



Count the Cost of Discipleship

March 10, 2019

Mark 1:16-20 and Luke 14:25-33

“Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:27).

Jesus attracted great crowds partially because of the earthly benefits those who followed Him expected to receive. They saw or had heard about Jesus feeding thousands of people with a few borrowed fish and some pieces of bread. Obviously to some, if they followed Jesus, they could enjoy free food and not need to work. Perhaps even better, some expected Jesus to heal all their diseases if they ever got sick. After all, Jesus made the blind to see, the deaf to hear, and the lame to walk. Imagining all the possible benefits of following Jesus, who wouldn't want to join the crowd! But, as Jesus told Pilate, His Kingdom was not of this world. Jesus wanted followers who would love and obey God, not just seek the gifts God could give them. Jesus wanted followers who would become His disciples and learn the truth about His Father, himself, and the gift of eternal life; then, His disciples could go out into the world and proclaim the good news of salvation from sin and sin's consequences through faith in Him. So, Jesus thinned the crowds when He told everyone they could not be His disciples unless they carried their own cross and were willing to suffer and die as a common criminal to learn the words of eternal life. Since Jesus had promised, “Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life,” Peter chose to suffer and die as His disciple, telling Jesus, “You have the words of eternal life” (Matthew 19:29, John 6:68).

Thinking Further

1. Do you think Simon and Andrew, and James and John, knew anything about Jesus before Jesus called them to follow Him? Give a reason for your answer.
2. What are some of the qualities of a fisherman's occupation that would help Simon, Andrew, James, and John be good at fishing for people?
3. What are some of the reasons that you can think of for great crowds of people following Jesus? Why do you think some people, even some great crowds, follow Jesus today?
4. Why do you think Jesus' true disciples obey Him immediately? What might it indicate when someone who calls himself a disciple of Jesus consistently refuses to obey Jesus' commands in the Bible?
5. Have you counted the cost of becoming and being one of Jesus' true disciples? Give a reason for your answer.