

“The Gospel: Free but Costly”

Luke 14: 15-33

If you have been around a while, you know that my wife had surgery about five weeks ago. And so people ask over and over how she's doing, and I'm just give you a tiny vignette.

So about 15, 18 days ago, we were sitting after dinner and I said, man, the floors are just dirty. I gotta clean the floor. And she said, if you want to. And then about three days ago she said, this floor is a mess. Somebody needs to do something about this. And I said...she's back.

I have no idea how I'm going to transition to God's Word, but we're going to go over well. I'll transition this way. we are in a little series on the teachings of Jesus, above all through the parables for a few weeks. And today we're in Luke chapter 14. I'm really covering the whole chapter, but I'm going to read to you mostly from the NIV today. But, mixing up a little from, chapter 14, verse 15 to 33, this is God's Word. This is the word of our Lord Jesus, describing both the gospel and the response and the cost of discipleship. Listen to what Jesus said as well as did in the Gospel of Luke.

When one of those at table with him they were to feast heard this, he said to Jesus, blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God. Jesus replied, A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet. He sent his servant to tell those have been invited, come, for everything is now ready. But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, I've just bought a field and I must go see it. Please excuse me. Another said I've just bought five yoke of oxen and I'm on my way to try them out so I can't come. Still another said I just got married, I can't come. The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town, and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame. Sir, the servant said, what you ordered has been done, but there is still room. Then the master told his servant, go out into the roads and country lanes and make them come in. Compel them to come in so that my house will be full. I tell you, not one of those men who were originally invited will get a taste of my banquet. Large crowds were traveling with Jesus and he turned and said to them, if anyone wants to come to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. Suppose one of you wants to build a tower, will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, this fellow began to build and was not able to finish. Or suppose a king is about to go to war with another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able, with 10,000 men, to oppose the one coming against him with 20,000? If he is not able, he will send a delegation, while the other is still a long way off and ask for terms of peace. In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything cannot be my disciple.

Let's pray for a moment. Give us, we pray, Lord, ears, to hear the beauty of the gospel and also the cost of following you by your spirit. Bring us closer to yourself. We pray in Jesus name, Amen.

Please be seated. If you'd like to know what's coming, there's an outline in the bulletin that says, we're just going to start with a big general idea that everybody knows. And that is the best things in life are

free. There's a lot of contact between that saying and the gospel. We're going to look at God's invitation or summons to faith the way people say yes and then no. And then if you really say yes, Jesus says there is a cost. And he describes that in various ways.

We celebrate a lot of things in this church. I hope the one we celebrate above all others is the gospel, the free offer, the gospel. That is to say, as I trust you know you are not right with God by works, by something you perform, by passing a test of some form. The Lord offers redemption, draws freely to all who believe, and he gives us eternal life by union with him, with faith.

But as this passage teaches, discipleship also has costs. In fact, Jesus says it's a free gift, but it's also going to cost you everything you have. That sounds like a paradox, but it's the paradox of the gospel, and it's absolutely true. It's fact. It's true for all of life. So many of the best things in life are free and yet costly. For example, if you love fresh air and we got to walk outside today at temperature of 64, nice crisp air. If you like fresh air, you don't have to pay for it. It's free now if it's muggy in the city in the south, you can go to the mountains. You can go to the beach and find air there. Lovely air. And you don't pay for that either. The air is free and good health is free. And energy, vitality of life is free. You wake up, you feel it. You didn't pay for it. It's free and love is free. The best things in life are free, but they also have costs. So if you want to enjoy the mountain air, you got to be willing to climb in the mountains and be fit enough to do that. And if you want good health, you have to push away cheesecake and get out and exercise and do what the doctor says and so forth. It's free, and yet it's costly. Now, number one, in all the things that are free and costly is surely love. Now the ocean is free, but you have to have the you to pay the price of learning how to swim and overcoming your fear of the waves.

And so it's free and costly. But, but love is the big one. Because you don't pay for love. Two people give themselves to each other in love, and it's wonderful to know that you have a secure and lasting love and you're your beloved, your spouse will not let you down, for better or for worse. Sickness and health. We love each other and it's a free gift.

And yet it's also costly, isn't it? Let me say it this way in the land of Oz, every young man believes he is marrying Dorothy. But one day most men wake up and suspect that they've married the Wicked Witch of the West. Now, don't think I'm a chauvinist. The women wake up and they're convinced they've married a flying monkey.

