

DEAD MAN WALKING // Luke 14:27

Message from the series, The Cost of Discipleship

Main Idea of the Series: It will cost you something to be a disciple.

In the previous verses (Luke 14: 25-26), Jesus indicated that being a disciple would cost you your family, that you would have to make Jesus the top priority in your life, the greatest love in your life. In verse 25, he is now calling us to carry our own cross and come after him—your life with Christ won't start until your life really ends.

Main Idea of the Sermon: Christ calls his disciples to a life of self-denial and total surrender.

This is not a call to physical death—everyone will die physically—but a call to live in a posture of life in which you are dead to self and to the world. There is no life apart from what is lived in, through, and for Christ.

You must not only hate your family; you must hate yourself. This is not hating ourselves in a framework of despair, but in a way that prompts us to turn our eyes on Jesus. Only when we deny ourselves as Jesus prescribes will we ever know how to truly love ourselves. We are never more loved than through the lens of the cross.

Some of us do hate ourselves, our sins and failings and limitations. Many of us don't hate ourselves enough—we want to keep our lives because they seem to be going well and we want Jesus to just bless what we have. We often make these judgements of hate or love based on a worldly scorecard of life.

Jesus wants you to take all the stuff that you hate and all the stuff that you love and put them to death, to crucify them, and focus on who he is instead.

Four Aspects of the Call:**1. A blanket approach**

Every disciple receives the same call—no one can dodge the cross. There is a sense of comfort in being part of the church because we are all in the same position and there is a fellowship in carrying our crosses.

2. A radical assignment

Everyone in Jesus' original audience knew what it meant to carry a cross. It meant to be subject to Rome and to be going to your own execution by a horrific death. It meant to be a dead man walking. To follow Jesus in carrying the cross means to die a daily death, each day to take up a new cross. We are under new management, and to walk after Jesus is to be subject to the cross.

3. A necessary assumption

The assumption is that if you pick up the cross, you will begin walking toward Calvary. Those carrying the cross are never standing still. We must have total identification with Jesus, and the suffering we experience as a result is directly correlated to our connection with him. The cross changes the way that we live and the decisions that we make. Jesus will ask you to do things you don't want to do and will prevent you from doing things that you want to do. But, despite the devil's lies, there is an empty grave on the other side of the cross.

4. A dreadful admonition

No cross, no crown. You cannot be Jesus' disciple if you do not take up your cross and follow him. There is no junior discipleship, no halfway disciples—you are either in or you're not. Jesus is not looking for people to say, "Here's my life, use me." He is looking for people to lay down their lives.

Jesus also counted the cost before he went to the cross. He will never ask us to do something that he has not also done himself.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is it important to be part of the church while living out this radical calling?
2. What does it look like to die to self daily? What spiritual disciplines promote this way of living?
3. How has carrying the cross to follow Jesus impacted the way you live and the decisions you have made?