

The Bulletin

Meeks Street Church of Christ

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“Counting The Cost”

By David E. Pratte

I have a book by Paul Johnson about the history of the American people. It describes the development of the United States and discusses at length the role of religion in our history. One point he emphasizes is the tension throughout our history between the importance of religion and spirituality on the one hand and the urge for possessions and materialism on the other hand.



At one point he describes the occupations, material success, and living arrangements of Americans in the 1700's, including a description of their homes. Page 100 includes the following about what was to be the most magnificent home built during the 1700's:

"The greatest early 18th-century house in America was Rosewell, erected by Mann Page ... in 1726 on the York river. Page had this superb house built using designs ... published in London ... Page overspent, his grand house was unfinished when he died in 1730, and his debts exceeded the value of all his property ... Rosewell ... was burned down in 1916."

Compare this to Luke 14:26-30,33, where Jesus said:

"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it - lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' ... So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple."

Consider the lessons we can learn:

The Cost of Discipleship

Jesus said one cannot be His disciple unless he first hates his own father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, and even his own life. "Hate" here does not mean to have no love at all nor to actively seek the harm of others. Jesus also said we must even hate our own lives. Surely this is not absolute or literal. We should love others as we love ourselves, and no one hates his own flesh (Matthew 22:36-40; Ephesians 5:29). The Bible teaches us to love all people, especially our family (Matthew 22:36-40; Titus 2:4; Ephesians 5:25-29).

The meaning here, as shown by context, is to love them less than we love others. In this case we must love Jesus more than we do our family members, so we are willing, if necessary, to give up our relationship with them or give up our lives in order to follow Jesus fully.

We may never actually be required to literally give up our relationship with our loved ones to please the Lord, and we may never be required to actually die for His cause, but we must be willing to do so.

This is what it costs to be a disciple. And Jesus says that people who are not willing to pay this price simply cannot be His disciple. They may think they are disciples, and they may appear to others to be. But Jesus does not consider half-hearted followers to be true disciples.

There is no point starting to serve the Lord, unless we are willing to give true, whole-hearted commitment, seeking His will above all else.

[Compare Matthew 6:19-33; 10:34-39; 16:24-27; Romans 8:5-8; 12:1,2; John 6:27,63; Luke 12:15-21; 1 Timothy 4:8; 6:6-19; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; 8:5; 10:3,4; Colossians 3:1,2; Galatians 2:20.]

Consider the Cost

To be a disciple of Jesus one must pay a severe cost. Sacrifice and hardship are required. So Jesus urges people to consider the cost before becoming disciples. Many, after becoming disciples, will be rejected because they are unwilling to continue. So one should realize from the outset what he is getting into.

Jesus illustrated the need to count the cost of discipleship by describing a man who would begin to build a tower without first considering how much it would cost, to see whether or not he could afford it. If one does not consider the cost beforehand, he may begin to build but be unable to finish. People will then see how silly he was.

Likewise, if we are not willing to pay the price to serve Jesus, there is no point in beginning. We should consider this beforehand.

Of course, Jesus is not really hoping people will decide not to become disciples. He wants all to be saved (2 Peter 3:9). We need to consider, not just the cost of being a disciple, but also the cost of not being a disciple. That cost is far greater (Matthew 10:28).

The point is that we are better off not to start at all than to start and quit (2 Peter 2:20-22). And even further, if we start serving Jesus without realizing the sacrifices involved, we are likely to be discouraged and quit when we learn what it requires. However, if we know from the outset what is required, we are more likely to make a true commitment and then remain faithful when the hardships come.

Jesus then said that the price we must be willing to pay is to forsake all that we have (verse 33). Again, we may not physically lose all we possess, but we must be willing to do so if necessary to please the Lord. And many have made exactly this sacrifice. And even if we do not lose all our possessions physically, we must commit ourselves to using them for His service.

