



SERMON SERIES BY:
STEPHEN HERROD

MESSAGE:

WELCOME TO CALVARY

PASSAGE: LUKE 14:26-27 ESV

26 “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.
27 Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

MESSAGE GOAL:

The goal of this message is to emphasize the intense commitment and sacrifice involved in discipleship to the Lord Jesus Christ. It aims to clarify that discipleship goes beyond a mere association with a church or profession of faith; rather, it requires a transformative lifestyle where one's commitment to Christ takes precedence over everything, even family ties and personal ambitions.

INTRODUCTION

Do you really know what you got yourself into as a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ? Or if you are on the outside looking in, do you know what you would be getting yourself into if you accept the invitation to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Let's start here. Disciple in the Greek language is μαθητής (mathētēs), and it generally refers to any student or learner, as

opposed to a teacher. In the time of Jesus, it was most associated with people who were devoted followers of a great religious leader or teacher of philosophy.

To be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ is to be a learner of Jesus and a follower of Jesus, but it's not merely learning or following in the most basic sense, for the depths of what it truly means run deep and come with a hefty price. To be a disciple of Jesus involves learning and following him, and I want you to leave here sure that you understand what truly means.

For example, at the conclusion of this proclamation and exposition of the teachings of Jesus Christ, there will be an invitation to discipleship. Now let me clarify that the invitation to discipleship is not only for the unsaved or unchurched; It's more than coming down aisles, professing your faith, filling out a form and joining the church. Unfortunately, there has been a trend in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ where some people respond to the invitation to discipleship solely for the sake of their eternal security. Upon professing their faith, the journey is considered complete, and there is nothing further to do in following Jesus. Now that is partially correct, because once one comes to Christ, their journey prior to following Christ is complete, but the journey of following Christ has just begun. Furthermore, we must not confuse salvation

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with sanctification; we must not confuse salvation for discipleship. To be saved, to be delivered, is a free gift from God.

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

Salvation is a free gift from God that is received through faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and acceptance of his sacrifice on the cross and his resurrection from the dead. “If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved (Romans 10:9).” Salvation is a free gift from God that is received through faith. Faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17). When you hear the word of God and respond in faith, you start the journey of discipleship, but once again, we must not confuse salvation for discipleship. Salvation is a free gift from God that costs you nothing, but discipleship costs you everything. Salvation is free, but discipleship is costly. Discipleship costs you your life. You must lose your life. Salvation is free, but discipleship costs your life. An invitation to discipleship is an invitation to calvary where you are called to surrender and die. It is an invitation to nail your old way of life, your old way of thinking, your old way of believing, your old way of behaving, your old way of talking, your old way of walking, your old way of living, your

power and control, to the cross, and die. You, as you were prior to Christ, must die, if you are to be his disciple.

Now, I would have you to know that there is life on the other side of your Calvary experience, just as it was for Jesus, and that is a benefit of being His disciple. But I would also have you to know that the life on the other side of this death that must occur is a completely different life than you lived prior to truly following the teachings of Christ. You will be born again; old things have passed away because you have nailed your old way of life, your old way of thinking, your old way of believing, your old way of behaving, your old way of talking, your old way of walking, your old way of living, your power and control, to the cross.

“You have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires (Galatians 5:24). From your Calvary experience will emerge a new birth, a new life, that is completely shaped and formed by the words and teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is why the invitation to discipleship is not a one-time experience. It is also why the invitation to discipleship is not only for the unsaved or unchurched, but for all of us. Anytime you study the words of Jesus or hear His words proclaimed by one of His proclaimers, it is an invitation to discipleship. It is an invitation for you to respond in faith and obedience, with the aid of the Holy Spirit. Anytime the teachings of Christ are proclaimed, it is an invitation for

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all us to surrender, to yield, to believe, to obey. Your life is not your own, but to Him, you belong. And I don't know what you were told about this journey, but it comes with persecution, suffering, betrayal, warfare, and even death.

Welcome to Calvary.

As paradoxical as this sounds, it is true: true discipleship is to give up everything so that you may truly gain everything, “for whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for him will truly find it (Matthew 16:25).” You must surrender everything. To truly follow Jesus is to make everything subordinate and subjected to Christ and his teachings, including yourself. Now I don’t want you to just take my word for it but take His words for it. Let me remind you of his words in these 2 verses, and then I'll extend the invitation to discipleship.

SERMON POINTS

1. *IF YOU ARE TO TRULY BE A DISCIPLE OF JESUS CHRIST, YOUR COMMITMENT TO CHRIST AND HIS TEACHINGS AMUST BE ABOVE EVERYTHING AND EVERYBODY ELSE.*

Verse 25 says, there was a crowd of people who were following Jesus, and Jesus turned to them to let them know what following

him truly meant. He turned to them, and he turns to us, saying these words: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he or she cannot be my disciple (Luke 14:25)." Surely, Jesus is not teaching us to literally hate our father, mother, wife, children, brothers, and sisters, or ourselves, for that would contradict his own teachings. Elsewhere, Jesus told us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves (Luke 10:28). Beloved, you are to love your family and your friends. You are to love yourself. You are fearfully and wonderfully made. You are a one-of-a-kind creation. God uniquely designed you. Love others and love yourself. You are not to hate anybody. Jesus is not teaching us to genuinely harbor hatred towards our family members. Instead, he employs a literary technique known as hyperbole, which, when used here, is an exaggeration for emphasis and rhetorical effect. Here it is: Jesus is not teaching us to truly have hatred towards our family members but uses this strong language to highlight the radical commitment required for discipleship. He is teaching us that following Christ should take precedence over even the closest family ties, even over oneself.

