

## Counting the Cost

Franklin Church of Christ  
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### Introduction:

A friend once told me about a store he had been in. I don't remember the kind of store or the product at which he was looking. I just remember what happened when he asked about one of the items that had no price tag. The shopkeeper responded, "If you have to ask, you can't afford it." The response had a two-fold meaning. First, if you were concerned enough about your finances that you had to ask how much the item was before choosing to buy it, you wouldn't be able to afford it. Second, if you had to know how much it cost before determining whether you wanted it, you didn't want it enough to pay the price.

Lots of people have a romantic notion about discipleship, like seeing that classic convertible on the side of the road and dreaming about how neat it will be to drive with the top down. But when they call the number on the sign and find out how much it costs they decide it is just too much. **Luke 14:28-32** describes the importance of counting the cost. We need to be like a person who is building a tower or facing an enemy army. We need to consider the cost and whether we are ready to pay the price. If not, we need to just walk out of the store.

### Discussion:

#### I. What are we buying?

- A. *A relationship with Jesus:* In **Philippians 3:8**, Paul said he was giving up everything in order to attain the surpassing value of knowing Jesus. Discipleship is, at the heart, having the closest possible relationship with a great teacher. Our modern form of schooling doesn't highlight the concept of discipleship very much, but Jesus walked the earth when teachers like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle would set up shop in the cities to gain followings. If you impressed the teacher enough you got to become part of his close entourage. You became his disciple. Part of his glory and reputation was passed on to you. How much greater it is to be able to claim you have that relationship with the master teacher of all time, Jesus Christ.
- B. *Forgiveness:* In **Matthew 26:28**, Jesus said His blood was poured out to offer forgiveness. How awesome is this? What sins have you committed? Have you lusted, lied, cheated, stolen, committed sexual immorality, coveted, been drunk, got high, gossiped, slandered, raged, exploded with anger, committed murder, taken advantage of others, extorted, committed homosexuality or gone after idols? It doesn't matter. Those who become Jesus' disciples are cleansed, sanctified and justified (**1 Corinthians 6:9-11**).
- C. *Freedom from sin:* Not only are we forgiven but we are given strength to overcome our sins. **Romans 7:15-24** demonstrates the problem we face outside of Christ. We have given our lives over to sin and it is destroying us. Who will deliver us? **Romans 7:25** gives the answer—Jesus Christ our Lord.
- D. *Eternal life in heaven:* **1 Peter 1:3-5** says a home in heaven awaits us and is reserved for us through faith if we have been born again. Paul had said the reason he wanted to know Jesus was to attain the resurrection of the dead (**Philippians 3:8-11**). What a blessing.
- E. I am going to answer the "what does it cost" question, but in reality we need to recognize if we look at this list of what we are buying and we want to know what it will cost before we make our decision, I'm warning you that it costs too much. If you are not already saying, "Whatever is on the list of costs, I don't care, I want these," when I start listing the cost, you aren't going to be willing to pay it.

#### II. How much does it cost?

- A. *Everything:* **Matthew 13:44-45** says the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure or a pearl worth so much that the men who found them sold everything they had to buy them. Regrettably, it is easy to say, "Everything," sing the invitation song and go home happy but in reality give nothing up because we don't think about what that specifically includes. Let's dig a little deeper. First, let me share a story that illustrates the parable of the pearl of great price. Then we will get specific. I found the story in Brent Hunter's **Personal Work 101**. He attributes it to a book called **Disciple** by Juan Carlos Ortiz.

“I want this pearl, how much is it?”  
 “Well,” the seller says, “it’s very expensive.”  
 “But, how much?” we ask.  
 “Well, a very large amount.”  
 “Do you think I could afford to buy it?”  
 “Oh, of course, everyone can buy it.”  
 “But, didn’t you say it was very expensive?”  
 “Yes.”  
 “Well, how much is it?”  
 “Everything you have,” says the seller.  
 We make up our minds, “All right, I’ll buy it,” we say.  
 “Well, what do you have?” he wants to know. “Let’s write it down.”  
 “Well, I have ten thousand dollars in the bank.”  
 “Good, ten thousand dollars. What else?”  
 “That’s all. That’s all I have.”  
 “Nothing more?”  
 “Well, I have a few dollars in my pocket.”  
 “How much?”  
 We start digging. “Well, let’s see: thirty, forty, sixty, eighty, a hundred, a hundred-twenty dollars.”  
 “That’s fine. What else do you have?”  
 “Well nothing. That’s all.”  
 “Where do you live?” He’s still probing.  
 “In my house. Yes, I have a house.”  
 “The house, too, then.” He writes that down.  
 “You mean I have to live in my camper?”  
 “You have a camper? That too. What else?”  
 “I’ll have to sleep in my car.”  
 “You have a car?”  
 “Two of them.”  
 “Both become mine, both cars. What else?”  
 “Well, you already have my money, my house, my camper, my cars. What more do you want?”  
 “Are you all alone in the world?”  
 “No, I have a wife and two children...”  
 “Oh, yes, your wife and children, too. What else?”  
 “I have nothing else, I am left alone now.”  
 Suddenly the seller exclaims, “Oh, I almost forgot. You, yourself, too. Everything becomes mine—wife, children, house, money, cars, and you, too.”  
 Then he goes on. “Now listen, I will allow you to use all these things for the time being. But don’t forget that they are mine, just as you are. And whenever I need any of them you must give them up, because (now) I am the owner.”

