

A call to discipleship

Relationships take time and effort for them to work. When a man and a woman meet with the intention of marriage they give up all other things to see each other. Their attention and devotion is focused on each other. They even give up things that they love for each other because their love for each other exceeds those things. So when Christ calls us to discipleship He calls us into a relationship where sacrifice is required but is willing given for our love for Him.

Luke 14: 15 – 35

1) A call to a feast

- The ultimate calling of a disciple is to a feast – the marriage feast of the Lamb.
 - Revelation 19: 6 – 9 Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: “Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God’s holy people.) Then the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!” And he added, “These are the true words of God.”
- When Jesus calls us he’s calling us to something of eternal good – His call is a marriage proposal. He’s the groom and we’re the bride.
- To turn down His invitation is to shun His goodness – it’s like a slap in the face in the Jewish culture
- There are numerous reasons why we decline His invitation.
 - A focus on worldly things and responsibilities
 - One person bought a field and wanted to go and see it
 - Another bought oxen and wanted to try them out
 - A focus on family matters
 - Someone else had just got married so couldn’t attend the feast.
- Note that God knew them all but they didn’t want to know Him.
 - Sometimes we want to go through the ritual of religion without walking with God
 - Rituals can be performed along with having everything else in the world.
- Imagine if a marriage is about to take place but the bride says that she can’t be there because she has to see her new field, or has bought a new car, or had to attend a friend’s wedding. How would the groom feel?
- When God calls us to discipleship we need to understand His intentions, the fact that what He has for us far outweighs what we have.
 - 2 Corinthians 4: 17 – 18 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.
- Jesus has reached out to us by His grace. He doesn’t need us although God is angry if His grace is shunned. He’ll fill His banquet hall with people who the world would consider unworthy and leave out those who the world considers worthy.
 - Let us not judge other by outward appearances but rather we ought to judge ourselves by God’s standards to make sure that we aren’t disqualified from entering the great banquet – the wedding feast of the Lamb – ourselves.

2) A call to sacrifice

- After all the excuses are given Jesus lays down His expectations of discipleship.
- He doesn't limit it to the sacrifice of family relations and even of our own lives. By emphasising, by saying that we should hate them, He's merely using hyperbolic language that would include everything else. Normally people uphold their family relations above anything else and, normally, their own lives above their families.
 - Hence if we sacrifice our families and our own lives for the sake of being a disciple of Jesus then sacrificing other things would easily follow suit.
- When the rich young ruler came to Jesus and asked how he could receive eternal life. First Jesus told him to keep the commandments and when he said that he had done so Jesus said:
 - Matthew 19: 21 "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."
 - This young man was wealthy and content to keep the law.
 - It wasn't about giving up his wealth. It was about whether he loved his wealth more than he loved Jesus, which he did.
- What is it that keeps us content in our religious duties but would keep us away from walking closely with Jesus?
 - Are we willing to sacrifice that which is most precious to us that we can gain the pearl of great price – Jesus.
- Jim Elliot: He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.
- Remember the parable of the farmer who had bumper crops and wanted to build bigger barns to store them in and God said: "You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?" (Luke 12: 16 – 21)
- We should never take discipleship lightly.
 - Jesus is saying that we should count the cost and used examples of someone who wants to build a tower and also of a king who wants to go to war.
 - Have we taken being a disciple of Jesus seriously?
 - Have we truly counted the cost and are willing to take up our cross – die to ourselves and all that is dear to us, and follow Jesus as He is the dearest person in our lives?
- Luke 14: 33 In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.
 - This means that we need to relinquish all rights on everything that we have when we are disciples of Jesus.
 - Everything that we have belongs to Him.

3) A call to saltiness

- Matthew 5: 13 You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.
- We can only be the true salt of the earth when we are truly Jesus' disciples having relinquished all hold onto anything else and having been freed from the hold anything had on us.
- Salt gives taste and we are the salt – the fragrance of Christ – making the world thirst for Him by the way we live.
- Salt preserves and are to be the people who preserve moral uprightness in our society by being Christ in the world.
- However, if we are Jesus' true disciples and merely fit in with the way the world does things then we will have lost our saltiness and are good neither for Jesus nor the world.

Are you longing for the feast of the Lamb?

Are you living as a true disciple of Jesus having relinquished all rights to all else to follow Him?

Are you the salt of the earth making others thirsty for Jesus and upholding moral righteousness in it?