

THE BIG IDEA: Counting the cost helps us pay the price.**The Take-Off**

I remember preaching at a youth revival once and giving the altar call when I was done

(For those of you who didn't grow up in church, the altar call isn't actually a call for an altar as much as it's a call for people to respond at an altar - but ending a service with a "people call" doesn't sound right so someone decided to go with "altar call")

Anyway, when I called people to respond to Jesus, nearly 100% of them stood.

I don't know how you would have reacted to that, but I told them all to sit back down and tried to very carefully and clearly explain the cost of what I was calling them to.

That is very similar to what we see Jesus doing in our section of Luke this morning.

2 things are growing at the same time for Jesus - His popularity with people and His tension with religious leaders. Isn't that the way it usually is? The more focused we get on our goals, the more extreme the reactions are of those around us.

If you go all in on a diet, the people around you will be divided into people who applaud and people who eat junk RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU!!!!

If you go all in on a budget, the people around you will be divided into people who support you and people who KEEP ASKING YOU TO GO OUT TO EAT!!!!

In all seriousness, Jesus has made a very pivotal move in His ministry and is moving toward the death for which He came, and that focus is going to start to cause that division in the people around Him: some will applaud and go with Him and others will turn on Him and try to kill Him.

Over the last 11 verses of Luke 14, we find Jesus trying to help His followers understand that tension because it will affect them if they continue to walk with Him on His mission.

In short, Jesus asks them to count the cost of discipleship for one very simple reason: **counting the cost helps us pay the price.**

That's your Big Idea: **counting the cost helps us pay the price**, and Jesus pointed out 3 very specific things that can challenge our commitment.

Let's take a look at them so that we'll be prepared to pay the price.

1. Don't let the crowd change your commitment

- a. **Luke 14:25-26**
- b. The pressure of the crowd is real - in fact, most of the important things you've done in your life - good or bad - came with the encouragement of the crowd.
- c. Sometimes we see crowds as either good or bad, but Jesus didn't.
- d. He knew that crowds would grow and shrink, come and go
- e. He just wanted to make sure His followers knew that they couldn't allow the size or excitement of the crowd effect their commitment to the mission.
- f. Jesus didn't blast the large crowds that followed Him; instead, He tried to make sure that the crowds were following Him with their eyes wide open.
- g. Jesus wasn't a "bait and switch" guy
- h. He warned the crowd that following Him just because the crowd was would ultimately end badly
- i. Here are just a few of the warnings about crowds leading us away from our commitment to Jesus:
 - **Exodus 23:2** / don't follow the crowd in evil
 - **1 Samuel 8:19-20** / they wanted a king so they could be like all the other nations
 - **1 Corinthians 15:33** / the way to kill good morals is by surrounding yourself with people who don't agree with them
- j. As disciples of Jesus, we need to get to the place where Joshua was when he said the words found in **Joshua 24:15** to the crowd he was with / "Choose for yourselves ... but as for me ..."

2. Don't let the cross change your commitment

- a. **Luke 14:27-33**
- b. It was common practice for those being crucified to carry their cross to the place of execution

- c. There's no way around it: Jesus was calling his disciples to the cross to die
- d. He could do that because He knew that was part of the mission, and that there was no other way to accomplish the search and rescue of lost souls
- e. It was the salvation of souls that fueled Jesus to and through the cross
- f. **Hebrews 12:2**
- g. Look past the pain and see the gain!
- h. This is huge, because if we keep looking back to what seemed less costly and more comfortable, we'll be distracted, unfit workers
- i. **Luke 9:62** / being distracted is worse than not even starting in the first place
- j. Knowing it will cost everything doesn't make it easier (even Jesus asked if there was another way), but **counting the cost helps us pay the price** because we understand the value of what we're paying for

3. Don't let the culture change your commitment

- a. **Luke 14:34-35**
- b. Jesus ends this teaching by talking about salt, and that makes us scratch our heads, but His listeners would have understood His point immediately
- c. We hear salt and think about table salt, but the crowd with Jesus would have heard salt and thought about the Dead Sea
- d. Salt in the Dead Sea would lose its flavor because it was surrounded by other chemical elements in the water such as bromine and magnesium
- e. The presence of other chemicals around salt would dilute the effectiveness of the salt
- f. Part of our calling is to be salt - to add flavor to the things around us
 - **Romans 12:2** / transform, don't conform
 - **1 Peter 1:14-16** / leave your past in the past
- g. Either we're salt that flavors or salt that doesn't, and Jesus is clear which of those has value
- h. Too often we allow the culture around us to change our commitment to the lost, but Jesus is clear that we are to be steadfast no matter what the culture does around us
- i. **We're called to be salt even when others are salty**
- j. **[VIDEO / Girl dancing in children's choir]**
- k. **Changing the culture starts with not allowing culture to change us**
- l. That girl was going to dance no matter what those other kids were doing!
- m. We're called to follow Jesus like that!

The Landing

This morning, I want to call you, as Jesus did, to the mission:

It will cost you everything, but never forget this: **a gospel that costs everything is worth everything.**

The crowds, the cross and the culture may cause you to shrink back, but those who follow Jesus will not allow those things to change their commitment to the mission.

If that's you, I want you to stand, place your hand on your heart, and receive these words that Paul wrote to another warrior on the rescue mission:

2 Timothy 1:3-9

Yes, there is a price to pay for this mission, but we know it and are willing to pay it.

Hebrews 10:39 / we do not shrink back, but press forward, and **counting the cost helps us pay the price.**

Let's pray and thank God for the strength He has given us to follow Jesus no matter what.