked for, the door at which a man must knock.

Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is costly because it cost God the life of his Son: "you were bought at a price," and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us.

What does it mean to be a disciple?

Definition: a person who is a pupil or an adherent of the doctrines and teachings of another.

**A Haunting Truth: We are all a disciple of someone or something. [we are all worshipping something]**

- The truth is we are all adhering to the doctrines of something/someone.
- There is something we are chasing after, something we think is worth pursuing with every fibre of our being:
- SUCCESS – WEALTH – HEALTH – RELATIONSHIP – FASHION – ATHLETICS – BEING LIKED – BEING RESPECTED – AN IDOL OR ICON – AN IDEA, CAREER OR POSITION
- *I would argue that whatever it is in your life you are willing to give up the most for... you are a disciple of.*

**The BIG Idea:**

**What we are willing to sacrifice in order to obtain something, demonstrates its value to us.**

*The measure of our sacrifice is the measure of our love...*

- Jesus is described as the pearl or the great treasure which is worth selling everything in order to obtain.

**MATTHEW 13:44-46**

**“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.**

**<sup>45</sup> “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, <sup>46</sup> who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.**

- The disciples literally left everything, their lives, their families, their careers, their own aspirations, their own desires in order to receive the grace and the life Jesus promised.
- There is a GREAT cost to being a disciple, BUT like most things that cost a great deal... there is an even greater return.
- Jesus is INFINATELY more valuable than anything we have to give up in order to follow him.
- There is cost, but there is great benefit as well.
- Mother Teresa: there is no worship without sacrifice.