

Counting The Cost

Introduction:

- A. Jesus said that his followers must be willing to give up anything in order to follow him
 - 1. He said that even our families cannot come before our service to God (Lk. 14:26-27).
 - 2. He also said that we can't let anything that we have stand in the way of following him (Lk. 14:33).
- B. Before one becomes a Christian he must "count the cost" involved in the decision to follow Jesus.
 - 1. We must decide ahead of time whether we are willing to follow Jesus all the way to the end (Lk. 14:28-32).
 - 2. Is it really worth what it will cost us to follow him?
 - 3. Every decision we make in life has some kind of cost involved.
 - a. Time off of work costs you money that you could have made if you had been working.
 - b. Time spent working costs you time that you could spend with family and friends.
 - c. The decision to move may cost you your relationship with friends and family members.
 - d. The decision to take a new job may cost you the familiarity you had with your old job and your old co-workers.
- C. How much does it cost to follow Jesus?
 - 1. Jesus said it will cost you everything you have.
 - a. Matt. 22:35-39.
 - b. Many people refuse to follow Christ because they are not willing to pay the cost.
 - c. Some start to follow Christ, but then quit because they failed to count the cost ahead of time.
 - 2. Yes, the cost of following the Lord is great.
 - a. But the reward is greater than the cost!
 - b. Matt. 5:12a.
- D. What is hindering you from being baptized into Christ (Acts 8:36-38)?
 - 1. What is it that is stopping you from making the decision to follow the Lord?
 - 2. In the Ethiopian's case, nothing was really hindering (stopping) him from being baptized.
 - 3. But, there are many things that keep people from obeying the gospel.
 - 4. We need "count the cost" in order to find out what those things are in our own lives.
 - 5. What is keeping you from obeying the gospel?

Body:

I. Lack Of Understanding?

- A. Some people do not follow Christ simply because they don't understand the gospel.
 - 1. For example, the Ethiopian Eunuch didn't obey the gospel at first because he didn't understand the gospel message and needed someone to explain it to him (Acts 8:26-31).
 - 2. Once his lack of understanding was cleared up, he made the decision to follow Christ (Acts 8:36-38).
- B. Do you understand the gospel?
 - 1. All have sinned against God (Romans 3:23).
 - 2. The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23).
 - 3. The gift of God is eternal life (Romans 6:23).
 - 4. Jesus offers the terms for forgiveness of sins and salvation (Mk. 16:16)!
 - 5. Maybe you haven't obeyed the gospel because you have never really understood it before.

II. Lack Of Faith?

- A. Some people do not follow Christ because they don't fully believe the gospel.
 - 1. The Bible says that faith is absolutely necessary in order to have a relationship with God (Heb. 11:6).
 - 2. Faith is absolutely necessary in order to follow Jesus (Jn. 8:24).
- B. Do you believe the gospel?
 - 1. Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Rom. 1:3-4)!
 - 2. He is the only way of salvation (Jn. 14:6).
 - 3. Maybe you haven't made the decision to follow Jesus simply because you don't believe he is the Lord and Savior of mankind.

III. Unwilling To Gladly Receive His Word?

- A. Some people do not follow Christ because they refuse to gladly receive the gospel.
 - 1. When the gospel was preached on the Day of Pentecost we read that many people "gladly received it" (Acts 2:38-41).
 - 2. But not everyone had this kind of reaction to the message that Jesus brought (Jn. 6:60, 66).
 - 3. Every person who hears the gospel has a choice as to how they will react to it.
- B. Will you gladly receive his word?
 - 1. The gospel message is "good news" for everyone (Jn. 3:16).
 - 2. What could be better than hearing that God loves us so much that he sent Jesus to die for us so that we could be forgiven of our sins and have a home in heaven with him?
 - 3. Maybe you haven't obeyed the gospel because you haven't been willing to gladly receive the message.