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It means to put your commitment to Christ:
above your job,
above your business,
above your brand,
above your affiliations,
above your political allegiances,
above your personal ambitions,
above your husband,
above your wife,
above your parents,
above everything.

Discipleship is not merely an affiliation; it is a lifestyle. However, when discipleship is reduced to an affiliation, when it becomes merely a part of your life, or simplified to a routine or membership, its transformative power diminishes. Get this: If discipleship is relegated to being a part of your life rather than your life itself, you will become unstable in your ways. You'll be pulled in different directions by Jesus, new age spirituality, the secularism of the academy, conservative framework, liberal framework, the perspective of another person, author podcaster, influencer, and/or content creator, leaving you confused and unstable. Here's the revelation: Discipleship isn't a journey that becomes a mere part of your life; it's a journey that becomes your entire life. When your commitment to Christ is above everything and everybody else, and His teachings serve as the lamp for your feet and the light for your path, they will inform every aspect of your existence, and instead of being shaped by diverse influences leading to a spiritual multiple personality

disorder, the teachings of Christ will guide how you relate to yourself, your family, your friends, and everything else in this world. The teachings of Christ will be the lens by which you see yourself, others, and everything else. If I could sum up what Jesus is saying here in 5 words, it would be: Jesus over everything and everybody.

If you are to truly be a disciple of Jesus Christ, your commitment to Christ and his teachings must be above your job, your business, your family, your friends, your goals, and even yourself.

Let me illustrate it this way: in the 90s, a popular phrase and movement emerged in Christian culture—WWJD, which stands for "What Would Jesus Do?" The idea was to encourage individuals to consider how Jesus might respond to a situation and guide their actions accordingly. Today, I'm not looking to start a movement, but I do have an acronym and corresponding phrase to offer you that will help navigate the implications of discipleship: WDJS, which stands for "What Did Jesus Say?"

Here is how that will help:

If your family or friends say one thing, but Jesus said something different, as a disciple of Jesus Christ, you know whose words to follow. If the academy and professors say one thing, but Jesus said something different, as a disciple of Jesus Christ, you know whose words to follow. If someone is preaching or teaching one thing, but Jesus said something different, as a disciple of

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Jesus Christ, you know whose words to follow. If a celebrity or influencer says one thing, but Jesus said something different, as a disciple of Jesus Christ, you know whose words to follow. If politicians or the media say one thing, but Jesus said something different, as a disciple of Jesus Christ, you know whose words to follow. If you follow THE CHRIST and do not hate your own father and mother and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, and even your own life, you cannot be his disciple.

2. IF YOU ARE TO TRULY BE A DISCIPLE OF JESUS CHRIST, YOU, TOO, MUST BEAR A CROSS AND DIE LIKE JESUS DID.

Now, according to verse 26, Jesus teaches us that whoever does not bear his own cross and come after him cannot be his disciple.

Welcome to Calvary.

"Must Jesus bear the cross, and all of us go free? No, there's a cross for everyone, and there's a cross for you and me." The invitation to discipleship is an invitation to die. Anyone given a cross in that time and context faced execution by the Roman government. The invitation to discipleship is an invitation to die, just as Jesus did. To be a disciple of Jesus Christ is to die as Jesus died.

Soon after Jesus finished this teaching, he was given a cross to bear, and he died!

Reports say he died until the moon dripped in blood. He died until the earth began to shake like a drunken man. He died until the centurion soldier said, "Surely this must be the son of God!" He died until the sun refused to shine! He died until death died! But on the first day of the week, Jesus was resurrected from the dead!

The invitation to discipleship is an invitation to Calvary to die, but be encouraged by 2 Timothy 2:11 that says, "Here is a trustworthy saying: If we die with him, we will also live with him!" Paul expresses it elsewhere: "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me (Galatians 2:20)."

If you are to follow Christ, you must die; Nail your old way of life, your old way of thinking, your old way of believing, your old way of behaving, your old way of talking, your old way of walking, your old way of living, your power and control, and die. Die, so that the life God has for you can emerge, so that the way of thinking and believing that God has for you can emerge! Die, so that the teachings of Jesus Christ can inform how you see, hear, think, believe, behave, love, grieve, feel, walk, talk, sing, praise, worship, give, serve, and live. Beloved, following Jesus costs you everything, but it is worth it. This journey of discipleship comes with suffering,

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persecution, betrayal, warfare, and even death! But it also comes with resurrection, and the new life in Christ outweighs and outlasts the life that is not life at all outside of Christ.

QUOTES BY STEPHEN HERROD

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“When someone comes to Christ, their journey prior to following Christ is complete, but the journey of following Christ has just begun.”

“When you hear the word of God and respond in faith, you start the journey of discipleship, but salvation is not discipleship. Salvation is a free gift from God that costs you nothing, but discipleship costs you everything.”

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