

We live in an "easy come, easy go" society—we want it all and we often are looking for the better path
Americans have a huge sense of entitlement—that it is our "right"
I think that is often transferred to our religious beliefs
We have a sense that God owes it to us to order our lives well
When things go wrong—we are angry at God

But Jesus gives us a very different picture of what it means to follow him
As the crowds follow after him, Jesus recognizes this same sense of entitlement among people
We want the blessings without commitment
We want to be healed
We want the invitation to the banquet
He turns to the people and says... Luke 14:25-33

Basically, Jesus is saying that it will be costly to follow me
It will be your whole life
It will consume your focus and priorities in life
It will set you up as a failure in the world's eyes

But hate? Hate your father, mother, wife, children, brother, sister? Hate myself and my own life?
Give up all of my possessions? Austere, self-denial and poverty?
Jesus is intentionally exaggerating here to prove a point
Following Jesus must be your focus—not life encumbrances, whether people or things
Jesus is pushing buttons because he wants us to recognize what it means to follow him

If you are going to follow Jesus—whose actions lead to his death on the cross
They were politically costly actions that he persists in doing
IF you are going to follow Jesus—this path must take priority in your life
To follow Jesus means going to this same place of costliness as Jesus—even to death
If we are focused on saving our own skin—we will never be able to follow
Human reaction is to maintain safety and security
Following Jesus means abandoning all of that and trusting God

But before you can truly follow Jesus—you must count the cost, not just assume it will all be good
Like the crowds following Jesus that want the blessings without pain
American Christians often want the good life and are angry when things go wrong
So, count the cost and be aware of what you are doing
Jesus gives them 2 short parables
If you are going to build something, you figure out what it will cost first
Figure out what you have to spend so it isn't half built with no money
A king doesn't go to war without calculating if it is winnable
In following Jesus, be aware that there will be cost to you personally

But not costly in the kind of self denial that just says I have to give up everything and be good
Christians have misused this passage and it has put a guilt trip on us many times
Being good, giving up the pleasures in life, being poor
No. God loves to bless us and lavish us with goodness
Following Jesus is the most exciting and rewarding life ever

For Jesus, it was costly politically
Doing the right thing cost him his life
Because he persisted in breaking the rules and loving the outcast
He infuriated the political and religious structures of his day and they killed him for it

But Jesus told the rich young ruler to sell his possessions and give the money to the poor
That was personal to that man—don't globalize it as a Christian rule
On the other hand, what is it that prevents you from coming whole heartedly to Jesus?
From following Jesus with radical abandon?
That Jesus will ask you to give up or reprioritize—let it be its right size

Don't let life derail you from your calling—put Jesus first and your God given purpose in life first
Who am I?
How am I uniquely gifted?
What is it that I'm to be about? What is it that I am constantly drawn towards?
What is my passion?

Letting go of all excuses—what are my true limitations in life?
Too often our sense of limitations is self-expanding to include putting me first
Jesus is calling us to set those all aside and focus on following Jesus
There is always way forward for everyone of us—way forward to follow fully
I firmly believe that as a community of faith and as individuals...
We have everything we need to take the next step in following Jesus with radical abandon
It will cost us everything in the end
But we are enough for this journey
Right now we can move forward
As we follow and do the one thing we know is ours to do, we will be shown the next
Live into the Light that you have been given

When I Listen deep within, what is my calling? What does it mean for me to follow Jesus?
What will it cost for me to follow Jesus?