And then what? And then you remember your vows. You remember your pledge, and you say, you know, we clashed a little bit. We had a hard time for half an hour or maybe a day or two. But we love each other. We're committed to each other. We're going to repair this relationship. We're going to talk about what went wrong, and we will come together again.

It's free, but it's costly. Now, this is all set up in the Gospel of Luke by a party. And the party is at the house of a Pharisee. Now, Jesus was what I like to call an equal opportunity part attender. If you invited him, he would come if you were, rich and immoral and you invited and he'd go.

And if you were self-righteous, a Pharisee and a critic, if Jesus would go to the house of people whom he knew would criticize him, while there, he would go. So one day he's at the house of a Pharisee because the Pharisee invited him. And there's a lot of people there, and there's a man who's crippled in the hand, and it's a Sabbath day.

So the Pharisees think we know what he's going to do. He's going to heal this guy, and it's against our rules. So they're ready to pounce, and they're watching him, and he's watching them. And what he sees is it this particular party, they did things the way people always did in those days. And to some degree, everywhere there's a formal event, there's a head table.

And, you know, the important people that had table. And if you were close to the important people, you're important yourself in some way, or there's a good relationship you sit at or very near the head table, you're the leader. And then the farther away you are. In those days, they had, a table here and then two more, and if you're at the end of those tables, you have a low status. So the Pharisees are watching Jesus. Jesus watches them, and they're angling to get as close as they can to the head table in the master, Jesus says, you know, if you really want to have honor, the way to do it is not to fight for the top seats. Just give up the quest. What you should do is have a party. Invite the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame. The nobodies. Stop trying to be a somebody. Invite the nobodies of this world to your house, and then God, who sees your generosity, will repay you.

Now we may wonder exactly why Jesus is interested in seating patterns. And the truth is, he's not. He's interested in telling us about the way the Kingdom of God works. And fortunately or providentially, in this conversation, somebody says, hey, Jesus, I'm on your side. Blessed is anyone who will eat in the kingdom of God. That is to say, I'm with you.

This kingdom of God is not just for wealthy people. It's for the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame. Just the way you said I agree. And Jesus says, not so fast, because you got to make sure that while you're saying blessed are all who eat, you got to make sure you're going to be there. And I'm going to describe the way in which people are there at the feast and the way in which people confuse themselves, which is possible in those days.

And I think it's possible even today, especially in the Bible Belt. So this is something we need. Jesus says, there's a man who's going to have a feast, and he does what people did in those days, kind of like what we do today. He invites people and the equivalent of RSVP, you're going to come? Yes, I'm going to come.

I'm going to prepare food for the right number of people and they say, we're coming. Now, if you look at the list, you can tell that these are pretty prosperous people. They're not the poor, the crippled, the blind, the lame. We got a person here who bought a field. Now. The promised land was thickly populated. Land was expensive. We would think they spent 1 million to \$1 million. Another person bought five yoke of oxen that doesn't register to us. But that's a lot of oxen. That's a lot of resource just went into. It's like buying a fleet of trucks or brand new computer system. Third person says they just got married. But these are people who have some means.

And I want to tell you that they said yes to the host. But when the time comes to actually show up, the master says, okay, we don't have wristwatches like this. I'm just going to tell you the meal's ready. You need to be ready around dinner time, around the time when the sun sets. And now it's time to come.

And when the time arrived, they all began to make excuses and beg off. They said, well, I'm doing this so I can't come. Please excuse me now. Audience participation. You're ready. Thumbs up, thumbs sideways, thumbs down. I want you to vote. Okay? I just bought a field and I want to go look at it so I can't come.

Who thinks that's a good excuse? Put your hands up. Everybody thinks it's a bad idea. Correct? Excellent. You're well taught because once you bought the field, you can look at it anytime you want. By the way, if you wanted to inspect the field, you would have inspected it before or you bought it. This is a terrible excuse. That's number one.

Number two. I bought five yoke of oxen. I need to try them out. Who thinks it's a good excuse? Thumbs up, thumbs down. Everybody's thumbs down. You try them out beforehand. It's like saying, I bought five trucks and I need to see if they start. Well, you know, you check that out in advance. Third excuse. I have married a wife.

That's what it literally says in the original language. I married a wife, so I can't come. Who thinks that's a good excuse? Nobody. Nobody. Even that one. So if you if you have confused levels of Bible knowledge, you may say all is in reverse. The Old Testament, like when you're newly married, you devote yourself to your spouse. You don't have to do everything. Yes, you don't have to go to war. This is not war. It's a meal. Besides, besides, you knew you were getting married. It's not a shock you got married and you said yes to a party. So you should come. These men are dishonoring. Disrespecting the master. They said yes, and they're saying, you know, we're going to show you we don't care about you.

