

Counting the Cost of NOT Following God

"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; and you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance." (Isaiah 55:1-2 NKJV)

Like the woman at the well at Bethesda who previously had five husbands and was living presently with another man, or the lead singer of the Rolling Stones rock and roll band, we live in a world of people who "can't get no satisfaction!"

Those of us engaged in ministering the Gospel understand that the only water that will satisfy our thirst is the living water offered by Jesus Christ.

Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." *"Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." (John 4:10-14 NKJV)*

Often times when the offer of new life in Christ is offered we are quick to count the cost of unreservedly giving ourselves to Him. Oswald Chambers in his devotional, My Utmost for His Highest puts it this way, **"Sanctification means being made one with Jesus so that the disposition that ruled Him will rule us. Are we prepared for what that will cost? It will cost everything that is not of God in us."**

But what about the other cost? What about the cost of NOT following Him? To those who have been delivered from life dominating sin this cost can mean life itself! To others it can be abundant life threatening. Such was the case of most of those delivered from bondage in Egypt by the very hand of Almighty God.

"I am the LORD your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt; Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it. "But My people would not heed My voice, And Israel would have none of Me. So I gave them over to their own stubborn heart, to walk in their own counsels. "Oh, that My people would listen to Me, That Israel would walk in My ways! I would soon subdue their enemies, and turn My hand against their adversaries. The haters of the LORD would pretend submission to Him, but their fate would endure forever. He would have fed them also with the finest of wheat; and with honey from the rock I would have satisfied you." (Psalms 81:10-16 NKJV)

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Charles Spurgeon puts it this way: ***“Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.”*** Because he had brought them out of Egypt he could do great things for them. He had proved his power and his good will; it remained only for his people to believe in him and ask large things of him. **If their expectations were enlarged to the utmost degree, they could not exceed the bounty of the Lord.** Little birds in the nest open their mouths widely enough, and perhaps the parent birds fail to fill them, but it will never be so with our God. His treasures of grace are inexhaustible,

We all cringe at the thought of others falling away from Christ and we grieve when He opts to take one of His own home. But what about the rest of us, have we lost our first love and the zeal that we began with? Jesus spoke these words through the apostle John to the church in Ephesus; ***“Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.”*** (Revelation 2:4-5 NKJV)

Perhaps today as we share the Gospel, we should encourage others to count the cost, not of following Jesus, but of “Not” following Jesus. And we should heed His warning to give ourselves wholeheartedly to Him, not out of obligation, but out of sincere love.

Spurgeon, C. H. (2009). The treasury of David, Volume 3: Psalms 56-87 (402). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

Chambers, O. (1986). My utmost for his highest: Selections for the year. Grand Rapids, MI: Oswald Chambers Publications; Marshall Pickering.