

# Are You Accompanying Or Following Jesus?

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Date: 17 May 2026

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[ 0 : 00 ] This coming week, Pastor Tripp will be preaching in the morning service.! I have a little bit of a busy week this week.!

It's called Life Together, and it's talking about the body of the church and what we expect. And the exact title has just drifted right off my mind.

It describes it well. So, we'll be looking at that starting May 31st. About two decades ago, a large house near where we used to live caught on fire.

And was destroyed. Shortly thereafter, the people put a mobile home on the property and began to rebuild themselves.

It was exciting to watch. The frame went up steadily. The house was at least as big as the original house was.

[ 1 : 24 ] And over time, you could see that the owner now is making some significant improvements to the design. The work went slowly but steadily.

And it remained something that I looked forward passing as often as I could just to see what changes had taken place. And it was interesting.

This whole process took a couple years. Several years. Eventually, though, the work just stopped. Scaffling.

A cement mixer. Ladders. Just remained frozen in time. For a decade. The people still lived in the mobile home behind their beautiful 75% complete house.

And I never knew what happened. Maybe they didn't have enough money. Maybe they didn't count the cost before they started. And it always struck me as I drove by that house thinking how that is just the epitome of the warning that Jesus gave in Luke 14.

[ 2 : 37 ] Let's read Luke 14, verses 25 to 35. Now great crowds accompanied him.

And he turned and said to them, If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it.

Otherwise, when he has laid the foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build and was not able to finish.

Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with 10,000 to meet him who comes against him with 20,000.

[ 3 : 49 ] And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

Salt is good. But if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is of no use, either for the soil or for the manure pile.

It's thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. Let's pray. Father, I thank you for this passage.

I thank you for what Jesus was endeavoring to accomplish as he spoke this passage. And Lord, I pray that by your spirit, he would accomplish the same thing in our midst today.

Pray that you would be with me and help me to be clear. And I pray that you would bless our time together in your word. In Jesus' name, Amen. I want to talk first about the setting here.

[ 5 : 09 ] It's been an eventful lunch. Now, to understand that, you have to think back through a good part of this chapter. At the beginning of this chapter, we saw that Jesus had been invited to a

house.

It was the house of the ruler of the Pharisees. He'd been invited there for a banquet. And Jesus wasted no time. No time at all pulling punches.

I mean, he was at it from the minute it seems that he walked in the door. They'd been watching him and they were trying to find something to accuse him of. But he angered the Pharisees by healing a man of dropsy on the Sabbath.

That made them angry, but I'm sure it made them even more angry as he exposed the hypocrisy by saying, which one of you wouldn't deliver their son or even their own oxen from a pit on the Sabbath?

And of course, they all knew that they would. And so, they were exposed as being hypocrites. In the very same banquet, he went on to point out and then rebuke several of the guests who had come for their own self-exaltation in the way they picked seats at the banquet, wanting the most advanced seats, always wanting the most honor.

[ 6 : 31 ] And he rebuked them for that. I'm sure that didn't set well with them, but then he went on. And he rebuked the host for just inviting people that would pay him back.

He said, you ought to invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. He was looking right at the ruler of the feast, the very man who had addressed him.

And then, as we saw last time, he talked about who would be there. As he talked about that parable of the great banquet and the guy went out and invited people and they said they would come and then he sent the servant out to say, it's ready, it's time, and they all began to have excuse.

And with that, Jesus taught them that many of the Jews would not be at the great messianic banquet that they looked forward to from Isaiah because they ignored his invitation.

Jesus himself was there and he was letting people know it is time and it's time to come and it's time to believe and it's time to enter into the beginnings of this great messianic banquet and they didn't want any of it.

[ 7 : 45 ] They didn't want Jesus. And he let them know that they didn't want it. Since they didn't want it, they wouldn't have a part of it. They wouldn't be a part of that great messianic banquet. They would be on the outside looking in while Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and the prophets and people from the west and the east and the north and the south would be gathered from all the earth and Gentiles would be sitting down in that banquet where they would not be.

I'm sure people left that banquet with indigestion and frustration and Jesus really stirred them. But that was mercy. That was grace. Better for them to know the truth, know where they were wrong, know where they stood with God than for them to go on blindly in their ignorance of what they failed to see and how they weren't right with God.

