

Who Do you Love?

Luke 14:25-33 ²⁵ Now large crowds were traveling with him; and he turned and said to them, ²⁶ "Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. ²⁸ For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see 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 will begin to ridicule him, ³⁰ saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.' ³¹ Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³² If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. ³³ So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.

Truly this scripture is one of the most radical statements of the requirements being a Christian. Jesus is asking a lot of us in this passage of scripture. We must put Jesus above all else and that includes family and material wealth. With this passage we are told that life as a Christian requires being able to live under a death sentence. We must put to death our own ambitions, desires, pride, and perhaps even our own lives to be a disciple. Then Jesus asks each of us to consider these requirements and decide if we can do it. Do we have the resources to complete the task? He uses the example of building a building and going to war. Our commitment to Christ must be total. Many of us

forget the total commitment thing. We say we follow Jesus but if something more important comes along then Jesus gets pushed to the side. How many of us would be here right now if the Steelers were playing at 10 AM today? How many of you know someone who could be here but chose not to come to church today? This what I don't understand about folks who say they believe Jesus but don't go to church--if you have made a total commitment to Christ as this passage suggests we should, then why would you not go to a place where you can be taught about this person to whom you are committed?

Christianity requires total commitment – and church provides the resources to complete the requirement—to me it would be like saying you were hungry and then skipping dinner. It just doesn't make any sense. Jesus is looking for disciples who will make a total commitment. I mentioned the Steelers, earlier, and that reminds me that football is a sport that requires a total commitment. There are daily practices, and games every week during the season. Players are asked to take on opponents who may be bigger and stronger than them. Teams may have to go into a game knowing that they don't have a chance to win, because sometimes the battle itself is more important than the victory. My son-in-law was the head coach for Cambria Heights High School Football team. When he was coaching they didn't have a large talent pool to draw from and so each year it was hard to find kids who wanted to play football every week knowing they might not win every game. So the kids that did make the commitment were special and deserved respect. They were willing to play the game because they loved it, not because they were going to win.

Can we make a commitment like that to Jesus? Can we be a disciple of Jesus even though we know that we will not

beat every opponent we face? By that I mean we will not be able to gain every soul we meet for Jesus. Can we be a disciple of Jesus even when life seems to throw more losses at us than wins? With Jesus, if we are willing to fight the battle, we will win because Jesus has already won the final victory.

The commitment to Christ must be total. It is a lot harder than some people think it is. Can we really be Christian and not be associated with a Christian church? I don't know— It would like saying you're a Steeler fan but you never go to one of their games, or listen to a game on the radio or watch them on TV. I love the Steelers. I am excited for their first game coming on September 12th. Did you watch any of their games last season? No. What about the season before? Have you ever seen them play? No. Then how can you say you're a Steeler fan?

I love Jesus. Did you go to church last week? No? What about the week before that? No. When was the last time you were in church? When I was baptized as a baby. Then how can you say you love Jesus when you haven't been to his house since you were a baby?

Today you have an opportunity to renew your commitment to Jesus. When you receive communion today say this little prayer to yourself. I love you Jesus. I want you to be in my life and I want to be part of your life. Amen.