And the master understands that this is an insult. And he's angry. The passage says, but he doesn't stay angry. He says, I'm angry, but I will not be stymied or thwarted. I prepared food and people will come. And the people who come, the master says to a servant, are going to be those poor, crippled, blind, and lame. Now that's what Jesus said earlier invite the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame, the nobodies.

And then in the story, the man invites the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame from his town. And they're coming. And the feast is going to be almost full, but not quite. And so the master says to the servant, I want you to invite other people. I want you to go out into the countryside, into the roads and the hedges.

I'm translation say and invite people who don't know me, people who have no relationship with me. There's no basis where we're unaware of each other. I want you to invite them in. And the servant says, yes, absolutely, absolutely. And he says, I want you to compel them to come in, which has been used in the past, in the Middle Ages, briefly, people said, oh, compel means you can force people to become Christians.

Like, you know, like Charlemagne and other Christian leaders would line up an army and they'd say next to a defeated army next to a river. And they'd say, do you want to be baptized by being put in the water a little? Or do you want to be put in the water a lot? And they would say, well, we'll take a little.

They were misunderstanding what Jesus said. What he means is that when an odd invitation comes, you have to insist anybody. You've probably had an odd invitation, haven't you? Or someone invite you to use their house or their car and you think, oh, I can't use your car. Barely know you want. The first time. My wife and I flew cross country five hours from Baltimore to San Francisco many years ago, and my wife is a very friendly person.

Struck up a conversation with a woman on the other aisle, and before the flight was over, the woman that my wife was talking to was saying, cancel your hotel reservations. There's no good places you can

really afford in San Francisco. Just stay at our house. And I'm thinking she wants to sell her kidneys. But my wife said, no, no, no, she's a nice person.

And she kept saying, stay at her house, stay in her house, stay at her house. And eventually we capitulated. We stayed at their house. They compelled us to stay. There were delightful people. We had scars on our back later on, but. It's not true. You have to insist. And Jesus says in this parable, there's an insistence about the gospel.

Now what is it? What is it telling us? What's the point of this tale that Jesus tells? Now, in the last couple of weeks, I've pointed out to you that Jesus puts people like us in his parables. He puts believers and unbelievers and people who can't quite decide because that's the way people are. And he also puts someone like himself or like the father.

A couple weeks ago, we looked at the parable, the Good Samaritan, and I said that Jesus is the Good Samaritan, the great rescuer. A couple of weeks before that, or three weeks ago, whatever it was, we talked about the sower and we and Jesus says, he is the sower. He's the one who so see, Jesus puts himself in his parables.

So it's not just how to live, it's who is the Lord and who are we? So it's pretty easy to tell who's who. The father is the host of a great feast and the prophets and the apostles and people like us invite people on God's behalf to his feast. Ultimately, Jesus is the host of the feast. He invites us to himself.

He calls us or summons us to the gift of eternal life, to relationship with him, even though we're poor, crippled ly, blind and lame, or even if we're from the countryside. Now, what does that mean? It means something like this. The people who originally said yes and then begged off are like the Pharisees, religious people, observant, pretty confident.

They belong to God, but they're self-righteous and they love their rules. They love their rules so much that when Jesus comes, they reject him. And there are people to this day who go to church. They think maybe it's good to get some ethics and get my kids in with wholesome friends and, and, and the gift of eternal life sounds good.

And then time goes by and they say, you know, now that I think about it, the church demands too much or it's kind of judgmental or legalistic or it's not very popular to be a Christian right now. And they start to beg off. I'm not actually sure I want to be part of this. They say there are people who label our day today, right now as the great deep church that is people have been dropping out of the church for decades, and part of it is they just don't like some things.

Okay, so God says then and now, but my feast will be full and so invites other people in those days who are the other people? The other people, the poor, crippled, blind, and lame are kind of the nobodies of Israel. The non observant Jews who lived in Israel. But they didn't follow the rules, but they loved Jesus. They flocked to Him and His love.

And then the people from the outside would represent people from other cultures, other lands, Gentiles, the nations who said we'd have no knowledge of this master of yours. You know, in those days, most of the Greeks and Romans worshiped Aphrodite and Zeus and Apollo and Hermes, and they said, we don't need the God of Israel. We got our own gods.

