



What do you think the cost of being a follower of Jesus is?  
 What things might you have to sacrifice?  
 Think of some examples of scenarios.

Peter answered him, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?" Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. Matthew 19v27-30



The second parable

"Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples." Luke 14v31-33



What is the risk in this parable?  
 What does this parable say to you?

Do you think anyone ever thinks they are up to the calling of God?  
 What are we called to give up to be Jesus disciple in this passage?

These two parables are actually saying opposite things. In the first parable the person has a choice, they are free to build or not build. In the second there is no such choice, the army is coming and has to be faced either with battle or negotiation. In the first parable Jesus is saying think whether you can afford the cost of following me. In the second He is asking if you can afford the consequences of not following Him. That is to refuse His demands. Jesus is on His way into your life with an army – what are you going to do?  
 What are the war, negotiation options for us?

You either fight God or surrender to Him. If you fight Him then ultimately you will be destroyed.  
 A disciple is someone who gives (or is prepared to give) everything to follow Jesus.

Have you changed your definition of a disciple since the one given above?  
 At the start most of us would have claimed to be a disciple rather than a follower. Has your assessment of yourself changed during this study?

Being a disciple is a process. As it was for the twelve it is a journey. It is about learning, leaving, growing, committing and doing. It is not done overnight or on an altar call. It is a process that Jesus leads us into, but that we must commit to. It is a path that can lead absolutely anywhere. (Where might it lead?)

In each of these teachings of Jesus there is an element of choice. Followers choose to be disciples.



Will Jesus call you to give up everything straight away?  
 What attitude does a disciple have?  
 Why does the Kingdom of God need disciples as well as followers?

Where are you in this process?  
 How far are you prepared to go?

# BIBLE STUDY



Read Luke 14v25-33

The passage starts with large crowds travelling with Jesus.  
 Why do you think people wanted to travel with Jesus?

People must have followed Jesus for very many reasons. Some good and some bad. There must have been a real mix of motives.

On one occasion Jesus criticised the crowd because they wanted to see miracles like the feeding of the 5000 but did not want to take seriously the implications of these signs. John 6v25. They liked the food but did not want to think about what it meant.

Why do you think people attend church today? Are there still mixed motives?

Jesus turns to the crowd and makes two statements and tells two parables.  
 What are they?

Jesus ended each of His statements and the second parable with the phrase; "whoever does not... cannot be my disciple."



Is there a difference between being a follower of Jesus and a disciple?  
 How did this show itself during Jesus ministry?

Jesus had a limited number of disciples the twelve plus at any time a larger group of around 100. But it is clear that many thousands of people believed in Jesus, but did not follow Him around the country. They had jobs and families, but they also had a real faith.



Why did Jesus issue this challenge to the crowd?  
 What might He have wanted to achieve?

Is there still a difference between a follower and a disciple?  
 How would you define each?  
 What is the goal of a follower of Jesus?  
 What is the goal of a disciple?

Perhaps a follower wants to be right with God and knows the need to be saved. They want to be a part of the Kingdom of God. A disciple is one who learns from Jesus and learns to be like Jesus. It is their goal to be active in God's kingdom now. This is a bit over simplistic, but clearly the two are different and the difference is in the level of commitment and action.

A disciple is...


What might we expect of a follower today?


Most of us want to see ourselves as disciples not followers. After all, the great commission was to go and make disciples – not Christians. Matthew 28v19



Is everyone automatically a disciple?  
 Does thinking of yourself as a disciple make you one?  
 Is it wrong to just be a follower?

It would be easy to say yes, everyone should be a disciple. But there is a enough teaching in the gospels to suggest that the same expectations are not levelled on everyone. Some received 5 talents others 3. Nor did Jesus call everyone to follow Him as a disciple but only a selected few. Luke 9v59-62. Other people He told to go home. Mark 5v18-19, Luke 5v24.

From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked. Luke 12v48

For us today two categories are probably not enough. Perhaps we should see this as a continuum with follower at one end and disciple at the other. Perhaps we should also recognise that there are different seasons in our lives which bring different movements on that scale.

What things do you think mark out a disciple today?



### The first statement.

"If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters--yes, even life itself--such a person cannot be my disciple. Luke 14v26

What is the cost of being a disciple in this verse?

How can you hate your parents when Jesus Himself said we must honour them? Luke 18v20, Matthew 15v4.

Jesus even told us to love our enemies.

It is likely that Jesus taught in Hebrew. Aramaic may well have been used in common speech. In Hebrew hate is a relative concept not an absolute one as it is in English. Matthew's version of this saying expresses this clearly "Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves a son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." Matthew 10v37

Jesus is saying that He has to be put before family or earthly relationships.

It has to be said that Jesus is very critical of people who claimed to honour God at the expense of their family. Matthew 15v4, cf 1 Timothy 5v8.

Can you think of any examples of what Jesus might mean?



### The second statement

And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. Luke 14v27

What does it mean to take up your cross? (This is a very frequent teaching of Jesus.)

It is very easy to find a metaphorical interpretation for this, - we all have our crosses to bear! - but in Jesus' day to pick up a cross meant only one thing – to die slowly and painfully.

What is Jesus asking of His disciples?

F.F. Bruce translates this verse. "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him be prepared to be led out to public execution, following my example."

A person on the way to public execution was compelled to abandon all earthly hopes and ambitions. Bruce.

In Luke 9v23 Jesus says this is a daily thing. We must say death to self and life to Jesus every day. We must put to death our ambitions and desires and chose surrender to God daily.



Why is this a condition of being a disciple?  
 Are you prepared to do this?



### The first parable

"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, saying, 'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish.' Luke 14v28-30



What are disciples building?  
 What is the cost that has to be considered?  
 What is the danger of not counting the cost?  
 What is the danger of counting the cost?



What does this parable say to you?  
 What is the cost of being a disciple?  
 What might you have to give up?  
 When Jesus says this what is His goal? - Does He want you to decide not to be a disciple for fear of the cost?

Jesus goal here is to pre-warn us not to dissuade us. The cost is a life choice.