- B. *It costs our pride:* **Matthew 5:3** says blessed are the poor in spirit. If we are lifted up in spirit, we will not look to Jesus enough to be His disciples.
- C. *It costs our self-rule:* **Galatians 2:20** says I must crucify myself and allow Jesus to rule my life.
- D. *It costs our self-reliance:* **Romans 7:15-25** shows what happens when we rely on ourselves to overcome sin. We must rely on Jesus to deliver us.
- E. *It costs our fleshly passions:* **Galatians 5:24** says we must crucify our flesh with its passions. **Vss. 19-21** lists some of those passions. Our drinking, our gambling, our lusting, our gluttony, our procrastination, our laziness—all this must be given away.
- F. *It costs our resources:* **I Timothy 6:9-10, 17-19** demonstrates if we have material goods we are not to put our hope in them, but use them to serve God and others. They are no longer our own.
- G. *It costs our friends:* **I Peter 4:4** says the friends who are not willing to sell all for the great treasure will malign us. They will abandon us, all the while claiming we have abandoned them.
- H. *It costs our families:* **Matthew 10:35-37** says we must love Jesus more than we love our family if we will be His disciples.
- I. *It costs our personal goals:* **Philippians 3:3-7** demonstrates Paul’s sacrifice. He gave up his personal goals as a Pharisee among the Jews and all that went along with it, a seat on the Council, influence, prestige, money in order to gain Christ.
- J. *It costs our prejudices:* **Galatians 3:28-29** says we are all one in Christ Jesus no matter our race, gender or class. If we show partiality to white people, middle class people, southern

people, American people, people who dress like us, talk like us and act like us, then we are sinning and condemned as transgressors (**James 2:9**).

- K. *It costs our time:* **Matthew 6:33** says we must seek first the kingdom of God. Seeking takes time. We have enough time to do anything we want, but not everything we want. If we are going to seek the kingdom of God, we are going to be spending time we could have been doing other things.
- L. *It costs our leisure:* **Hebrews 4:8-11** says when we enter Christ, we haven't entered our rest. The rest comes when we get to heaven. No doubt God provides us with time for rest and rejuvenation. But the general rule is work for the Lord. If we are not willing to work, then we are not disciples.
- M. *It costs our independence:* As Americans we like to tell everyone else they have no business in our business. **Hebrews 10:24** says different. Our brethren do have business in our business. They are to push us, challenge us, rebuke us, provoke us, stir us up.
- N. *It costs our privacy:* **James 5:16** says we need to confess to one another. I am not saying we have to air all our dirty laundry to everybody. However, I am telling you if you want to overcome sin and be Jesus' disciple, you are going to have to start talking to others and getting help with your weaknesses.
- O. *It costs our eyes and hands:* **Matthew 5:29-30** says if our eyes or hands get in the way, we need to get rid of them. Obviously, this is not really about eyes and hands. But it is about getting rid of anything that gets in the way of our discipleship no matter how bad it hurts.
- P. Go back to the parable of the treasure in **Matthew 13:44**. Notice it says that the person was willing to sell all he had for joy over the treasure. When we understand the treasure Jesus is offering, it will be a joy to pay these costs.

### III. What is the cost of not buying?

- A. Having heard the cost, you may be thinking about not buying. But let's think about the alternatives. First, the benefits to not buying. If you don't buy the discipleship, you get to keep all your money and use it however you want. You get to do whatever you want and tell everyone else it is none of their business. You get to go where you want, do what you want, watch what you want, drink what you want, eat what you want, sleep with what you want. You get to be lazy if you want. You get to party if you want. You get to use your family and friends however you want. You get to be angry when you want, bitter when you want, hypocritical when you want. You can surf whatever you want on the internet. You get to control you and no one will be able to say a thing about it. There will be lots of pleasures along the way. But how long will that last? 50 years? 80 years? 100 years? Then what?
- B. The story of the rich man and Lazarus in **Luke 16:19-31** tells us the cost of not being a disciple. For a few years, you may live on top of the world. However, for eternity, the cost is overwhelming. Whatever conflict may be going on in your mind, let me assure you, the cost of hell is not worth whatever fun you will have getting there. However, heaven is worth the costs you must pay to get there.

### Conclusion:

**Matthew 16:24-26** explains we must take up our crosses if we wish to follow Him. To some of us, that seems a bit extreme. The question we have to ask, though, is what is our soul really worth? Only you can answer that question. You will have eternity to rejoice that you gave it all up for heaven or you will have eternity to mourn that you gave heaven up for something else. The choice is yours.