

COUNTING THE COST

I. [Matthew 10:32-39](#) [Luke 9:57-62](#)

A. [Matthew 10:32-39](#) (ESV) picks up right where we left off last Sunday with hard words from Jesus: **32** *So everyone who acknowledges Me before men, I also will acknowledge before My Father who is in heaven,* **33** *but whoever denies Me before men, I also will deny before My Father who is in heaven.* **34** *Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.* **35** *For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.* **36** *And a person's enemies will be those of his own household.* **37** *Whoever loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.* **38** *And whoever does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me.* **39** *Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.*

B. But let's not stop there; let's hear a few more nice words from our sweet Jesus: [Luke 9:57-62](#) (ESV) are three accounts of would-be/could-be followers: **57** *As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, "I will follow You wherever You go."* **58** *And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."* **59** *To another He said, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."* **60** *And Jesus said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God."* **61** *Yet another said, "I will follow You, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home."* **62** *Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."*

C. Now of course there are many other places in the gospels where Jesus says things difficult to understand. We might call them "*hard sayings*." It's important that we don't just sweep such sayings under the rug. What did Jesus mean? Was it hyperbole? Why did He say such things? How do we read them in context with everything else He said and did? Was this any way to start a Messianic movement?

D. Jesus' mission wasn't to start a movement by making friends and influencing people. His rescue mission included the establishment of a Kingdom beachhead in this earthly realm of darkness where enmity towards God had reigned since the first couple fell. While all members of His Kingdom are indeed former enemies, not all former enemies actually become His friends. While all the members of His Kingdom include former spiritual orphans, not all orphans become God's adopted sons & daughters. That sword of division pierces straight through families...

E. I imagine some of you were good at making excuses when you were growing up, either with your parents or teachers or coaches. Perhaps you're still pretty good at excuse-making with your employer. Or maybe you've become skilled at exposing the excuses of your children or grandchildren or even your employees, crushing their schemes whenever they try to pull a fast one. But know this: No one has ever succeeded in pulling a fast one over on God! [Psalm 139:12](#): *"Even the darkness is not dark to You; the night is bright as the day..."*

F. So when excuses were given to Jesus when the invitation to follow Him was clearly given, He saw through them! And yes, He sees through all of ours as well! Last

week, and many times over the years I've said, "*Nobody's getting away with anything!*" Here's a bulletin: That includes all of us!

G. Some excuses are actually inexcusable. These are your basic "the-dog-ate-my-homework" excuses. Unless someone did their homework on paper made from raw meat, the likelihood that a dog ever actually did such a thing is remote. Poor excuses are often just another name for bearing false witness--lying. If I chose not to do my homework because I spent the weekend binge-watching TV and then tell my teacher the reason I didn't write the history report was because Fight-O was hungry, my poor excuse is really a boldface lie. With the risk of making us all fidgety in our seats, we're all pretty much guilty of bearing false witness and that means we've lied to God. Making excuses is like making clothes out of fig leaves and fig leaves leave little to the imagination, at least as far as naked people go.

H. But even as God went looking for Adam & Eve in the Garden once they sinned, and even though they tried to hide from their Maker (who sees all things and knows all things) our God seeks us out too. Their sin and our sin still leads to death. But Jesus is the answer and the remedy to our death sentences. Though we are liars, He is the Truth. Though we are lawbreakers, He is the Law-Keeper. Though we try to sew together fig leaves to cover our sin, He places His robe of righteousness upon us... Let's go to the Scriptures before we go to His Table...

1) **1 Peter 3:18** (AMP) says: *18 For indeed Christ died for sins once for all, the Just and Righteous for the unjust and unrighteous [the Innocent for the guilty] so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit...*

2) **Romans 5:6-9** (AMP) expounds like this: *6 While we were still helpless [powerless to provide for our salvation], at the right time Christ died [as a substitute] for the ungodly. 7 Now it is an extraordinary thing for one to willingly give his life even for an upright man, though perhaps for a good man [one who is noble and selfless and worthy] someone might even dare to die. 8 But God clearly shows and proves His own love for us, by the fact that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Therefore, since we have now been justified [declared free of the guilt of sin] by His blood, [how much more certain is it that] we will be saved from the wrath of God through Him.*

3) **1 Corinthians 15:3-4** (NIV) shucks it down to the cob: *3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...*

I. When you take the Bread & Cup, you have the vivid reminder of the length God went to save you from your sin and make you His very own child. Whatever cost packages we may face, they are pittance in comparison. Whatever He bids us to do with respect to following after Him, it is our joy and honor to run after Him...

* Pray & Officiate Communion...

