**9/7/25**

**Hate is Such a Strong Word**

**Vicar Vince Piekarski**

**Luke 14:25-33 (NRSVUE)**

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 1:2, NRSVUE) (2) **Amen.**

I also need to add this today, “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.” (Psalm 19:14, NRSVUE) (2) **Amen.**

There is a heavy message dealt to all of us from our Gospel Reading today. That is precisely why I quoted both of these very important scriptures as mini prayers and blessings before we got underway here. I also did that because I talked about and read a word that my mom tells me time and time again to never say or use. I can only imagine the look she was giving me through the conference call during the Gospel Reading. So, those little extra prayers and blessings were needed more than you all may realize. That was why I also probably cringed a little when I read it. However, this is also the time where I tell her that the “H” word is in the Bible, and it was Jesus who actually said it. I am not throwing Jesus under the proverbial bus here, but I for sure am not taking the blame either! I was only fulfilling my duty and role up here as I read the Gospel out loud. Unfortunately, I will need to say the “H” word a few more times to get my point across in my sermon today. So, you all pray that my mom can’t teleport through that conference call somehow and hit me or something.

**Hate is Such a Strong Word.** I know for a fact that several of you have been caught off guard by it. As a matter of fact, you may be sitting there in the pews or on the conference call just as uncomfortable as I was when I first started reading and researching for this sermon. You may even be wondering what the next words that I am getting ready to deliver actually are following these very words from the book of Luke. Now, of course you may have just heard these words for the first time or at least in this particular context. Then again, maybe you have read or heard these words several times over the years as you have been attending church. Perhaps you read them in your bulletins in your Thursday emails, or even just prior to our worship service today as you began preparation for our time together. What I will tell you is that no matter what way, or how many times we actually read or hear this message, I know there should be some kind of impact for **Hate is Such a Strong Word.** That is unless we are all just sitting there spiritually dead of course.

This is where I remind you that the words in today’s Gospel Reading were specifically meant to evoke feelings! They were meant for us to get our hearts, minds, and even our approach to discipleship right. Now, as cute as that image might be on the front cover of our bulletins, we must remember that there is way more responsibility, and that there is way more required of us in order to carry the cross and truly follow Christ.

So, you may say or think that this message hurts, that these words cut deep, or even that these words go completely against other things we have read in scripture before. Yes, **Hate is Such a Strong Word.** You may even be sitting there and pondering how in the world Jesus could have said this to the people back then, or even those of us right here and right now. Yes, **Hate is Such a Strong Word.** You might just be sitting there and thinking that we misread or overheard this message, and you may be thinking that it was taken out of context somehow. However, I am still going to say that **Hate is Such a Strong Word.** Then again, some of you may just happen to be very comfortable and understanding of this particular presentation as well. That still does not disqualify or make it any different, and we still come to realize that **Hate is Such a Strong Word.** We do all capture the message, but we all just happen to capture it slightly different from each of our own unique perspectives. Yet, let me remind you, the goal is exactly the same. We all need to hear what Jesus is really calling us all to, and we need to hear it in this insanely yet peculiarly perfect manner that it is put in.

 So, I ask that you be ready to listen just a little bit more and even more deeply. I ask that you please have your hearts open, and even be willing to still be uncomfortable when we are done here today. There is a reason and a purpose that these scripture verses, these parables or examples, these words and the mentality of Jesus are here for us to explore in this time and place just like they were back then. So, with all that being said, with your brains possibly swirling more than when you even came into church today, I say let’s get to business here folks and explore why **Hate is Such a Strong Word**, but yet the correct word.

What several of us often forget is that Jesus’ words come off harshly because Jesus desires so much more for all of us. Sometimes we even forget that Jesus is continually delivering these messages to the crowds who are constantly following him along his journey, and that the crowds may even change pending on where he just left from. Sometimes he may have a more wealthy and good to do crowd, and other times he may have a more broken or financially unstable crowd. Regardless of who Jesus is speaking to the very journey is actually leading to the exact same place, and that of course is to the cross folks! These messages are not for the light of heart, these messages are not given so that we only listen, but they are given so that we truly hear and even apply them. Yes, I just said that these messages require action, just like the actions we heard in the two parables delivered here. Awkwardly enough, sometimes that very action requires sitting down while estimating and considering what our desired goal or outcome actually is. We want to do things right by ourselves, we want to do things right by others, but more importantly we want to do things right by God. In the process we definitely do not want to be ridiculed, defeated, or even wore down. We want to succeed and we want to be victorious for sure!

Now, you may be sitting there and saying or thinking, hold on just one minute Vicar Vince! Doesn’t Ephesians Chapter 2, verses 8 and 9 inform us of something totally and entirely different?!?! For those verses tell all of us that, “8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— 9 not the result of works, so that no one may boast.” (NRSVUE) (2) And I would tell you that you were exactly right, and I would say good job relating things back to alternative scripture readings. However, what I will also tell you is that if you desire some kind of cheap grace, or if you think that you just get this wonderful gift without making some sacrifices and changes to yourself, or if you think that you should not be sharing this with and in the life of your neighbors, good luck! I will also inform you that you are very far off from what this particular scripture message is conveying to all of us right here and right now, and everyone who was listening to Jesus back then and throughout the years as well.