And the apostles insisted, no, no, no, those gods don't exist. And the God of Israel really wants you to come to him. We insist that the covenant, the love of God, is for you. We're telling you who the living God is. He came in the flesh of the person, Jesus Christ. You really need to listen to this.

I'm thinking of campus ministries now. That's what campus ministries do. They say missionaries do church planters, which we support in numbers here we're saying, let's go. The God of the world is inviting you to himself. And we need to say yes. We should say yes. Because Jesus says, the people who originally invited and then said, no, we'll not taste my feast.

That's the last word in the parable. It's Jesus comment they will not taste my feast if they say, well, I'll try Christianity a little bit as soon as it becomes a little bit dangerous or difficult, I'm out of here. Now this word. I'm by the church. I want to make sure you know that when I say Jesus is referring to the nations, that comes from the Gospel of Luke and the Gospel of Luke in the beginning, in chapters one and two, John the Baptist says, all flesh will see his salvation, and the Christ will be a light to the Gentiles. So God's always intended for his gospel to go outside Israel to everybody.

So that's the point of the parable. And it's a good word for people who join the church or come to church a while and are baptized in catechism, sanitize for most major sins, and then think, I'm not so sure there's a warning here. It's an invitation. It's a call. It's a summons. Now, I don't know about you, but probably at some point in your life when you were a kid, you realized that invitations can be pretty important.

Maybe I'll tell you. I was about 12 when I realized that life consisted in more than learning things and hitting a ball. I realized there were girls. I realized it at 12, and it became important at about 14. It took me a long time to get it going, and I realized there were parties in, Your status depends on whether you get invited or not, whether it's a formal invitation or just a sense.

Come on over to my house. And it includes things like, how handsome are you? How good are your clothes? You take the right stand on music, you know, for and against Taylor Swift, for and against hip hop. Incredibly, I had a conversation with a 60 year old elder about hip hop just yesterday. He said, we have to sort these things out because if you're on the wrong side, you may not be invited.

Okay, so they're invitations and they're parties. You know that you probably aren't going to get invited to because you're not good enough. Now there is a party.

That we're all pretty sure we don't deserve to belong to. If you look at the name of the host already, you know you don't belong. And then if you if you get a load of the guest list, can I tell you some of the people on the guest list? Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, few others like that.

You think you belong at that feast? Do you think you deserve it? The answer is no. But the host of the feast says, I insist. Come, this is for you. This feast is for you. Yes. You don't belong. But I decided, I decree that you do belong because you don't have to do anything again. And you just have to be invited and say yes to the invitation or the call or the summons.

Everybody's invited. No credentials required. This is the free gift of the gospel. It's what we celebrate to say in plain language, what we celebrate in this church and every good gospel affirming church. We

celebrate salvation is by grace alone. You don't deserve it. By faith in Christ alone, by looking to him. Some people say, well, you know, at least I had the sense to accept the offer in the gospel.

No, that's a mistake to because real faith does not look inward to the believing self. It looks upward to the Lord in whom we trust, and we lean on him. So that's what Jesus is describing here, the call to Christ, which is free and yet it has cost. Now I want to break from Scripture and just tell you a story.

The story is the story of the birth of my first child, one aspect of it. So, in many cases, the birth of a first child is long labor and my wife was in labor for 20 hours. And unfortunately the labor started right around supper time. So we went 33 hours without sleep. And the child is born. Everything is good and you know, she holds out our new baby girl and we bond and we put a hat on her.

We take some pictures. We do all the things you're supposed to do. And then my wife says, I'm tired, I'm going to sleep. She's yours. And so I went around the hospital with her for the next little while, and nobody told me that while they're doing things that are really good for the child, they're also torturing your child specifically, they undress the child.

So she's cold because they want to see exactly how much she weighs, is good for her. And then they stretch her out to see how long she is. And she's been, you know, all scrunched up beautifully in her mother's womb all this time. And I don't want to be stretched out. And by the way, bright lights. And he laid me on cold ceramic and she's crying.

And then there's smearing goop on her eyes. She doesn't get some disease. And getting the mucus out of her nose and mouth. And she's wailing by now. And forgive me, but it's been 33 hours without sleep, 20 hours of labor. And and I find wrath rising within me toward these people who are torturing my child for no apparent reason.

I'm stirred, and I want to just snatch her out of these people's arms. Then I saw the headline Local pastor strikes nurse in a hospital melee. And I thought, okay, calm it down, man. Calm it down. Now what? I felt as it calmed down was I'm astonished at how much I love this child. I've known her for about 14 minutes and I'm willing to die for her.

