

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #206

Jesus' Ministry in Perea Jesus Describes the Cost of Discipleship LK 14.25-35

25 A large crowd was traveling along with Jesus. Turning around to face them, he said:

26 "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters in comparison to his love for me--yes, even their own life--such a person just cannot be my disciple. 27 And whoever does not always carry their cross, and keep on following me cannot be my disciple.

28 "Say one of you wants to build a tower. Don't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? 29 For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will mock you, 30 saying, 'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish.'

31 "Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Doesn't he first sit down and evaluate whether he is able with ten thousand men to gain victory over the one coming against him with twenty thousand? 32 If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for the terms of peace.

33 "In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.

34 "Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? (35) It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out.

"Whoever has ears to hear, I command them to keep on hearing."

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	On the Road, Traveling Through Perea
Timeline	January or February (Months 36 & 37)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VII: Jesus' Ministry in Perea
	A. Jesus' Ministers Throughout Perea
Title	5. Jesus Describes the Cost of Discipleship

COMMENT:

In the previous reading we saw that life in the kingdom of God begins by believing and responding to God's gracious invitation to attend his banquet. God has prepared everything for us in advance. We accept his generous bounty.

In today's reading Jesus spoke to the next step in discipleship. We have been invited to an eternal banquet as the bond-slaves of God, because HE owns and controls everything. In entering the kingdom of God we step into a realm in which God alone holds title to everything. Jesus alone must reign over our relationships with all people, things, and even ourselves. We die to our self-will so that we can serve the King of Kings and LORD of Lords in a way worthy of his greatness and excellence.

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Jesus used two illustrations indicating the need to count the cost of discipleship in advance. First, a person who wants to successfully build a house must count the total cost of construction in advance, and make sure they have the resources in hand to complete the project.

Likewise, a General must calculate the cost of a battle, or war beforehand, and make sure they have enough resources to gain victory. Otherwise, they must establish terms for peace while they still have the chance.

Jesus turned both of these illustrations upside down when he made his application: ***"In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciple."***

In other words, the question for a disciple is not whether we have enough resources in hand to finish the job. Rather, the issue is whether we are holding on to anything that actually belongs to Jesus, as if it is our own. Everything we hold on to for ourselves prevents us from following Jesus.

The whole point of stewardship is to manage Jesus' resources for his purposes. A bond-slave in Jesus' culture did not own anything for themselves--not even their own life. It ALL belonged to their Lord. Problems in discipleship emerge when we think we have anything that truly belongs to ourselves, to use for our own purposes. Then conflict with Jesus is inevitable.

A mature disciple understands that everything--literally--belongs to Jesus already. It is our place to manage his assets--even our "own" life--for HIS purpose and not our own.

We live in the age of democracy, where people believe they have "inalienable rights," including the right to our own personal property. We take this for granted in our modern world-view. However, that is not the perspective of true followers of Jesus.

We believe that Jesus created everything that exists, and sustains it all by his own power as well. It ALL belongs to him--already. Therefore, reckoning clearly in our minds from the very beginning that we are living in a world where Jesus owns everything, and we are living as faithful managers of his gracious, good purposes is they key to following him.

Yes, God provides everything we need in advance, and issues an invitation to us to feast with him at his banquet table. That is his goodness and grace. At the same time, we enter his banquet hall with nothing of our own--even the air we breathe and clothes we wear belong to him, not us. We have NOTHING that we have not first received from him. Therefore we live by, and manage his resources for his purposes. This is what bond-slaves do.

APPLICATION:

Many people misunderstand the Old Testament principle of the tithe. We treat it as a kind of tax. We own the money, and resources, but we are required to give 10% back to God for the right to do what we want with the other 90%. This is opposite of the real idea.

In the Old Testament world, all the land was owned by kings. No matter where you went, you were walking on some King's land. The "tithe" was actually a way of acknowledging that the King owned 100% of everything. The person who paid "fealty dues" gave the owner-king a portion, in recognition that the King actually controlled it all. 20, 30, 40, or 50% "fealty dues" were common. The fact that God only required 10% paid in tithes was incredibly generous, but it was intended to be a declaration that God, in fact, owned 100%, not 10%.

The only way to follow and serve the King of the universe is to believe and practice the truth that HE owns 100% of everything. We own nothing. We have nothing but him. But, because the LORD is our good shepherd, we are guaranteed to always have everything we need. That is the benefit of managing the resources of the Sole Owner of everything that is!

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What are you holding on to, as if it belongs to you, in spite of the fact that it is actually under the control of King Jesus? You can make no further progress in following Jesus until you recognize the impossibility of your situation, and give the ownership of that thing back to him. When will you do that?