

Study 3

Counting the Cost

Luke 14:25-35

Group Discussion

How do you know if a person is really committed to something?

What have you been prepared to give up for the sake of a particular job or hobby or passion... or for love?

Often, people will play down the cost in this life of following Jesus. How do they do this?

The Context

Having just told a confronting parable about people who were too busy to come to God's great banquet because they have bought a field, are test driving their new tractor or because their new wife won't let them out of the house. Because of that, they'll be excluded from the Kingdom, and the banquet table will be filled with a surprising bunch of people. Following Jesus is not a part time occupation or a hobby! Following Jesus is not something that gets what's left over of your time and attention. The demands he makes are incredibly confronting!

Of course, if we'd been there at the time it would have been easy to side with the Pharisees. They were powerful and influential. Jesus was the one who was rocking the boat! It would have been safe to just stay with family and friends, and tend to the new field with your new team of oxen, and settle down with your new wife. In Luke 14:25, **large crowds** are following Jesus. The trouble is, they don't really know where he's heading and what lies ahead. They're perhaps enjoying the way Jesus is poking fun at the Pharisees, they're impressed by his powerful healings and his ability to feed large crowds with a few bits of bread – and they've totally missed the point of what he said in...

○ Luke 9:22-24...

○ Luke 9:57-62...



○ Luke 12:49-53

Read the Passage

As a group, **read through Luke 14:25-35.**

a) Split up the passage under these three headings by adding verse numbers below...

1. 'Hating' your own life and loves (verses 25 -)
2. Finishing what your start (verses -)
3. Surrendering to a stronger force (verses -)

Remember, Jesus is speaking very literally here. He is on the road to Jerusalem, where **he** is going to be executed on a cross. Going on the road with him wasn't going to be a party – it was a journey to death. It meant leaving behind security and family and ambitions... and maybe even life itself.

- b) Though we are not literally following Jesus on the road to crucifixion in Jerusalem, what costs will there be in genuine discipleship today?
- c) What's your (honest) reaction to the idea that following Jesus can be painful and costly?
- d) Sometimes, evangelists have been known to offer people healing and prosperity and a solution to all life's problems if they give their lives to Jesus. What should we tell people instead?
- e) If this is the case, why would anyone become a Christian? Verses 31-33 give a very good reason! What is it? (Think through who the 'kings' are in the parable.)

Time to Turn Back?

Maybe you've found these words from Jesus confronting. Maybe your 'spiritual house' is only half built, and you've run out of funds to complete it. Maybe you've started following Jesus on the false assumption that

he'll make everything go well for you, only to discover that life as a Christian is tough! Maybe you're ready to give up.

- f) According to verses 34-35, what does Jesus want you to do instead?

Carrying the Cross...

Don't be disheartened. If you're scared, you're in good company. Jesus said, if you don't hate your own life and **carry your cross and follow me**, you can't be my disciple. But even his closest disciples didn't do much of a job of it!

- g) Look ahead at Luke 22:33-34 and 54-62. How does Simon Peter rate when he's put to the test as a disciple?

- h) Simon Peter failed to take up the cross and follow Jesus – so, ironically, another Simon takes his place! **Read Luke 23:26**. After the resurrection, Simon Peter went on to become the leader of the church, with great courage and conviction. But how do you think he felt as he thought back to these events?

Counting the Cost

We live in an age of easy Christianity. Commitment is cheap, and we treat church like we're consumers – looking for what we can get rather than what we can give. Even getting to church regularly and on time seems to be just too much for most 21st century Christians... and the prospect of serving or giving or doing anything costly or inconvenient is almost laughable. Here's a confronting thought. Maybe it's time for you to either opt out, or really opt in?

Pray together as a group. Ask that God would give real courage and conviction. How can we change our world without it?