This is also why I inform you at times that I do not spend several hours reading and researching, I do not spend several hours writing and rewriting, and I do not spend several hours thinking and praying about how this message hits you and I alike for no reason folks. I do not just get up here in this pulpit because it is my job, but I do it because it is my calling and vocation. Quite frankly it is also my responsibility to prepare you and myself alike for greater things. Yes, there may be times that I get frustrated, angry, confused, or even tired of certain things dealt in the message for the week; but I never forget the mission and the purpose. I never forget that I am here because you all have been raising me up in this very congregation for years, and that our Triune God has been raising me up my entire life. So, there is no need to get up here and sugar coat things folks! Today is yet again another opportunity to listen, be fed, and take in the real point of this message as we process why **Hate is Such a Strong Word**, but yet the correct word. Alright, let’s refocus here, and let me not worry if my mom teleported through the conference call somehow. Let’s go at this just a little bit deeper as we wrap all of this up and continue on with our Worship Service.

What we heard this morning was not a demand to **hate** everyone and everything. What we heard this morning was not to disrespect or dispose of everything. What we heard this morning was not to even despise or disregard everyone and all that we have been blessed with. What we actually heard is Jesus telling everyone back then, people through the years, and those of us right here and right now that our main and only focus should be on our Creator, our Heavenly Parent, our Triune God. We all should and without a doubt come to realize that all things are because of and only exist because of God. So, we can be thankful for and be blessed with the people in our lives and the stuff that we have, but all those things are only secondary to the one who created them. If we put anyone or anything in front of Christ then we have misguided ourselves, and we have misguided everyone that we know who is watching us, let alone we have misguided the people that we may not realize are watching us as well. Living a life like Christ, unto Christ, and for Christ is an extremely big deal! It is often different, awkward, uncomfortable, and it is definitely counter-cultural for sure! Although, that is the entire purpose of our existence folks!

So, we must do precisely as the two fellows in our parable did here. We first must sit down. Action of course is essential, but so is reflection. Yes, I know in a fast-paced society that is not something most of us always do or are even used to, but we should be. Then, we must estimate or consider the entire cost and effort required to accomplish what we are setting out to do. There is cost for discipleship, and there is wisdom gained on the journey. Furthermore, we must do so in a way that has us on the path of completion and victory. **Hate is Such a Strong Word**, but yet the correct word because we are holding nothing back and we have our eye on the prize, our eternal life in the kingdom. So, following Christ is an all or nothing process folks! That means when we pick up our crosses and follow Christ that our hearts and minds are all in, that it is our true and only desire, and that particular desire burns inside each and every single one of us like a fire that can never be put out!

**Amen****.**

**Luke 14:25-33 (NRSVUE)**

 Jesus speaks frankly about the costs of discipleship. Those who follow him

 should know from the outset that completing the course of discipleship will finally

 mean renouncing all other allegiances.

 25 Now large crowds were traveling with [Jesus], and he turned and said to them,

 26 “Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and

 children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple.

 27 Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. 28 For

 which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the

 cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has

 laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him,

 30 saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’ 31 Or what king,

 going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider

 whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him

 with twenty thousand? 32 If he cannot, then while the other is still far away, he

 sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. 33 So therefore, none of you

 can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.”

**References & Study Points**

(1) Sundays and Seasons

 Preaching

 Year C 2025

 September 7th, 2025

 13th Sunday after Pentecost

(2) BibleGateway.com

(3) The Four Pages of The Sermon

 Revised and Updated

 A Guide to Biblical Preaching

 Paul Scott Wilson

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 Abingdon Press

(4) WorkingPreacher.org

 Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

 Consider how Jesus’ teaching might inform matters you are discerning

 September 7, 2025

 Commentary on Luke 14:25-33

 E. Trey Clark

(5) WorkingPreacher.org

 Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

 No one considers hate a fruit of the Spirit; rather, it is commonly viewed as the

 antithesis of love.

 September 8, 2019

 Commentary on Luke 14:25-33

 Mitzi Smith

(6) WorkingPreacher.org

 Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

 Would-be disciples must acknowledge at the outset that following Jesus will cost

 them everything

 September 4, 2022

 Commentary on Luke 14:25-33

 Carolyn J. Sharp

(7) WorkingPreacher.org

 Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

 Last week’s pericope from Luke was set inside, namely, in the home of a Pharisee

 where Jesus had been having relatively intimate mealtime conversations and

 interactions.

 September 4, 2016

 Commentary on Luke 14:25-33

 David Schnasa Jacobsen

(8) WorkingPreacher.org

 Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

 Luke is interested in stories about Jesus and his family.

 September 8, 2013

 Commentary on Luke 14:25-33

 Emerson Powery

(9) WorkingPreacher.org

 Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

 We live in a market driven society, so it is not surprising that we feel the urge to “sell”

 Christianity in the marketplace of competing ideas and ways of life.

 September 5, 2010

 Commentary on Luke 14:25-33

 Jeannine K. Brown

(10) Take Up the Cross

 9/7/2025

 Vicar Kenneth Bassett

 Luke 14:25-33 (NRSVUE)