* So let's go home today with more of Jesus' words, more red letters, more hard sayings: **Mark 8:34-38** (NLT) says: *34 Then, calling the crowd to join His disciples, He said, "If any of you wants to be My follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow Me.*

35 *If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for My sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it. 36 And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? 37 Is anything worth more than your soul? 38 If anyone is ashamed of Me and My message in these adulterous and sinful days, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when He returns in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."*

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

Matthew 10:32-39 (ESV)

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Luke 9:57-62 (ESV)

57 As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, "I will follow You wherever You go." **58** And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." **59** To another He said, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." **60** And Jesus said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." **61** Yet another said, "I will follow You, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home." **62** Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

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1 Corinthians 15:3-4 (NIV)

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Mark 8:34-38 (NLT)

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Bonus Rations

Following Christ Is Costly — But How Do You Count the Cost? - John Piper

<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/following-christ-is-costly-but-how-do-you-count-the-cost>

Count the Cost and Follow Christ - Billy Graham

<https://decisionmagazine.com/billy-graham-count-the-cost-and-follow-christ/>

Does Jesus Really Want Me to Hate My Family? - Jeff Robinson (The Gospel Coalition)

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/does-jesus-want-hate-family/>

How To Treat Fellow Christians - Paul Martin

<https://ca.thegospelcoalition.org/article/how-to-treat-fellow-christians/>

Are We Living in the Last Days? - Robert Godfrey (Ligonier Ministries)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DIKEf19AIVY>

Operation Christmas Child 2021 - Samaritan's Purse (Everything You Need to Know)

<https://www.samaritanspurse.org/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/>

Samaritan's Purse - Animals, Agriculture, Livelihoods (Goats, Chickens, Bees, Etc)

<https://www.samaritanspurse.org/what-we-do/animals-and-agriculture/>

Matthew 8:19-22 (ESV)

19 And a scribe came up and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go."

20 And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." **21** Another of the disciples said to Him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."

22 And Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead."

Luke 14:25-33 (ESV)

25 Now great crowds accompanied 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 bear his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. **28** For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? **29** Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, **30** saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ **31** Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? **32** And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. **33** So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be My disciple.

Matthew 12:46-50 (NKJV)

46 While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him. **47** Then one said to Him, “Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You.” **48** But He answered and said to the one who told Him, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?” **49** And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! **50** For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.”

Luke 18:28-30 (NKJV)

28 Then Peter said, “See, we have left all and followed You.” **29** So He said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, **30** who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life.”

1 John 2:15-17 (NLT)

15 Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. **16** For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. **17** And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.

Isaiah 64:6-7 (NASB)

6 For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; and all of us wither like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. **7** There is no one who calls on Your name, who arouses himself to take hold of You; for You have hidden Your face from us and have delivered us into the power of our iniquities.

Isaiah 61:10-11 (NIV)

10 I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For He has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. **11** For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.

Galatians 3:26-28 (NLT)

26 For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. **27** And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. **28** There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Quote by Charles Spurgeon

"Our Lord Jesus was far too wise to pride Himself upon the number of His converts; He cared rather for quality than quantity. He rejoiced over one sinner that repented, but ten thousand sinners who merely professed to have repented would have given Him no joy whatever. His heart longed after the real, He loathed the counterfeit; He panted after the substance, and the shadow could not content Him."

Quote by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

"Costly grace is the gospel which must be sought again and again and again, the gift which must be asked for, the door at which a man must knock. Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a Man His life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is costly because it cost God the life of His Son: 'Ye were bought at a price', and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us. Above all, it is grace because God did not reckon His Son too dear a price to pay for our life, but delivered Him up for us. Costly grace is the Incarnation of God."

Quote by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

"When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die."

The Solid Rock (My Hope Is Built On Nothing Less)

by Edward Mote, 1834

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

Refrain:

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand,

All other ground is sinking sand.

When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;
In every high and stormy gale,
My anchor holds within the veil.

His oath, His covenant, His blood
Support me in the whelming flood;
When all around my soul gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay.

When He shall come with trumpet sound,
Oh, may I then in Him be found;
Dressed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne.

Washing Excuses Similar to Excuses for Not Going to Church

Author Unknown

I don't wash before my meals, because:

1. I was forced to do it as a child.
2. People who make soap are only after your money.
3. I wash on special occasions, such as Christmas and Easter.
4. People who wash are hypocrites; they think they are cleaner than everyone else.
5. There are so many kinds of soap I can't decide which is best.
6. I used to wash, but it was so boring that I stopped.
7. None of my friends wash. Why should I?
8. The bathroom is never warm enough in winter or cool enough in the summer.
9. I'll start washing when I get older...and dirtier!
10. Life is so hectic, I just can't spare the time.