



The Call to Discipleship and Counting the Cost Luke 14

Introduction

God has two basic requirements of all who would enter into fellowship with Him. Both are presented in this chapter: to accept His invitation and to take up His cross. The first is evangelism, the other is discipleship.

Outline

- I. Call to Dinner - Luke 14:1-24
- II. Cost of Discipleship- Luke 14:25-35

I. Call to Dinner- Luke 14:1-24

- A. Bread in a Pharisee's Home - Luke 14:1-6

Now it happened, as He went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath, that they watched Him closely.

1. A provocative situation - 14:1-2

This is the final time in Luke's gospel that the Lord shares a meal with the Pharisees. The last time He was with them they were particularly hostile. They verbally attacked Him and hurled barbed questions at Him, waiting for Him to say something they could use against Him (Luke 11:53-54). Yet He met with them again.

There was a man with dropsy, or edema, at the dinner either by accident or by design. He may have ventured in knowing Jesus was there or, more likely, he was there by invitation of the Pharisees, the innocent participant in a situation that was set up to test Jesus.

2. A Sabbath healing 14:3-6

Jesus asked the waiting, watching lawyers and Pharisees, *Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?* This topic was one they had been over before and knew they could not win in a debate with Jesus, so they did an uncharacteristically wise thing and remained silent. Jesus healed the man and sent him home. Almost half the people Jesus healed were healed on the Sabbath. After His claim of deity, it was what angered the Pharisees most. They saw themselves as the keepers of the law in general and of the Sabbath in particular.

They refused to answer Jesus' second question about the rightness of rescuing an animal on the Sabbath versus the rightness of releasing a person. Do you ever struggle over man-made rules to the extent that you fail to do good when you can?

- B. A Hypothetical Wedding Feast - Luke 14:7-11

1. Presumptuous choices - 14:7-10

Jesus, noting guests scrambling for the best places at the Pharisee's meal, gave some fitting advice. When invited to a wedding feast, where people are seated according to rank, they should take a lowly place so that, rather than being asked to yield to one more worthy, they might be asked to come take a better place, and thus be honored rather than embarrassed. It is much better to be told, *Friend, go up higher*, than be demoted.

2. Principle repeated - 14:11

For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. The quality of humility is a key Biblical theme. God will save the humble person (Job 22:29). *The humble He guides in justice; and the humble He teaches His way* (Psalm 25:9). *The meek shall inherit the earth* (Psalm 37:11; Matthew 5:5). *Though the Lord is on high, yet He regards the lowly* (Psalm 138:6). See also Psalm 147:6; 149:4; Proverbs 3:34, 11:2, 15:33, 16:19, 22:4, 25:6-7; Isaiah 29:19, 57:15, 66:2; Jeremiah 45:5; Micah 6:8. Jesus described Himself as *gentle and lowly in heart* (Matthew 11:29). He also said, *Therefore, whoever humbles himself as this little child, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven* (Matthew 18:4). See also Matthew 23:12; Luke 1:52, 18:13; John 13:14; Romans 11:20; 12:3; 1 Corinthians 13:4; Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:12; James 1:9, 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5-6.

Are you one who always has to have the best? Do you subtly, or not so subtly, take the choice seat or biggest piece of cake? Do you dominate the conversation or demand to be first? It might be novel to take the lowest place for a change, let others go first, listen when others speak, and give honor to others, beginning with those in your family.

- C. A Rewarding Dinner - Luke 14:12-14

Jesus next addressed the host, who may have been in agreement with Him up to now. When you give a dinner...do not ask your friends... relatives ...nor your rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back and you be repaid. *But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.* This is radical teaching. It requires firm belief in the resurrection. What payback

do you expect when you invite guests to dinner? Would you consider taking Jesus at His word by giving a dinner and inviting those who cannot reciprocate? At the resurrection you will receive your reward.

D. A Great Supper - Luke 14:15-24

1. Bread in the kingdom - 14:15

One guest imagined such a scene and expressed that it would be quite a blessing and honor to break bread in the kingdom of God.

2. Invitation to the great supper - 14:16-20

Jesus responded with a story. *A certain man gave a great supper and invited many.* The guests knew the date but not the exact time. At supper time his servants went and said to those who had been invited, *Come, for all things are now ready. But they all with one accord began to make excuses.*

a. Excuses - verses 18-20

Excuses always raise questions of priorities. One man *must* look at a new lot, bought evidently sight unseen. Another had bought five yoke of oxen and felt compelled to test them - at the end of the day. (What if they failed the test?) The third simply invoked his marriage. *I have married a wife and therefore I cannot come.* (It's all her fault!) We also wonder whose wife he married. Do you give excuses or joyful obedience to God?

b. Matthew's account of the story - 22:1-6

Matthew gives a similar story about a king's wedding for his son. There, too, the servants called the invited guests, *and they were not willing to come.* The king sent other servants to tell them that the feast was ready, *But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his farm and another to his business. The rest seized the king's servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them.*

3. The second invitation - 14:21-23

The angry host issued a second invitation by sending his servants into the city to invite the poor, lame, crippled, and blind. They did so and there still was room. So he sent them beyond the city to the highways and hedges to *compel people to come in that my house may be filled.* Are you helping to fill God's house? Who have you invited lately?

