

“The Cost of Discipleship”

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Sermon Preached: Sunday 7th September 2025

Preacher: Pastor Jason Sander

Location: St Peter's Lutheran Church, Loxton

Sermon Text: [Luke 14:25-35](#)

My friends, grace, mercy and peace to you in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Have you ever wanted something so badly that you had to give up other things to get it? Yes, have you ever wanted something so badly that you had to give up other things to get it? The story of a young man who dreamed of becoming a concert pianist, spent hours every day practicing. His friends invited him out or when quick money jobs came along he had to say no.

His teacher reminded him every time you say yes to something you're saying no to something else. If you want the music you must pay the price. Years later after great sacrifice after discipline he stood on the stage in a great concert hall and as the music poured out of his hands he knew it had been all worth it.

Perhaps that's the picture Jesus gives us in Luke 14 from verse 25, following him has a cost, following him has a cost but the cost opens the door, the door to real life. So Luke tells us that large crowds were following Jesus. People were curious, excited and perhaps even caught up in the buzz of the moment.

But Jesus he turns around and he says well if you want to be my disciple you must hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes even your own life. Whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. Strong words, a bit of a shock value there.

We had a great chat on a meeting on Thursday night for our Vine project and we couldn't get over this word hate because many of us were taught as kids don't use the word hate, hate is such a powerful word. That's when you can say well Jesus says it, why can't I? But no because it's him trying to make a very big point to us, shock tactic point. Jesus doesn't mean despise your family, he means I must come first even before the deepest loyalties of your heart otherwise the tower is left unfinished, the army is left undefeated.

Jesus is saying don't just don't follow me on it on a whim, don't get swept up in the crowd, count the cost. It's easy to get swept up in the crowd, see following Jesus or Christianity is a just an exciting type of entertaining product, particularly in our Western culture. You know Jesus says don't get swept up in that, really consider what it means to follow me.

Now first that sounds like bad news, who would sign up for that? Give up everything, carry a cross, a burden? Here's a twist, Jesus isn't closing a door, he's opening one, a door to a new life, a new way of living. Think of a door that's swollen shut, obviously as sometimes the seasons change we sometimes know that one door gets a little bit sticky, there's one in the ministry centre, one of the toilet doors always gets a little bit sticky around wintertime and then when summer comes she's all good again. Sometimes you have to do a bit of work on

that door to open it, you may have to scrape away what blocks it, you have to get the plane around to take off that little edge that's stopping it from opening.

I think Jesus' words are like that, he strips away what clutters our hearts, our pride, our possessions, our illusion of control, so that we can step into freedom. It looks like a loss, it may even feel like a loss. What Jesus offers is so much more than what the world can give us.

So it's actually a gain, it's trading a false life for a real one and that's what we need to weigh up, that's what we need to discern. So the Christian community, we're a discerning community, we continually reflect on where Jesus is calling us, where he's leading us, what we need to remove that may be stopping us from growing, from serving him in his mission. And so the invitation to follow Jesus is an invitation to receive, freedom from being trapped in ourselves, freedom from being trapped in our sin.

It's an invitation to receive forgiveness and grace that no one else in this world can give. And after that passage Jesus says that we become like salt. We didn't hear that this morning but if salt loses its saltiness it's worthless.

What's he saying? Well, as Christians we are like salt, we are flavour giving, we are preserving people, we preserve God's truth in this world. We're agents of healing because salt was used for healing in the ancient world too. We add to the world.

And so Jesus says that if salt that loses its taste is worthless, a disciple without surrender is the same. But a disciple who follows wholeheartedly, now that's the life that makes a difference. Here's a moment for honesty.

We listen to Jesus' call to consider the cost. We strive to do our best, to take up our crosses and to let go of everything. We know that we do fall short.

We trip up, we hold tightly to our pride, our possessions, our desire for control instead of surrendering when we need to. So then does Jesus turn away and say, no, you're no good to be my disciple, nick off. No, he doesn't do that because the good news is this, the same Jesus who calls us to carry the cross is the one who carried the cross for us.

He knows our weakness, he knows our stumbling, he knows that we can't do this on our own strength. So when we fail, he doesn't let us go. He forgives, he restores, he picks us up and says, follow me again.

We just have to flick through the New Testament and see the disciples themselves struggling with this. Peter, who struggled to count the cost, and he denied Jesus. So when we fail, he sets us back on course to persevere and to keep running the race of faith, which we've explored through the book of Hebrews 11-13 over the last few weeks.

He puts us on course to help us persevere. And it's through this we learn to remove the things that hinder us. We listen to him.

We listen to the one who calls us to grow in him, to let go of the things that bog us down, to live that life of repentance and faith, to keep coming back to the font, to let go of those

things so that new life can rise. So Christ can keep growing us and we can keep learning him. Think of the story of an old man who always carried a heavy backpack.

Inside were broken tools, scraps of metal, and even rocks that he picked up on the way. And he would trunch through town and people would be like, why don't you just set it down? But he clung on to it. And one day he was so exhausted, he finally just dropped it.

It fell off. And suddenly he felt so light, free, able to walk further than ever before. That's what discipleship is like.

But Jesus calls us to put down the heavy pack, to let go of the clutter, the false securities, the things we think we can't live without. And when we do, we discover the truth. The cost of discipleship isn't losing life, it's finding it.

And even when we stumble, we pick that heavy pack up again, Jesus is patient. He reminds us gently but firmly, lay it down, follow me, lay your burdens at my feet. I'm not letting go of you.

So as we reflect on Jesus' call to discipleship, of learning his way of living and following him, what might the Holy Spirit be revealing in your life that you need to consider, even to let go of? Are there things that are weighing you down? Because Jesus invites you to let it go, to count the cost, to trust him and to walk through the door into the life that only he can give. It's Jesus' faithful journey of accomplishing our redemption on the cross that transforms us, sustains us in this journey. Simply put, it is God's grace that makes our journey of discipleship possible.

That's why we rely on him, leaning to him. One key point I want us to wrap up on is taking note of the context of Jesus' teaching. He's speaking to the community, to the crowds.

Following Jesus, it is a personal decision, but we do it with others. We do it in community so we can support, encourage and persevere together. Following Jesus is not done alone.

So as community, we can support each other. We can come to others and we have things like our prayer team and other individuals who can lead us in prayer ministry to help us let go of things. In our small groups, we can discern together where Jesus may be leading us and calling us, where he may be asking us to let go of things, to have that accountability as Christians in a loving and safe community.

Even that takes a step of faith to live like that in community, of letting go of things, to be able to be vulnerable and to live that way in community. But it's God's grace that makes our journey of discipleship possible. Let me pray.

Lord Jesus, the words you speak to us are challenging, difficult, but they are life for us. They give us your life. We thank you that even when we stumble in following you, you don't let us go.

Lord, help us to be a discerning community, to also have personal discernment too, to trust you with what we need to let go of, and to find in you the life that is truly life. Give us purpose, filled with your grace, filled with your hope. We thank you for opening the door to real life.

Help us to follow you each day, Lord. We ask this in your name, Jesus. Amen.

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