Far too many of us are too attached to our material pursuits:

possessions, pleasures, sports, travel, entertainment, recreation. If we are not willing to sacrifice them for His cause, we simply cannot be disciples.

Are we willing to pay the price?

"THE CASE OF CHRISTOPHER YOUNG"

By Kyle Campbell

The last person executed in Texas was Christopher Young, who was put to death after his appeals for clemency were exhausted on July 17, 2018. Young was sent to death row after he carjacked a woman at gunpoint in San Antonio in 2004, then headed to a mini-mart and dry cleaners. He walked in, and reached over the counter as he demanded money at gunpoint. Store owner Hasmukh Patel pushed the panic button and ran, but Young followed and shot him to death before fleeing. Despite the fierce controversy over the death penalty, God's word reveals that it is a just punishment.

Back in the Old Testament, God taught the taking of a life was sinful and was to be appropriately punished (Genesis 9:5-6; Leviticus 24:17). Now it may seem that the death penalty is nothing but vengeance killing, but the death penalty has nothing to do with vengeance. Instead, it has to do with controlling and limiting evil within a society: "At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So thou shalt put the evil away from among you" (Deuteronomy 17:6-7).

In the New Testament, Romans 13:1-4 gives us authority for the death penalty. It says, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same ..." The "sword" is a reference to capital punishment, and thus authorized by God. Therefore, when mankind stands against the death penalty, as so many people did in the case of Christopher Young, they stand against God.

Some say that standing for the death penalty and against abortion is hypocritical. It is true that those who oppose abortion believe in the sanctity of life. But God has authorized taking the life of one who has committed crimes worthy of death. Babies are innocent; they have committed no wrongdoing. There is no authority from God to take their life. In fact, He condemns it (Exodus 21:22-25). What is really hypocritical is to promote the killing of innocent lives while opposing the execution of ungodly criminals.

Those Who Need Our Prayers & Encouragement:

Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Daniel Holloway, Debbie Keplinger, Robbie, Sheila, Sherry Doles, Sandi Poole, Nathan Cox, Sandra Oliver, Chad Harris, Eli Johnson, Burt Ward, Jamie Jones, Mary Ann Holley, LuAnne Parrish, Robert Howard, Billy Grisham, and Fred Johnson.

Debbie Johnson is home recovering from her surgery.

Lee Busby has recovered from Covid, but his son, Levi, was running a fever Friday.

Our Gospel Meeting With Stacy Crim is scheduled for April 21st—24th.
(Sunday to Wednesday)

Those Who Serve:

Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:

Opening Prayer: Tim Harris Jr.
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon #1: “How Do You Handle Envy & Jealousy?”

Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am:

Workbook: Jerry Kennemur
Author: 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon
Starting Page & Question: Herschel Patton
Page #39, Question #1

Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:

Announcements: Russell Briggs
Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading: Blake Briggs
Scripture Reading: Ecclesiastes 5:18-20
Song Leader: Paul Busby
Lord’s Supper: Fred Johnson
Assisting: — —
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon #2: “The Blessings Of Work”
Closing Prayer: Lee Busby

Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.

February 21, 2024

Auditorium Bible Class: Russell Briggs
Workbook: The Book Of Daniel
Author: By Daniel H. King
Starting Page & Question: Page #22, Question #1
Invitation: Doug George
Song Leader: Dan Cottrell
Closing Prayer: Blake Briggs

“How Do You Handle Envy & Jealousy?”