As we pick up in verse 25, Jesus has now left the banquet and it says that there were great crowds accompanying him as he continued towards Jerusalem.

This was back a little further but those crowds are there. He's just been in the house for a meal. They all waited for him and as he went out he continues on his journey towards Jerusalem and these great crowds were following him.

[ 9 : 11 ] And Jesus turned to address the crowd. Now he's been talking to them since clear back now this doesn't tell us time or date but he's been talking to them clear back into Luke chapter 13 where someone asks him a question that question is Lord will those who are saved be few and from that statement Jesus begins this conversation or this teaching with the crowd and he responds to that question by warning them to strive to enter through the narrow door for many I tell you would seek to enter and will not be able when once the master of the house has risen and shut the door and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door the Lord saying Lord open to us then he will answer you I do not know where you are come from.

The point is Jesus has been speaking to the crowd for a long time and he's been here and he's begun here to ask are you just accompanying me or are you following me?

You notice this starts out in verse 25 it says and great crowds accompanied him he uses this word for and it's rightly translated accompany another word for follow that ties close to disciples or discipleship so as he's been challenging the crowd warning them of their condition there is a narrow door you must enter and you must enter before the Lord of the banquet closes the door and you cannot enter anymore you must enter this door and so he's been discussing these things and applying these things with the crowd then he went into this banquet and he sat down and he dealt

with those at the banquet in mercy and in grace and telling them what they needed and now he's back with the people and this heart that we saw back in chapter 13 that talked where Jesus said oh Jerusalem Jerusalem you who stone the prophets and kill those sent unto you oh how I would gather you to myself as a hen gathers her chicks and you would not he has this heart of love for them and he continues and what we're about to see is not pompousness it's not arrogance this is love this is grace this is God addressing them exactly as they needed to hear are you just accompanying me or are you going to follow me there's a difference the outcome of the difference brings vastly different consequences those who just accompany are going to end up in a different place than those who follow him following him comes with a cost as we've seen in things that we've talked about here already we find that the Pharisees didn't like Jesus none of the rulers of the Jews like Jesus the scribes even some who weren't followers of the rulers of the Jews the Herodians none of them liked Jesus some were following him and it was already coming at a cost and so Jesus as he's heading on his way and he turns around to address the crowd he says if anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters yes and even his own life he cannot be my disciple those are strong words the cost of being a disciple requires allegiance allegiance to Christ above all others all others now

Jesus is not doing away with the fifth commandment honor your father and mother nor is he doing away with many other scriptures both new and old testament we are called to honor our fathers and our mothers we are called to love our wives as Christ loved the church women are called to respect their husbands as unto Christ we are to love our enemies as we love ourselves we are to love our children and not frustrate them but draw them by speaking the word to the Lord we are not to cease these responsibilities but we are to love God with all of our heart mind soul and strength we are going to apply this as Jesus applies this in just a second I just want to stop here if you and we are going to look at examining ourselves but if you are a true

Christian you know that there is a struggle even in this area for you I know there is for me there is the temptation out in public where if it if I stand for Christ I will suffer there is a struggle there and sometimes we may be tempted to say do I love God more than anyone else of course sin is loving something other than God it is and there is there may be and in fact this happens so much more than we even want to think about it happens in our lives all the times Christian we are people who at times will choose in the moment to love something else more than God whether it be food or whether it be pleasure whether it be intimacy in the wrong way or intimacy out of out of proportion or you know any kinds of things we face this battle but a true follower of Christ over and above through it all down beneath is one who loves

[ 15 : 55 ] God with all of his heart soul mind and strength who wants God's will first he battles with his flesh and so this goes on this is something that happens in a true Christian's heart we can struggle with our loyalties because of our sin but when we do we have the obligation to confess and repent and seek to make that right you say it happens all the time yes we sin all the time we need to be people who are running to the cross Christ died for that Christ died to pay for our sins and when we choose in the moment to love something other than Christ to show our allegiance to them I think of Peter in the in the aftermath of Christ initially being arrested

I think he was already trusting Christ I think by the things that Jesus says he was but there was that moment certainly you're one of his disciples I don't know the man oh yes your speech betrays you I don't know the man and he began to curse and to swear that he didn't know Christ but his reaction was when he thought about what he done he wept bitterly he repented and that's what we as Christians do so as I talk about this whole thing I want us to realize Christians this is something we deal with in our own hearts and lives and we need to know how to deal with this we need to know that when we do that we we confess it before before the Lord and we turn from it repent we forsake it now you say I know but but I end up doing it again what do I do you confess it and repent again and you'll be doing that all of your life until Christ comes back but a

