

## Defining Discipleship

Luke 14:25-35

The following are responses from comment cards given to the staff members at Bridger Wilderness Area.

- Please avoid building trails up hill.
- Too many bugs and leeches and spiders webs. Please spray the wilderness to rid the area of these pests.
- Please pave the trails and add chair lifts so that we can reach the beautiful views without having to hike to them.
- The coyotes made to much noise last night and I didn't get any sleep. Please kill them all.
- A small deer came into my camp and stole a jar of pickles. Can I get reimbursed? Please call me.
  - A McDonalds would be nice at the trail head.
  - There are too many rocks on these mountains!!!

I don't think that these people really understand what it means to stay in a wilderness area. I think they were looking for comfort and convenience. Which brings me to my point today; many people don't understand what it means to be a genuine Christian. They want it on their terms. They don't know the biblical definition of discipleship.

Jesus confronts this issue in our text today. Read Luke 14:25-35

So what is a disciple? A disciple is a true follower of Jesus. In other words, what we would call a "Christian." If you are a Christian then you are a disciple. The term disciple occurs 269 times in the New Testament, and the word Christian only shows up 3 times.

Jesus said in vs. 27, "Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple." It can also say, "Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be a Christian."

Vs. 25-27, the first thing I want you to notice is whom Jesus is speaking to. He spoke to the large crowd that is traveling with Jesus. They considered themselves to be followers of Jesus. They were kind of along for the ride.

They were like many today that look to Jesus to solve their money problems, relationship problems, health problems, and so on. And if these problems aren't solved in a timely manner by Jesus they quickly grow disillusioned and are unwilling to follow Jesus. This 'large crowd' is an example of a casual commitment. My question today is, "Which one are you?"

TO be a disciple of Jesus you must be committed to him above everything else. In vs. 26 Jesus says that this commitment level applies to "anyone who comes to me." Jesus is talking to everyone. Notice he wasn't talking to pastors, teachers, missionaries and apostles. He is saying this principal applies to everyone who would be his followers.

Jesus goes on to say, "Anyone who comes to me and does not hate his father, mother, his wife and children, his brother and sister, yes even his own life cannot be my disciple." (vs. 26)

The word "hate" isn't meant to be taken literal, but is trying to make a point. What Jesus is saying here is, we must love him much more than we love anyone or anything in our lives.

Jesus must be first in our priorities and loyalties. Is this true in your life?

In vs. 27, Jesus uses the phrase "carrying his cross" as an illustration to us to show us that following him requires that we say goodbye to our own will and desires.

Right about now some of you are saying, "Man I thought salvation was a free gift. I didn't know it was going to require so much out of me." Let me put it to you this way.

Suppose I wanted to climb Mount Everest. Let's say it costs \$70,000 after it's all said and done. But I can't afford that, so a wealthy man comes up to me and says, "I will pay your cost." If I accept his free offer, I have just committed myself to

months of difficult training and effort. It could even cost me my life. See... even though the trip was paid for, it's still costly.

Vs. 28-33, Jesus doesn't want people to make a commitment to him without understanding or thinking about what is involved.

Jesus doesn't want the crowds, he wants commitment!! The state of the church as a whole today tells me that we have big crowds but few disciples.

Vs. 34-35, "to give up everything." We may not literally give up everything but Jesus is referring to an attitude of the heart that says JESUS is my priority over anything else.

Jesus concludes by saying, "He who has an ear to hear, let him hear." He said this to remind us of our responsibility to listen and respond to this difficult message.

The teaching is not difficult to understand but it is difficult to accept.

The question we need to ask ourselves is not, "Am I able to follow Jesus completely?" But, "Am I willing to follow Jesus completely?" Jesus is confronting not our ability to follow, but our willingness to follow him with our whole heart.

Are you willing to be called his disciple?