

Sunday School Lesson for the Month of February 2021

The High Cost of Commitment

(Luke 14:25-35)

(Sunday, February 7, 2021)

Numerous motivations prompt commitment. People are committed to many different kinds of movements. The list of worthy causes is long.

At the time of Christ, however, there was often one motivation for commitment: life or death. In Palestine, the Jews were feeling the grinding pressure of the Roman Empire. They had lost their pride as a nation, a people “chosen of God.” Consequently, they were always looking for a leader to be committed to, one who would rescue them from their national dilemma.

Many would-be-messiahs and saviors came and gathered their disciples around them. But sooner or later, they were discovered to be weak pretenders or even psychotic madmen. Disillusioned, the people recovered but still waited for some leader who would give them hope. **Then Jesus came!** Never had the people experienced anyone like Him. He was no so-called Messiah. He was the essence of Kindness and humility, He spoke quietly, yet his words pierced the heart.

This month, we are going to study two brief parabolic illustrations Jesus gave. These eleven verses easily fall into three sections.

(Sunday, February 14, 2021)

I. The Setting (vs. 25-27)

- A. The time was the last days of our Lord’s earthly ministry. It may have been the week end before His crucifixion. He had been invited to a meal in the home of a Pharisee somewhere in the vicinity of Jerusalem, where He had healed a man on the Sabbath, and there was hostility from the Pharisees. He explained His actions with the illustration of the OX or donkey that had fallen into a pit on the Sabbath. The implication was that human needs were far more important than the life of an animal.
- B. Jesus confronted his audience with their snobbery. He did so by relating the parable of the great supper, in which the Master of the house had

instructed His servants to go into “streets and alleys” and invite “the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame” into His banquet room (vs. 21).

- C. Jesus declared for the first time the terms of discipleship (vs. 25). His words had a win now effect and many of the people left. He made this declaration after he left the Pharisee’s house and while he was traveling and speaking to large crowds.
- D. A phrase Jesus spoke three times during this brief address to the people is significant: “cannot be my disciple” (vs. 26-27,33). He was referring to those who refused to put their loyalty to Him above their other loyalties. He summarized with this statement, “anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.”

(Sunday, February 21, 2021)

II. The Illustrations

Through two parables, Jesus gave the reason for His demanding terms of discipleship.

- A. The first illustration (vs. 28) concerned the building of a tower and the need to first count the cost. Then, without a break, He gave the second illustration, that of the King who had to consider the number of his troops going to battle with another King (vs. 31). In both illustrations, Jesus was referring metaphorically to discipleship and not salvation. Sadly, there are those who are truly born again who never become dedicated, committed, and loyal disciples of Christ. They are in the circle of His redeeming love and grace, but they remain on the periphery.
- B. The first parable centered on construction. There is something about building that stirs the creative urges in us. The architect sits at the drawing board and dreams, assimilating all of the skills of his or her professional training. Then the architect meets with a builder and in time they determine a projected cost for the project. Next, land is cleared, foundation is laid, and the framework starts to rise. However, in the story Jesus told, the builder was so obsessed with desire to translate his dream

into reality, that he neglected the most important step in the process – he failed to sit down with his builders and count the cost. True assessments had to be made.

- C. Many Christian lives are like that of the builder. A marvelous foundation is laid; A set of plans for a new life provides the guidelines for the building, but somewhere, somehow, someone refuses to count the cost of building a Christian life. The result is, a shabby tent is created instead of a strong house. Refusing to see the cost of discipleship ensures a pitiful substitute for what God intends in our lives.
- D. The second illustration, Jesus gave had the same theme. In this story, a King was challenged in battle by another King and his army. Jesus asked whether the first King would consider whether to go to war with his 10,000 men against the other King's 20,000 men. If he were wise, he would send a delegation of his men to meet the other King long before they arrived at the battleground to ask for terms of peace. In other words, the King should assess the situation, explore all the possibilities, and then draw upon his resources of wisdom. He should count the cost of the battle, and if he does not have the necessary resources to win, use his ingenuity to bring about peace without the loss of a single man.

(Sunday, February 28, 2021)

III. The Application

- A. In effect, Jesus was saying that if our purpose is to be His disciple, we must build and we must battle. Both actions require counting the cost – preparation. Always there have been those, like the rich young ruler, who have liked the thought of following Jesus but have not been willing to count the cost.
- B. These people lived in spiritual tents instead of in the spiritual mansions God would have them build for Him. They win no battles against temptation and sin, instead, they lie wounded on the battlefield because they did not assess the strength of their enemy and prepare themselves to wage war against him. When you and I start to build our lives for God, we will be attacked on every hand. We need both the towel and the sword. They go

together; they are inseparable. Recall the story of Nehemiah rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem. The people were told to have a towel in one hand for laying the stone and a sword in the other hand to battle against the enemy. Commitment to Christ, to His cause, to His Church, to His People, is not cheap. But the reward is the product – our view of Christ! When we see Him in His full Glory, we will be like Him. The last finishing touches on our lives will have been made.