Christian has a desire overall to want to serve the Lord more than anyone else and what Jesus is desiring here as he's talking to this people he wants that these people would be a disciple of Jesus more devoted to him than just an acquaintance or someone who accompanies him I'm not pointing any fingers it's true in all churches there are people in churches who live their lives accompanying Christ I'm just here for this or I'm just here for that we're not pushing you away and that's great that you're here but hear Jesus' message are you here to accompany or to follow and so

Jesus shares this that a person who would be a disciple one who would be following Christ is a person who has to be seeking him first of all it was really interesting and we will read from Hebrews in just a little while we were reading from Hebrews this morning and I almost put a passage in from Deuteronomy the Hebrews passage tied it all together it talked and I can't for time sake we can't go into it all but in Deuteronomy I believe it's 33:9 Jacob or someone is praising Levi because he was a man who stood for the Lord even though those around him who would be his peers people he might love more he stood for the Lord even though others may be pushing in the wrong direction we disciples are people who love

Christ more than anything else secondly he goes on to say being a disciple also means allegiance to Christ above self above yourself whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple now bearing your cross is not like putting on a necklace with a cross on it you know or a t-shirt with some Christian saying we people call that witness wear and that's fine but that's not bearing your cross and that's not at all what Jesus is getting at Jesus when he's talking about bearing the cross he's referring to that not the whole cross but the horizontal piece the post the tall thing was usually left out at the spot where they be crucified but the cross piece the person who is going to be crucified they were tasked with carrying their own cross piece to the cross and as they walked through the streets the people recognized it's only the lowest of the low it's only those who were awful and deserved death now they may have misjudged but that was the thinking of people as someone who was going to be crucified and so people who were carrying the cross the cross piece the horizontal piece to the place where they be crucified would often be mocked on the way spat on even struck by the crowds to say nothing of what

[ 21 : 54 ] Roman soldiers would do to people on the way to the cross and so a person carrying that cross meant that they were going to a spot where very shortly they would suffer oft times on a cross for two or three days even up to a week in agony but their death was certain Rome would not allow people to come down from the cross when they carried that cross it meant they're dying they're done now Jesus suffered in providing redemption for us to be his disciples not that we suffer in redemption but it behooves us Jesus saying that we are willing to accept suffering because we follow him we want to be associated with him so

Jesus is saying if you're going to be my disciple you not only have to love me the most of anyone you have to be willing to lay your life aside lay your life down for me hopes and dreams that which you thought about since kindergarten now God may use that but you need to be the kind of person if you're going to be a disciple of Christ who puts that aside and says father what would you have me to do how would you have me serve not my will to sound like Christ not my will but your will what would you have me to do and Jesus at another point says the disciple is not above his master they persecute me they will persecute you and Jesus is saying you have to have this mentality that because of what Christ has done I am willing to endure anything everything all not to earn any standing not to gain necessarily any reward although

Christ knows what we go through and will certainly reward according to his wisdom and grace but we don't suffer in order to gain we suffer because we love we suffer because we see the value of the son of God Jesus then uses two parables to encourage people to consider the importance of counting the cost before discipleship now if you propagate the gospel as that which will give you your best life now you're lying at least according to what the Bible says if you say oh your life's a wreck come to Christ and he'll fix it if you're a Christian you know that your life probably was never harder than after you accepted Christ because there's all kinds of things going on the world hates Christ the world hates Christians God is all knowing and all wise and he knows how to work in people's hearts and lives and usually that working is through suffering God grows us through suffering he matures us through suffering suffering is a huge part of our life so he's telling us this isn't this isn't the key to a safe and healthy and wealthy life you say well then why would I want it well Jesus encourages people to consider the cost before they trust Christ with these two parables and the first one is the parable of the tower and it's you know which of you desiring to build a tower doesn't sit down first and figure out whether they can afford it lest you get halfway through and you have a house that sits for two decades with frozen ladders and scaffolding and even to this day don't know why that house wasn't finished not counting the cost oh yes

