

The True Cost  
Luke 14:25-35

A question as we begin our study of these precious words of scripture today . . . on those occasions when you have the opportunity to share your Christian faith with others, what do you say? What are the truths from God's word that you use?

If you are like me, you probably use some of the more familiar words of our Lord, words like those given in Ephesians chapter 2 that tell us.

<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

And those words are an excellent way to express a person's faith. They are absolutely true and can stand alone under any questioning. It is so very important to know and to understand that our salvation really is completely free to us in every way, that we can do nothing to merit or to earn the favor of God so that He will save us. That is the very meaning of the word "Grace". Our salvation is in every way a free gift from our Savior, the Lord Jesus.

A second question . . . if then our salvation is free, undeserved and unearned, where do the "works of righteousness" that are so obviously to be a part of our Christian experience fit in?

I ask this question because too often it seems that many of us Christians will hesitate at this point in our witness and we seem not able to go much further. And sadly it seems that the reason often is because many of us Christians have not taken the next steps into this walk with Christ that began with our salvation. We've not been as diligent as we should be to study and to learn that there really is more, much more to be known about our Lord and about His loving plans for our souls, that that special moment of salvation was only the beginning of it, only the first moment of our Christian experience, that there really is more, much more for us to know and to do.

So may I say this again, that a real difficulty can arise if we, for some reason, stop there at that first moment of our salvation and go no further in our understanding of what has taken place within our souls. Because God admonishes us strongly in Philippians chapter 2 that we must,

<sup>12</sup> work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. (Philippians 2:12-13)

What can those words mean? And then also in verse 10 of Ephesians 2 just following those blessed words that tell us that our salvation is a free gift from our Lord we read,

<sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.  
(Ephesians 2:8-10)

What could those words mean?

May I offer the truths given in this passage that we'll study today here in Luke chapter 14 as a part of the understanding of what has to come next just after we have stepped across that blessed boundary line into salvation.

Listen carefully to these words. They are so very precious, but folks be warned, these words are also very, very difficult to hear and even more difficult to accept, and even more difficult to follow.

Luke chapter 14, beginning in verse 25,

<sup>25</sup> Now great multitudes went with Him (the Lord Jesus). And He turned and said to them,

<sup>26</sup> "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.

<sup>27</sup> And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

<sup>28</sup> For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it--

<sup>29</sup> lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him,

<sup>30</sup> saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'

<sup>31</sup> Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand?

<sup>32</sup> Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace.

<sup>33</sup> So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.

<sup>34</sup> "Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned?

<sup>35</sup> It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" (Luke 14:25-35)

As I read these words, my first response is, "wow", the working out of our salvation surely is difficult, more difficult than our small minds are able to truly fathom.

And these are demanding words, words that require something of consequence from us, words that will not allow us to remain standing just inside the entrance of God's inner chamber looking in, but rather these words compel us to step on forward into a deeper relationship with our Lord.

This passage that we're considering today begins with one of the most difficult statements in all of scripture, saying to us that,

<sup>26</sup> "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. (Luke 14:26)

I must confess to you that I have struggled long and hard over these words, many, many times over the years. And I have read and heard many explanations, the most common of which is that God does not really intend for us to actually "hate" our beloved family members, not in the way that we experience the emotional kind of hatred that takes control over our feelings and behaviors. But rather Jesus is simply giving us a comparison by which we can measure the intensity of the love that we should have for Him.

That is to say, our love for God and our commitment to Him must be so devout and so dedicated that by comparison, our love for our father, our mother, our wife and husband and children and anyone else is at the level of hatred.

And I believe that answer is probably the best answer that we will be able to comprehend. However, knowing also that God's word is so very rich with many, even deeper truths than we first realize, as we study these words, I am asking the Lord to give us more and more wisdom from His precious treasure of knowledge about this kind of love that He wants us to have for Him.

So, with that in mind, let's first ask ourselves the question, "What is God's intent for us as we consider this passage?" From these words, we can clearly see that Jesus desires for us to give a deep and serious consideration to what the real and "true cost" of our salvation will be. That the "true cost" was not just what it took to get us to where we are in our salvation, but also what it will cost for us to continue on with the Lord Jesus day after day as we live and have our being in this corrupt and sinful world.