4. First invitation withdrawn - Luke 14:24

For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper. What does this mean? Note the three groups of invited guests. The first invited was

the Jewish nation which through their leaders refused the invitation. The next were very needy folk, similar to outcasts, and the third were Gentiles, those beyond the city. Later, after Jesus had risen from the dead, He said to his disciples, *You shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth* (whole world) (Acts 1:8). It is a terrible thing to refuse God's invitation, take it lightly, and go your own way. Have you accepted His invitation?

II. Cost of Discipleship - Luke 14:25-35

Jesus spoke to the crowd, but especially to His disciples. God's grand invitation is to a great supper, a banquet, a wedding feast -- a joyous occasion. We receive the invitation just as we are, but once on the guest list, guests must dress and be prepared for the banquet. God Himself begins to prepare every believer for the great banquet by beginning to make us look less like sinners and more like His Son. This happens through the work of the Holy Spirit in each believer's life. It is a work of sanctification through the process of discipleship. Discipleship involves your will in every circumstance of your life in choosing His will over yours. It is called obedience. Does your life display obedience to Christ and His call?

A. Hating or Loving Less - Luke 14:26

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. This stringent requirement for discipleship is explained by Matthew 10:37 where "hate" becomes "love less", *He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.* Disciples must begin by keeping the first commandment to love the Lord God above all else. *You shall have no other gods before Me* (Exodus 20:3). It is our loved ones who are most likely to take God's place in our lives unless we make a deliberate choice to put God first. He will bless that choice by the way. After all, was it not God who gave us our loved ones?

Is Jesus first in your life? If He is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all. Will you give Him first place in your heart now? Will you tell Him so? Will you show Him that your commitment is real?

B. Cross-Bearing - Luke 14:27

And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. The cross we are to take up is the counterpart of Jesus' cross. The cross was an instrument of death. Jesus carried His cross to His death. To carry one's cross means to die to self. It does not mean having poor health, enduring a bad relationship, or doing things you do not like to do. It means to deny

self (Matthew 16: 24-25). It means identification with Jesus Christ (Romans 6:1-8). Will you take up your cross today and give your life to Christ? Will you trust God to use you in His way and for His purpose which He alone knows? God loves you more than anyone else can. He is your Maker (Psalm 95:6; 100:4). He alone knows all about you. David said this knowledge was too wonderful for him (Psalm 139:6). What does this knowledge mean to you?

C. Counting the Cost - Luke 14:28-33

1. A builder - 14:28-30

No one begins to build without counting the cost! It is necessary to be sure the project can be finished. If the job cannot be finished due to lack of funds, a person risks ridicule and their efforts are wasted along with their resources.

2. A King - 14:31-32

A king contemplating battle considers whether or not he can win with the forces he has or he faces humiliating, costly defeat. This is a reminder that we are in a monumental spiritual battle that requires all our ability and resources.

3. Forsaking all - 14:33

So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. This is the bottom line of discipleship. Forsake all you have and you qualify to be Jesus' disciple. Peter left his fishing boats. Levi left his tax collecting business. Abraham offered up Isaac, put it all on the altar, and trusted God. Isaac represented Abraham's hopes, dreams, and the fulfillment of God's promises to Him. If Isaac died, Abraham would have no heir and God would have destroyed his hope of obtaining the promises. But Abraham believed that God, who gave him Isaac, could miraculously keep His promise somehow. Therefore Paul could say of Abraham's faith, *He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore it was accounted to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification* (Romans 4:20-25).

Do you believe like Abraham that with God you cannot lose? That you can make Jesus Lord of everything in your life? Can you give back to God your family, your

home, career, appearance, desires, health, future? He can take them any time He wants you know. Why not give them to Him while you can give them in faith, knowing and trusting that He will do what is best?

4. Living for Jesus

There is a hymn about living for Jesus.

"Living for Jesus a life that is true,
Striving to please Him in all that I do;
Yielding allegiance, glad hearted and free,
This is the pathway of blessing for me.

Living for Jesus who died in my place,
Bearing on Calvary my sin and disgrace;
Such love constrains me to answer His call,
Follow His leading and give Him my all.

Living for Jesus wherever I am,
Doing each duty in His holy name;
Seeking the lost ones He died to redeem,
Bringing the weary to find rest in Him."

Chorus:

"O Jesus, Lord and Savior,
I give myself to Thee,
For Thou in Thine atonement
didst give Thyself for me;
I own no other master,
my heart shall be Thy throne;
My life I give, henceforth to live,
O Christ, for Thee alone."

Thomas O. Chisholm 1866-1960

D. Like Salt Without Flavor - Luke 14:34-35

Counting the cost and taking up your cross does not mean the end of everything. It is actually the beginning of real life in Christ, a life of meaning, zest, and reality. Believers who are not disciples are like salt without flavor. What does that mean? It is good for nothing, absolutely useless. It might as well be thrown out.

Applications

1. Do you want to be a zestful, flavorful Christian? Do you understand what God requires of you to be salt in His world? How will you respond?
2. What is the cost of discipleship for you? Will you yield where you are now holding back?
3. Will you take up your cross and surrender to Jesus today? To hold on to your life is to lose it. To lose it is to gain it forever (Matthew 16:25). Jesus left heaven's glory for you. He gave all. What are you holding on to?