I want to be a Christian thinking it's my best life now and when trials come that parable of the soils when the thorns and thistles grow up and the sun beats down and those people are choked out they weren't really Christians not counting the cost leads to shame and embarrassment claiming to

be a follower but not willing to continue when you feel the suffering that following Christ causes will lead you to this embarrassment it'll lead you to worse but counting the cost no count the cost before becoming a disciple it's not your best life now it's peace now it's having our sin paid for now it is safe for all eternity with

[ 27 : 23 ] Christ for all eternity do you need what Jesus provides I'm talking about redemption do you need what Jesus provides enough to endure what you will go through to be a disciple do you need what and I'm not talking about he'll pay I'm not talking about any transaction if you're a sinner if you know that you're a sinner if you know what your sin how it makes you to be in God's sight if you know what the righteous judge says he will do to sinners if you know the length and the intensity of what happens to sinners in light of all that you know I have no other hope and I have to have Christ counting the cost the cost is just a small thing in relation to receiving what we need to have peace in our hearts forgiveness a right relationship with

God no one chooses to put themselves in a situation of having to take up a cross without considering if the reason they have to bear the cross is worth it is being Christ disciple worth giving up your life you have to answer that do you need your sins paid for I'm not talking about the truth that's just stated yes you need your sins paid for do you need your sins paid for do you need help that you can't get from anywhere else do you feel the weight of your sin before God do you need to be right with God is the eternal wrath of God something you're willing to endure to continue this soft life that you have that's kind of the opposite of where I am those who truly feel the weight of their sin before

God are desperate to find a remedy for and there's only one remedy and that's what Christ did on the cross those who feel the weight of sin will do anything to be free we're not talking about earning it you can't earn it but trust Christ cleansing righteousness right relationship with God eternity with him being able to behold him and the wonder of who he is and the joy and rejoicing that all is and all I have to do is follow him even if it's uncomfortable short term hardness for eternal peace restoration and the second parable is the parable of the king facing an invader you know the parable is built such that the king that that's addressed has a king that's going to come against him and so in the midst of that situation he has to figure out what do

I do do I go out and fight him or do I send an ambassador looking for peace and so he sits down and says okay my options he has 20,000 troops I have 10,000 troops my troops have leather shields broken swords broken bows he has metal shields metal spears good bows horses and chariots what do I do he has to make a decision now I've laid I've laid out a scenario you would know what to do but the parable doesn't doesn't leave it that way the parable is pointing to the fact that that king has to sit down and say looks like certain death makes peace now we could take this and I almost did in my message take this and relate it in a different way emphasizing the fact that Jesus says and Jesus uses these parables to point out you've got to count the cost if you put it back in the situation of will I just accompany Jesus or will I be a follower will I just come along for the ride or will I be one who is willing to follow and suffer and have Christ Lord you've got to make that decision you've got to weigh that and determine where you would what you were willing to do the king needs to count the cost and so do all people who are presented with the gospel what is Jesus doing in these parables is he trying to discourage people from becoming a disciple is he trying to make it harder to be a disciple no he's only painting a realistic picture a realistic view of what those following him will go through but being a disciple is worth it it's worth it in this life and especially in the next but it comes at a cost that all must consider so

[ 33 : 37 ] Jesus sums up this teaching with a challenge to count the cost of being a disciple of Christ verses 33 to 35 being a disciple will cost you everything but it's worth it Moses we read this I I'm so glad that this worked out that brother Caleb got to read this this morning Hebrews 11 24 to 27 by faith Moses when he was grown up refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasure fleeting pleasures of sin he considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt for he was looking to the reward not Egypt not even

Canaan he was looking to the reward with the Lord he was looking for that eternal rest with the Lord he was looking for sins forgiven cleansing before God right relationship with God so by faith he left Egypt not being afraid of the anger of the king for he endured as seeing him who is invisible sure Pharaoh may hate me sure Pharaoh may try to kill me sure I'm going to live in the desert sure it's going to be hard but I see Jesus and what he's done for me is worth whatever I will plod through on

this earth Paul had the same mentality in Philippians 3 but whatever gain I had I counted as lost for the sake of Christ indeed I count everything as lost because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord for his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them I'm going to go with the King James as dung in order that I may gain Christ he's not talking about earning salvation he's talking about I want Christ and everything else I endure is worth it in order that I may gain!