But let me stop at this point and instead of beginning our study with the "people side" of our salvation, let me instead go back and begin our study with where salvation really begins, and that is, with the Lord Jesus and with all that He did to gain our salvation for us.

As we said a moment ago, "Our salvation truly is a free gift from God and it costs us nothing". And that is a great and powerful truth. Jesus really did indeed pay every part of the debt for sin that we owed.

And we are required to suffer none of the real cost that it took to gain our salvation. Jesus Christ really did pay it all.

But to only say those words and to not consider them more carefully leaves us woefully lacking in our understanding. And we must not permit ourselves to stop with only those words.

And while the true cost for our salvation is something that our mortal minds will never truly be able to fathom, even so, we really must try. As Jesus said here, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

So why then is it so difficult for our minds to comprehend these things that have to do with our salvation? May I begin by suggesting that it is because of the nature of the thing that brings about the necessity for salvation, that of "sin", and of "sin's nature", because it seems that we come into this life blinded in our understanding of sin and of its nature within us.

Sin and our understanding about sin is measured off against a standard that is completely incomprehensible to our natural minds, the standard of real and true "Holiness and Righteousness".

Our ideas and our concepts about sin are at such a simplistic level. We think in terms of simply being wrong when we offend a brother, or that lies, or stealing from our neighbor is simply wrong and hurtful, and on and on along that line. And those truly are sins and they are very wrong and they do hurt other people. But to leave sin at that level, leaves us with an almost infantile understanding of it.

Because just in the same way that we view an iceberg, with only its tip showing on the surface and so much, much more of it beneath the surface, so also is our sin of lying and stealing and cheating our neighbor merely reflective evidences of far deeper, more consuming forms of sin that reside within the core of our being, deep within what these scriptures call, our depraved "sin nature". And that sin nature silently, but continually, cries out in a demanding voice within us saying, "I will be the master of my own soul!"

And that folks is first and foremost the "real" sin within us. Recall that God said that we are to put no other gods before Him. But when we insist on being the master of our own soul, that is what we have done. We have rejected God and we have put ourselves in His position as the ruler of our daily lives. And it is out from that depraved sinful nature that all of our more visible, surface sinful behaviors arise, the stealing, the adultery, the lies, and on and on.

And again, yes, Jesus did die for all of those surface kinds of sins, but much more than that, His suffering, His death, His blood, penetrated much deeper. It pierced all the way down to the foundation of our souls and surgically removed all that broken and depraved sinful nature from within us, cleansing us and preparing us for the next step of our journey, that long and sometimes arduous path along that "narrow way" spoken about in these scriptures.

That "narrow way" is what Jesus was speaking about when He spoke these words,

<sup>26</sup> "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.

<sup>27</sup> And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

And in verse 33,

<sup>33</sup> So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. (Luke 14:26-27, 33)

These are very hard words folks, "hard sayings", much like other "hard sayings" that Jesus spoke to His disciples, sometimes even provoking them to turn away and not follow Him anymore. Words like those spoken to the rich young ruler who possessed so much wealth and position, and was told that he would have to give it all up to follow Jesus. Those kinds of words are often confusing and indeed hard to accept.

Believing Christ and believing His truths is no easy matter. And as discouraging as it might sound for me to say it, our following after Him will only get more difficult with each step that we take along that narrow path.

But thankfully, God never leaves His children wanting. He gave us His Holy Spirit to accompany us all along each step of our journey. He tells us that it is,  
". . . not by might, not by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts".  
(Zecharia 4:6)

Thankfully then, as we consider all these things that first brought us to salvation and now sustain us along our narrow pathway, it has been and always will be of God and of His power and strength. Those words in Romans chapter 11,

<sup>33</sup> Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

<sup>36</sup> For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen. (Romans 11:33, 36)

Thanks be to God, it is through the power and the presence of the Spirit of Christ within us that we are able to walk the narrow pathway that we are to walk each day.

But with that being said, the Lord Jesus is also saying here that even with all that is done on our behalf by Him, and by God the Father, and by His Holy Spirit, once we are saved there is still some deep and difficult effort that still yet remains for you and me to do.

