

Intro.

- Thrilled that you are doing a series focusing on discipleship.
- The heart of a disciple is a teachable spirit.
 - Want to say that at start because I believe disciples are made, formed and moulded and if we are to be faithful disciples of Jesus then we need to have a teachable attitude.
 - I believe that is what Jesus looked for in his disciples
 - To be disciples of Christ involves being made into apprentices
 - It implies a process but a process that we need to go into intentionally and not just drifting into. This is where Jesus begins in verse 25.

Jesus is clear to the multitude

**25. Now great multitudes were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them,
26. "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.**

27. "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

- I want us to understand the context here. Jesus is being followed by many.
- Jesus was not interested in followers but disciples.
 - Any of you on TWITTER? On twitter, people who receive your tweets (updates) "follow" you. I like that term because in our modern language – following often means nothing – keep me updated and implies a very low degree of commitment. (a friend of mine has 38,000 followers on twitter)
 - The fact is that for a lot of Christians today that is how we go about "following" Jesus – we want an update (even a daily verse!!!) but do so without a commitment to the cost and implementation of the teaching of Jesus in our day to day lives,
 - Jesus Here goes out of his way to warn those who were coming to him that he required something extremely costly from them. Not a payment but rather total surrender to him.
 - **Jesus** doesn't want them to in any way mistake what he is saying and so he makes it absolutely clear, making the case in the strongest terms. He says it in fact in an unreasonable way
 - **He talks in verse 26 and 27 of hating your own family and indeed your own life.**
 - The implication is clear that coming to Jesus and following him requires a commitment to him that supersedes all else in its scope and magnitude.
 - Jesus does not call us to hate **but is making a comparison**. Mathew 10 sheds light on this aspect

Matt 10 v37-38

37. "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

38. "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

- Luke 9 57 -62 shows us this in more detail. People coming to Jesus saying they will follow him and Jesus reminding them of what it is that they are saying that they will do

LUKE 9:57-62

57. And as they were going along the road, someone said to Him, "I will follow You wherever You go."

58. And Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

59. And He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Permit me first to go and bury my father."

60. But He said to him, "Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God."

61. And another also said, "I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home."

62. But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

- Jesus here warns of the implications of following him- what that commitment involves.
- V58 lack of comfort – no longer prioritising self
- V59 -60: a new perspective on the things that are most important. A change of priorities - Obedience to Christ contrasted with obligations to others
- V61 and 62 a new sense of urgency.

Back to Luke 14

- By using the word hate Jesus is emphasising that in relation to Following him, other things have to come a close second
- *Personal example*. Going into full time ministry with YWAM rather than working in city and making cash-family pressures and disappointing their expectations.

- I think this also has huge implications for the way that we present the Gospel to others, can't soft soap it.

This is all about Following Jesus

V27 The fact is that we are to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

- Doesn't mean embracing difficulty for the sake of it.
- But rather OBEDIENCE in following Jesus.
- Want us to realise that God has given us an example of what this looks like. Taking up one's cross is the RESPONSE TO JESUS being willing to go to the cross.
- It is a response to what Jesus has already done.
- It is enabled not merely by human will and endeavour but it is empowered by Grace through what Jesus has already done.

Hebrews 4:15-16

15. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

16. Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.

- Want to emphasise that for us as Christians to take up our cross involves following in the footsteps of Jesus and being empowered by the Grace that we have because of what he has done
- Approaching the throne of Grace to find mercy and grace in our need.
- We can't do this without God's empowering grace.

Count the Cost

Luke 14:28-33

28. "For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it?"

29. "Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'

31. "Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and take counsel whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand?"

32. "Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks terms of peace.

33. "So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.

