

Gospel Lesson for the Week

September 9, 2007

15th Sunday after Pentecost

Please Read [Luke 14:25-33](#)

Read also [Jeremiah 18:1-11](#); [Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18](#); [Philemon 1-21](#)

Now large crowds were traveling with (Jesus); and he turned and said to them, "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. Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

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? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'

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? If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace.

So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.

Luke 14:25-33

Hard Sayings

Jesus provides a check list:

What am I willing to give up
in order to follow Him?

Father?

Mother?

Brothers?

Sisters?

Wife? (or husband, as the case may be)

Children?

Even life itself?

These were the standards he imposed.

"Too much!" I tend to say,
and would shrug and move on,
but he continues to probe
my conscience and consciousness.

Am I willing to carry a cross?

Why not? Well, if it's gold, that is,
and hangs loosely from a thin chain
around my neck. Why not?
And I might even be willing
to carry a cross
in some ceremonial celebration
once or twice a year
But *really* carry a cross?
A real cross,
rough-hewn
and splinter-prone
and too heavy to sustain
over a long uphill climb?
Or even worse:
the cross of stigma
and insult
and oppression
for being his disciple?
Let me think about these things.
Let me count the cost.

Which brings us to the subject
of tower building and waging war.
These are costly things,
and Jesus uses them as little parables,
compelling us to weigh with care
the the cost of discipleship.
Both have a strangely current ring
in these anxious days
of sub-prime borrowing and mortgages,
and Iraqi troop surge woes.
But just when I'm letting
contemporary headlines
distract me from the case at hand,
I'm driven back again to the main theme:
Discipleship.
Hmmm. There it is again.
Why does he keep coming back
to this same theme:
The stark necessity of giving all,
of holding nothing back.
Hard sayings indeed!
Let me think about this.

No scrimping on the cost of life's design

When counting the disciple's bottom line!

--- rvc