Christ and be found in him not having a righteousness that comes from the law but that which comes through faith in Christ the righteousness from God that depends on faith that I may know him and the power of his resurrection that I may share his sufferings becoming like him in his death that by any means possible I may attain to the resurrection from the dead he's simply saying I'm willing to go through whatever to be with Christ for all eternity yes count the cost but I think there's a flip side here because Jesus is asking are you just going to accompany me or are you going to follow me and some would say well I don't want to pay the cost I don't want to endure these hardships here I don't I'm afraid of Pharaoh I'm afraid of the wilderness I'm afraid of losing everything in verses 34 and 35 not being a disciple will cost you everything the example of the worthless salt I really as I approach this how in the world does this tie in salt is good but if it's lost its taste how shall its saltiness be restored it is of no use either for the soil or the manure pile is thrown away now this kind of thought is used in different ways in Jesus ministry but he's talking about salt here now pure salt never loses its saltiness but the salt they had was taken from the marshes around the Dead Sea or it was evaporated the water was evaporated and what was left was a salt but it was impure it had gempson and and carmelite or carminite or whatever had something else in it the name escapes me and it was impure and sometimes those impurities were so bad that it let the true salt leach out of what looked like salt when it was done and those impurities would ruin the saltiness now all that's just so you understand why he's talking about losing because if you know anything about chemistry salt never loses its flavor but here what looks like salt would lose its flavor but the thing that

[ 38 : 44 ] Jesus is pointing out is that just as worthless salt is cast out just as salt that doesn't have saltiness anymore is cast out and he talks about it's not even good for the dung hill or the ground it could be used in conjunction with stuff for fertilizer could be used to preserve manure so that it would be a better fertilizer it's not good for either of those it would have to be really bad to not be good for either of those but just as worthless salt was cast out because it was good for nothing so those who simply accompany Jesus without being willing to renounce all they have willing to serve Christ no matter the cross those people are worthless and cannot be Jesus disciples now

I want to remind you that's in the end until then the door is open the door is open and those who would enter the narrow door can do it so this is a warning to those who would accompany Jesus rather than follow him he ends with he who has ears to hear let him hear he's basically saying pay attention to this this is one of those statements that says what I'm saying is important don't let what I'm saying just glide by you those who are not willing to be Christ I like worthless salt you will be cast out this not only reflects the purpose of the illustration of salt but also brings us back to the conversation that Jesus began with back in Luke 13 he was going on his way someone said Lord will those who will be saved be few and he said strive to enter through the narrow door for many I tell you will seek to enter and will not be able among other things the reasons they won't be able is they want to keep their fleshly comfortable life they're not willing to put Christ first and we're not talking about earning salvation we're not talking about that at all if you need Christ you are willing to serve him and trust him first of all and so as he said enter while the door is open Jesus continues this conversation and says don't be like worthless salt that is good for nothing and cast out and be trodden under the foot of men does counting the cost and deciding not to follow Jesus come without risk or cost itself deciding not to follow Christ may come with a possible reward in this life of unbroken!

allegiances with family and friends in this life it may come with lack of suffering and lack of rejection by others but only in this life once life is over in this realm then the great reversal takes place then all of mankind will stand before God and those who are not willing to be Christ's disciples because they were afraid to love Christ more than everything else because they were afraid to suffer for him because they wouldn't make him his all mankind will know the same kind of thing that was taught through the situation or the example of Abraham and Lazarus remember Lazarus was this beggar who sat at the rich man's gate and he died and the rich man died and the rich man was carried into

hell and Lazarus carried into

Sheol and the rich man says send Lazarus he can dip his fingers in the water and drip drops on my tongue that I may be relieved three or four drops is a relief in hell that I may be relieved of this torment all of mankind who will refuse to submit to Christ to come to Christ to trust in Christ because they're afraid of what they may have to give up will in the great reversal because of what they're afraid to miss now they will miss for all eternity he who has ears to hear let him hear count the cost before you decide let's pray thank you father for your word

[ 43 : 47 ] I pray that you would be with us Lord you know hearts I pray that you would be with us who know you that today we would be people who are quick to repent when our love drifts when our selfishness rises and where we want life to be good for us and not the Lord and I pray that those who don't know you today who want to be accompanying rather than followers I pray that the starkness of what Jesus was teaching would cause them to count the cost and see that in the end there is no choice what Christ offers is of eternal reward eternal value and I pray that you would draw folks to yourself in Jesus name amen 585 is