

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

THE ONE WHO GAVE ALL, FOR ALL

Luke 14:25-33

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Analysis by Paige G. Evers

25 Now large crowds were traveling with him; and he turned and said to them, 26 “Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. 27 Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, 30 saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’ 31 Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. 33 So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.”

DIAGNOSIS: “No thanks, Jesus, I don’t want to be your disciple after all.”

Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem) – Clear

Expectations

In this lesson Jesus makes an announcement to his admiring public (the “large crowds” that “were traveling with him” in v. 25) that likely made them cringe. His words have the same effect today. “Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple” (v. 26), Jesus says. But family relationships aren’t the only tests of loyalty to Jesus. Carrying the cross (v. 27) and giving up all one’s possessions (v. 33) are also required.

Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem) – Easy Refusals

We don’t hear how the crowd responds to Jesus’ claims, but it’s easy to imagine ourselves reacting with some version of “Thanks, but no thanks.” One could reply, “Sorry, Jesus, I guess I love my father and mother, wife and children too much to follow you” or “Sorry, Jesus, when you put it that way I realize I just can’t live without my house, car, and stock portfolio.” Another possible response sounds different but ends up with a rejection of Jesus’ call to discipleship just the same: “Sure, I can give all that up, no problem, Jesus.” It’s easy to say but hard to do, the person discovers, when he attempt to follow Jesus without sitting down first to estimate the cost (vv. 28 & 31) of turning over his life to his Lord.

Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem) – Eternal Consequences

Those who refuse Jesus’ call to be his disciple find out, sooner or later, that their rejection of him has eternal consequences. If they cannot be Jesus’ disciple (vv. 26, 27, 33) they cannot be saved. They will be judged on their merits alone. Even their half-hearted attempts to follow Jesus won’t help them now. Their incomplete towers (v. 28-30), bloodied armies (v. 31-32), treasured possessions (v. 33) and family relationships (v. 26) will turn to dust.

PROGNOSIS: “Thank you, Jesus, for allowing me to be your disciple.”

Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution) – *Fulfilled Expectations*

What the crowds in the text find out, and what we know on this side of Easter, is that Jesus is the one who will fulfill everything that he requires of those who follow him. Jesus is the one who carries his cross and gives up his life to give us life. The crucified Son of God finishes what his Father started in the incarnation. He considered the cost, and even death is not too costly for him, because it is the only way to forgive sinners and to give them the gift of eternal life.

Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution) – *Joyful Disciples*

Trusting in what God has done through the cross and resurrection of Jesus, our hearts begin to cling to him, not to our earthly possessions and relationships. Instead of being afraid of what we must give up to become Jesus' disciple, we discover that our relationships are given greater depth and meaning when we put Jesus first in our lives. Jesus' self-sacrifice for our sake frees us to count the cost of following him. We choose to be his disciples, realizing that it's a way of life better than anything we could imagine or create for ourselves.

Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution) – *Willing Sacrifices*
Being Jesus' disciples means sacrificing ourselves by turning outward to others. Seeing the world through Jesus' eyes, we are free to give up our possessions for the sake of others, to love the neighbor, and to serve those in need. With a willingness to give our all, we demonstrate to those around us the radical difference it makes when Jesus is the Lord of our lives. And as we live out our discipleship, we draw others to the One who gave his all for us and for the world.