IV. Unwilling To Give Up Sin?

- A. Some people do not follow Christ because they are not convicted of sin and are willing to continue to live in sin.
 - 1. The Bible makes it clear that in order to follow Christ we have to make up our minds to stop sinning (Col. 3:5-8).
 - 2. But some people aren't convinced that they have done anything wrong, so they don't see the need to do anything to correct it.
 - 3. Others are living in sin and don't want to give up the sinful things they are involved in.
- B. Are you willing to give up sin?
 - 1. Sin separates man from God (Isaiah 59:1-2).
 - 2. You can be set free from sin by obeying the gospel (Rom. 6:17-18).
 - 3. But you must be willing to repent of your sins in order to obey the gospel (Acts 2:38)!
 - 4. Maybe you haven't made the decision to become a Christian because you are feel like you are enjoying the sinful life you are living more than you would enjoy following Christ.

V. More Of A Love For Worldly Things Than A Love For God?

- A. Some people do not follow Christ because they love the things of the world too much.
 - 1. The things that this world has to offer are not the same as what Christ has to offer.
 - 2. The Bible warns us against loving the things of the world (1 Jn. 2:15-17).
 - 3. Some refuse to follow Christ because the things of the world are more important to them than Jesus is (Matt. 19:16, 21-22).
- B. Do you love the world too much?
 - 1. Material things do not last forever (Matt. 6:19-21).
 - 2. In fact, this world will not last forever (2 Pet. 3:10).
 - 3. Would you rather have eternal life in heaven, or the temporary things of this world?
 - 4. Maybe you haven't made the decision to follow Christ because you love the things of the world more than you love God.

VI. More Of A Love For Man Than A Love For God?

- A. Some people do not follow Christ because they are more concerned with human relationships than they are with their relationship with God.
 - 1. The Bible talks about some who refused to follow Christ simple because they were too concerned with what other people would think of them (Jn. 12:42-43).
 - 2. Some people would follow Christ, but they are afraid that their friends or family members wouldn't approve of the decision.
- B. Do you value human relationships more than you value your relationship with God?
 - 1. Jesus said even our families must take second place to him if we are to be his followers (Matt. 10:37).

2. Are you willing to make Christ your number one priority in life?
3. Maybe you haven't obeyed the gospel because you are too concerned with what others will think of you.

VII. Have A Feeling Of Comfort In Almost Obeying The Gospel?

- A. Some do not follow Christ because they feel like they are good enough and close enough to God just the way they are.
 1. When King Agrippa heard the preaching of Paul, he said he was "almost" persuaded to become a Christian (Acts 26:27-29).
 2. Some people never make the decision to follow Christ because they feel like they will be okay just the way they are.
- B. Do you have a false sense of comfort because you are close to following Christ?
 1. Remember, "good" people will still be lost in sin for eternity without Christ.
 2. Cornelius was a "good" man (Acts 10:1-2).
 3. But even a "good" man needs Christ in order to be forgiven of his sins (Acts 11:13-14).
 4. Maybe you haven't made the decision to follow Jesus because you think you're good enough without him.

VIII. Waiting For A More Convenient Time?

- A. Some people do not follow Christ because they are waiting for a more convenient time to obey the gospel.
 1. When the Roman governor, Felix, heard Paul preach the gospel he didn't obey the gospel, but instead decide to wait for a "convenient time" (Acts 26:27-29).
 2. Some people never make the decision to follow Christ because they feel like they want to wait until they have a more convenient time to devote themselves to the Lord.
- B. Are you waiting for a more convenient time to follow the Lord?
 1. Illustration: Would you put off treatment if you learned you were dying of a deadly disease that could be cured if you acted in time?
 2. What if the "more convenient time" never comes?
 3. How do you know if you even have another day (James 4:14)?
 4. Maybe you haven't obeyed the gospel because you think now just isn't a good time because you're busy with other things.

Conclusion:

- A. Each one has a responsibility to "count the cost" involved in becoming a Christian.
- B. What is it that is hindering you from being baptized?
- C. What is it that is stopping you from following Christ today?
- D. Have you counted the cost?