And as He first mentions here, it often begins with our deepest and most intimate of affections, those involving our family members. As Jesus said here,

<sup>26</sup> "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. (Luke 14:26)

These words remind me of a question that Jesus asked of Peter some days after His resurrection, while they were talking there on the beach. After Jesus had fed His disciples, He took Peter aside and asked him,

<sup>15</sup> . . . "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these? (John 21:15)

Jesus knew that Peter dearly loved the other disciples. They had all been together through some very difficult times and had developed some of the strongest of human bonds.

And His question to Peter at that moment was of a similar nature to the words given to us here in today's passage about the extent to which we love our family members.

And though the Lord Jesus knew that Peter also loved Him very much, He knew that the kind of love that Peter would be able to muster from within his own heart would never be sufficient to carry forward the difficult ministry that lay ahead of him.

And so, simply put, Jesus was saying to Peter, "Peter you are going to need to be able to separate out the kind of love that you have for Me, from the kind of love, the 'brotherly affection', that you have for other people. Yes, your brotherly affection is God given and it is good, but it does not reach to the standard of love that must be had for Me."

In Luke chapter 10, Jesus gave that standard when He said,

<sup>27</sup> . . . You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind. (Luke 10:27)

Folks, this kind of love is beyond any kind of affection that our minds can comprehend. This is the "agape" form of love that has God's Holy Spirit permeated within it.

This is the kind of love that is able to abandon all other forms of love in order to fulfill the plans and the purposes of God.

Does this kind of love require us to actually hate our wife, our husband, our children and other family members? No! Not at all! It is simply a different form of love, anointed by the Holy Spirit and carried forward by His power.

And yes, if a choice is demanded between our obedience to God and our love towards our wife, our husband, our father, our mother, our children, then the choice must be clear and emphatic. Our choice must first be for the Lord Jesus.

But let's ask ourselves, when would such a choice be necessary? During the days that Jesus walked this earth, it was probably very common for families to disown one of their own when they turned from their traditional Jewish beliefs to follow after Jesus.

And unfortunately, a similar difficulty can take place in some, perhaps many of our homes of today, men and women making choices to give in to the wishes of their family members instead of faithfully following after Christ.

How many people do we know that don't go to church because of reasons relating directly to another family member or loved one. It has, and does still happen often.

Jesus is saying in very simple, but demanding words, "Do not let anyone, even your closest, most beloved family members keep you from coming to Him.

Folks, each of our eternities rests in the choices that we make. And as Jesus is saying in these words, the choices that will be required of us will not be easy ones to make.

This Christian life that we have entered into will be filled with obstacles and barriers that we really must overcome. Yes, many of those will come from within our own families. But folks, that is not all. All of the enemies of our soul, the world, our own flesh, and the devil will ever and always be continually at work to block our path and to cause us to stumble.

Sin and sin's temptations will never cease to pursue after our souls, especially those sins that we enjoyed before Christ saved us, sins subtly tempting us to return to them. But we must not! We must not! His words to us here,



<sup>27</sup> And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. (Luke 14:27)

And folks, these words from our Lord here in verses 34 and 35 are a clear warning of what can happen if we allow those sins to draw us back into their control . Here Jesus tells us,

<sup>34</sup> "Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned?

<sup>35</sup> It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" (Luke 14:34-35)

Unfortunately, there are many, many Christians who have encountered sins and obstacles to their walk with Christ and they have simply sat down and given up. They quit reading their bibles and they quit going to church. And because of that they bear no fruit for the Lord and for His people.

Yes, they do remain saved. Because a person can't really lose their salvation once the Lord has saved them. And yes, they will be in heaven with the rest of us. But the remaining days of their lives here on this earth will be fruitless and pitiable. Those words again . . .

<sup>34</sup> "Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned?

<sup>35</sup> It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" (Luke 14:34-35)

Folks, as difficult as many of our days as a Christian might be for us, there is "Joy", "real Joy" to be had as we live each day with our Lord Jesus. We need only to turn our eyes off the negative and difficult events of our daily life and fix our eyes upon our Lord and He will give us all we need for all the matters of life that we encounter.

And also, and especially there is a joy-filled eternity in heaven awaiting us and it is worth whatever sufferings we might endure while we remain here on this earth. So please, please keep taking that next step and the next and the next on that narrow path that leads to life, life eternal.

Those words again in Romans chapter 11 as we close,

<sup>33</sup> Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

<sup>36</sup> For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen. (Romans 11:33-36)

Let's pray.