- After making us aware of what following Jesus really is. The passage is clear that **we need to count the cost** of following Him.
- I like the fact that Jesus gives a clear example of what he is talking about. Doesn't want them to be in any doubt. Wants them to survey what that means.
- Jesus uses the example of building a tower – do you have the resources to complete it. In other words don't go into this in a half-hearted way. This will demand everything from you
- This is actually quite similar to marriage. One of the great joys I have is to do pre-marriage prep. Preparing people for entering in to a lifelong covenant that requires their all
 - Always begin first session by asking them what they think the commitment that they are making is all about? It tells me lots about how ready they are for marriage.
 - I like to emphasise that wedding vows are real that. VOWS. Not hopeful statements, not good intentions but VOWS- PROMISES. Don't make them unless you intend to keep them. Can you keep them??? Count the cost in a wedding we say "forsaking all others....."
 - That is the kind of cost counting also involved in following Jesus. It's what this passage is explicit on. Following Jesus requires that kind of commitment from us.
 - Likewise one of the saddest things I have to do is pick up the pieces around divorce, and typically you hear stuff like a marriage should be 50-50. You know then that the person has a wrong attitude. Marriage is giving 100% even when it feels like the other side isn't playing ball.
 - Many Christians become disillusioned because they have a 50% attitude to following Jesus.
 - It will cost you everything. Are we willing.
- Likewise the example of a king going to war..... Implication is that one cannot remain neutral. Need to decide on our response to Jesus.
- Pig and chicken going for breakfast. They see a sign that says Bacon and Eggs £3.50. Chicken says "I'm sure I'm involved with that breakfast." The pig looks at him, kind of annoyed and says "yeah but with me it's a total commitment."
 - Let's not be "kinda" involved in following Jesus, Let's be totally committed.
 - Interesting that he says CANNOT be my disciple and not will find it hard..... a warning here

So what does this look like practically?

33. "So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.

34. "Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned?"

35. "It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

- The implications of this are HUGE.

- Counting the cost means that we are aware that following Jesus requires not our best efforts but our all.
- V33 speaks of our possessions being no longer our own.
- That's quite an ask in a materialist culture. I think the big thing is to have a heart that is prepared to pay the cost.
 - Someone once said that when it comes to possessions- God isn't so much interested in what you have as much as what has you.
 - What does have you heart.
- Counting the cost means that we are aware our motivation in life needs to be different.

John 3 :28-30

28. "You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.'

29. "He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. And so this joy of mine has been made full.

30. "He must increase, but I must decrease.

 - I am constantly aware and challenged by the words of John the Baptist in John 3 v30 .
 - He got it. That for Jesus to increase it required him to decrease.
 - How about you and I
- **Counting the cost also means that we need to taste salty.**
 - Jesus speaks here of salt. Salt preserves and also it has a distinct flavour.
 - Salt that is no longer salty is useless.
 - Implications for us being distinctly different in our culture.
 - Bangladeshi Pastor attacked and badly beaten for handing out tracts. For being salty.
 - What about you and i. There is (and will increasingly be) a cost to pay for being committed to faithful proclamation of Christian truth in a culture that sees it as Judgemental outdated and bigoted.
 - As another major Evangelical Christian leader this month decided to abandon traditional and authentic teaching on sexuality , largely because of a pressure to conform to the culture we live in. Want to ask you? Are you prepared to pay the cost of proclaiming a Gospel that our culture finds offensive?
 - Counting the cost means being ready to give ourselves wholeheartedly to the cause of the Gospel of Jesus.
 - It means preaching a Gospel that calls sinners to repentance.
 - It means not preaching a watered down Gospel that produces defective disciples because we substitute popularity for authenticity,
 - It means becoming Less so that Jesus can be More

Questions for homegroups

- **Jesus was clear with people about the cost when they followed him How do we present that in evangelism? Do we have a tendency to minimise that to "get someone to make a commitment".**
- **It's interesting to see that Jesus uses Family relationships in both Luke 9 (57-62) and Luke 14. How do we go about getting a good balance in counting the cost of following Jesus but also being faithful with family responsibilities?**
- **What are some of those things that we most struggle with in terms of leaning to surrender to God?**
- **How do we go about trying to keep grace at the centre of counting the cost so that we don't just get into legalistic striving?**
- **How do we go about making sure that we don't cave in to the pressure of making our doctrine more "acceptable " to the world we live in?**