Lesson Text: **Mark 15:6-11.**

I. What Is Envy And Jealousy?

- **Envy:** “To experience a feeling of ill will due to real or presumed advantage experienced by someone else.” (**Louw, J. P., & Nida**)
- **Jealousy:** “zeal, jealousy,” See Genesis 30:1 NKJB And NASB.
- The Godly Sense Of Jealousy- **Rom. 11:14-15; 2 Cor. 11:2-3; Exodus 20:5.**
- Works Of The Flesh- **Galatians 5:19-21.**
- Signs Of Carnality/Worldliness In Our Lives- **1 Corinthians 3:3.**
- Sins That Will Keep Us Out Of Heaven- **Galatians 5:21.**

II. How Envy & Jealousy Changes People? Affects Others?

- Motivates Many To Work Hard For Material Gain- **Ecclesiastes 4:4 (ESV).**
- Causes Strife & Rivalry- **Philippians 1:15-18; Acts 13:44-45.**
- Blinds Us To Our True Spiritual Needs- **Acts 13:46; 1 Timothy 6:3-4.**
- Leads Us To Ill-Will And The Harm Of Others- **Genesis 37:4-5; Acts 7:9.**
- Shows A lack Of Love- **1 Corinthians 13:4.**
- Leads Us Away From God- **Psalms 73:1-3; Psalm 37:1-2.**
- Destroys Us On The Inside- **Proverbs 14:30.**

III. How We Need To Handle These Sins.

- Remember Where Envy And Jealousy Come From.
 - **Proverbs 23:17.**
 - **Galatians 5:25-26.**
- Guard Our Hearts From These And Other Sins.
 - **Proverbs 4:23.**
- Keep Our Focus On The Will Of God And Serving Others.
 - Moses- **Numbers 11:26-30.**
 - John The Baptist- **John 1:15; 27; 35-37.**
 - Jesus- **Mark 9:38-40.**

“The Blessings Of Work”

Lesson Text: **Ecclesiastes 5:18-20.**

I. God Designed Us To Work.

- There Are Many Who Have the Mistaken View That Work Is Evil Or A Curse To Mankind Because Of The Fall In The Garden- **Genesis 3:17-19.**
- Work Itself Is Not Evil Or A Curse To Us- **Genesis 2:15.**
- God’s Wisdom Teaches Us To Be Industrious Like The Ant- **Proverbs 6:6-8.**
- God Instructs Us- **Ecclesiastes 9:10.**
- The Example Of The Woman Of **Proverbs 31:27.**

II. Why Do We Need To Work?

- **1. Money. 2. Independence. 3. Community. (Employment First Florida Website).**
- Work Provides For Our Needs.
- It Takes An exchange Of Goods Or Services To Attain Money Needed For Our Needs...
- Work Also Gives Us A Sense Of Duty, Purpose, & Identity.
- Our Work Can Help People With Their Needs (Doctors, Lawyers, House builders....).
- It Can Give Us The Satisfaction Of “*A Job Well Done.*” **Ecclesiastes 3:12-13.**
- It Keeps Us From Begging Or Stealing For Our Needs. **Luke 16:3; Ephesians 4:28.**
- It Keeps From The Sins Of Idleness- **1 Thessalonians 4:11-12; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15.**
- It Keeps Us From Poverty- **Proverbs 6:9-11.**
- It Keeps From Depending On Others (Government) To Supply Our Needs.

III. The Kinds Of Work We Can Do.

- **Acts 18:1-3-** Paul, Aquila, & Priscilla Were Tent Makers , **Acts 16:14-** Lydia, A Seller Of Purple, Cornelius Was A Centurion- **Acts 10:1, & Matthew 13:55-** Joseph, Was A Carpenter....
- **11 Main Types Of Jobs Of Today:**
 - 1. Arts. 2. Business. 3. Communications. 4. Education. 5. Health Care. 6. Hospitality.**
 - 7. Information Technology. 8. Law Enforcement. 9. Sales And Marketing. 10. Science.**
 - 11. Transportation.**
- We Cannot Do Anything That Compromises, Undermines, & Causes Us To Sin!

IV. What Is My Attitude Toward My Work?

- Do I Hate It? Do I Love It? Do I Merely Tolerate It?
- Our Attitude Can Determine Our Outcome....
- **Colossians 3:22–4:1.**
- Am I A Christian Example At The Workplace? **Matthew 5:16.**