

"Consider the Cost"

The 13th Sunday after Pentecost

September 7, 2025

Luke 14 25-33

Dear Friends in Jesus,

Consider the cost. One of the important tasks of parents is helping their children understand how to budget and plan financially for the future. As children begin to receive an allowance or earn money through their odd jobs, they quite naturally want to spend what they have earned on junk food or sparkly trinkets.

As they mature and secure more permanent jobs, the desire for more costly items grows stronger – TVs, computers, audio systems, automobiles, etc. A parent's work continues to guide their child to consider the cost of such items and whether or not the child has the financial resources to pay the price.

In this week's Gospel Jesus reminds us of the importance of considering the cost of any venture we are about to undertake. Does the builder of a tower have the resources to complete the job? Does a king going to war have enough forces to meet an enemy? (Luke 14:25-33)

Great multitudes began to follow Jesus and they went where He went. One day He turned to them and spoke to them about what it would take and mean to be one of His disciples. Please listen to Jesus' words in the Gospel Reading and "Consider the Cost"

"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. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it — lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple."

Now there might be someone who thinks that it is always so easy to give such advice to the other guy ... so simple to tell the other guy to consider the cost. And that someone might be thinking that this is especially true for God; that it is easy for God to give advice and not get involved. After all, God can make a tower out of nothing in the twinkling of an eye; and besides that, there isn't an army that could withstand the LORD for even an inkling of a second. Such thinking is sinful and wrong - sinful because it is a doubt and denial of God's mercy - wrong because it is contrary to what has already taken place, that is, it is contrary to the gracious Good News.

For God **has** considered the cost. From eternity He looked upon this fallen world and knew that He would have to send His Son to be the Redeemer for "the LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek God. They have all turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is none who does good, no, not one" (Psalm 14:1-3). Thus, the

Savior could not be someone conceived by man and born of woman. Consider the cost, for someone else would have to pay the price. But the Savior could not be an angel, for angels are spirit and not flesh and blood, and as Scripture says: "without the shedding of blood there is no remission" of sins. (Heb. 9:22) The Sacrifice could not be from an animal "for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins" (Heb. 10:4).

So, who would be the Savior? And considering the cost, who could be the Savior? Listen to a portion of the Revelation to the Apostle John:

"And I saw in the right hand of Him Who sat on the Throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?' And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. But one of the elders said to me, 'Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals'" (Rev. 5:1-5).

God considered the cost and sent His Son Who was Incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary.

Consider Jesus ... truly Divine to be a sufficient Sacrifice which it was even from eternity, and truly human in order to be under the Law and shed His holy Blood which it was in time. Jesus left His Father's right hand and was born in this world. For the redemption of the world, He left behind His brothers and sisters, and would not let His disciples deter Him. When Peter sought to lead an army against Jesus' enemies, our Lord told Peter to put away his sword and further told him: "Do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matthew 26:53). Jesus considered the cost and left behind a heavenly host and a handful of disciples in order to be taken captive by Roman soldiers and Temple guards. "Then the detachment of troops and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him" (John 18:12).

Jesus left His mother in the hands of John and bore the sins of the world. He is nailed to a beam which is fastened on a narrow, wooden column with its base in the foundation of the world. Jesus is crucified and it appears to the world as if He had not considered the cost. It seemed as if, despite His best intentions and His greatest effort, this Man began to build the Kingdom of God and was not able to finish. He intended to be the Savior but He doesn't look much like He is going to make it. "And the soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, and saying, 'If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself'" (Luke 23:36). But this is not the way it was to be. When Jesus said, "It is finished" (John 19:30) the atonement of all sins of all people was accomplished. If you will, the temple is finished and the war is won.

The multitudes who heard Jesus speak that day are no longer there at the Place of the Skull. They stopped following Him when they considered the cost. A few are there. There always are. Mary, John, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea and some women standing at a distance are all that is left.

"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. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. ... So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple."

So, what **does** this mean? First, think on what hating family and even life doesn't mean, and what bearing your cross doesn't mean. Being a disciple doesn't mean that you may leave off fulfilling your vocation as father, mother, wife, child, brother, sister, member of the community, student, employee or whatever, anymore than it means having permission to taking your own life, which is to commit suicide. That would be leaving something that you are not permitted to leave behind.

Likewise, being a disciple doesn't mean you bearing your own cross of sin, for Christ has already done that. That would be taking on the burden of sin that has been taken from you.

So, what does this mean? Hating family involves the First Commandment ... "I am the LORD your God ... you shall have no other gods before Me" (Exodus 20:2-3). This means that we should fear, love and trust in God above all things ... even above your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters. Hating your life means remaining faithful to the LORD your God even if it means dying. As Luther wrote in his hymn: "And take they our life, goods, fame, child and wife; let these all be gone; they yet have nothing won, the Kingdom ours remaineth!"

Being a disciple involves bearing your cross and following Jesus. You do this when you rise every morning and recall that in your Baptism you were crucified with Christ and you bear on your brow the seal of Him Who died for you and rose again. You bear your cross when you drag yourself to the Altar and partake of the Feast of Victory from our God at His Table. Your cross is the yoke of forgiveness you bear with you as you hear the cleansing Word of the Absolution and depart in peace following the Benediction.

Listen to Jesus, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

In the Divine Service ... yes, in the Liturgy of the LORD ... you are able to join the choir of angels and archangels and the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders and the entire company of heaven in saying:

"Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!" (Rev. 5:12)

Truly, because you are forgiven in the Name of the Father and the (+) Son and the Holy Spirit, you are able to bear your cross and follow Jesus until that day when you also will hear and say, "Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him Who sits on the Throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!" (Rev. 5:13). Amen.