So that's unconditional love, which God plants in us, which is an echo of God's love for us. That is to say, God the Father loves us unconditionally. And good fathers love their children, and good mothers love their children unconditionally. That's parental love. It has nothing to do with a child's merit. And this, this reality that God plants in us is a sort of a, a hint, a foreshadowing of the gospel which says that God loves us as we are unconditionally.

And if I just say a word for parents, there's a vast difference between loving your child because they do well and loving your child. Who then wants to do well. There's a huge difference between obeying your parents to gain their love and obeying your parents because you know your loved. And we got to get it straight. We got to love our children unconditionally, and then we can require things of them because we're in a relationship.

So my children would probably say if they were here, Yes, mom and dad have loved us unconditionally. And yet and yet their love has been costly. So my third child, five years old, was given the solemn task of matching the socks. At one point, the age of five. She said, it can't be done.

She fell on the floor weeping. There are too many white socks, I said. No, there's a size differential in the socks. You can figure it out. And some have a white toe and some don't, and some have a black toe. You can do it, she said. Okay, I can do it. I don't want to, but I can do it.

We had rules. One of the rules was always tell the truth, tell the truth, make a mistake, tell the truth. If you hide it, you're in trouble. Tell the truth. You'll be forgiven. Tell the truth. Always treat each other with respect. And don't hit your sister unless she clearly deserves it. Those are the rules.

They're loved and there's a cost. That's the human family. It echoes the divine family. God loves us. And there's a cost. Now I'm giving you my illustrations, but I want you to look at what the text says, what the text says in the next verses, which expresses this great truth, that we're saved by grace alone through faith alone, by Christ alone, not on the basis of works, still has a cost.

Look at verse 26. It's going to go up on the screen for you. If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother, his wife and children, brothers and sisters, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. So it's free.

But you need to love me because he's the Lord. He's the God of the universe more than your family. If there's a conflict now, ideally there's no conflict between husband, loving wife and husband and wife loving the Lord, or parents and children loving each other and loving the Lord. It all goes together, ideally. But in those days when people first began to believe in Jesus, there was often a conflict, as there is today.

Sometimes, and to say I'm going to follow Jesus is heard by family members as I don't love you anymore. When Mom and Dad say, don't you love us? If you love us, you'll stop being so devoted. Jesus. And we say, Mom and Dad, I still love you, but I'm a follower of Jesus now and I got to put him first.

They say, so you hate me. If you love Christ more, it's going to feel like hate to somebody. That's willing to do that. Oh, go back to verse 27, please. Thank you. Take your cross now every Sunday. And I have no objection to it whatsoever. I said this before and I'll say it again, I have no objection whatsoever to people wearing crosses to church, and I've no objection if their cross is made of silver or gold or bronze or anything else, because we want to, make it clear that the gospel symbolized by the cross, the death and resurrection of Jesus is beautiful to us.

But when Jesus said the cross, he didn't think of bronze or gold. It was rough hewn, wood splinter, heavy, ugly, on which people died. And today very few of us have ever had to face the idea that they'll die for the Lord. But in the world today, in large parts of Africa, and some parts occasionally in South America and in Asia, it can cost you your life to be a disciple.

Jesus says, it's not that I want you to die, but it's possible you'll need to die. So in that sense, you have to take up your cross and follow Jesus. Now, John Calvin, whom you've heard of and I'll probably talk about him again to John Calvin was a man who wrote a lot of Christian literature in the at the center of one of his writings about the Christian life.

He says the Christian life is one of bearing the cross for Christ. That is to say, you must be willing to suffer for other people and for the Lord. And he followed it. I'll tell you the story the other day, but he wanted to have a quiet life of scholarship, just teaching a few classes. And instead he took an agonizing call to

one of the most unruly cities in the European theater at the time, the city of Geneva, and lived a life of constant tumult.

And he started a seminary. And that seminary mostly had students who came from France, where you could be killed for being a Protestant. And when you graduated from that seminary, you got a certificate for hanging. Get it?

Literally, gallows humor. You can hang it on your wall. But if you go back to France, which some of them did, it may cost you your life. And some of his grads did die because they preach the gospel to effectively. And you have to be willing to say, if I belong to Christ completely. Jesus gave himself completely for me, and I give myself to him.

The offer of the gospel is free, but you enter into a relationship which is complete. It's not like your barber who might cut your hair from time to time. It's like the deepest marriage ever, except more. That's the relationship we have with Christ. And I have to tell you, in the West right now and in places like this, by which I mean the fair parts of the South and the beautiful city of Birmingham, our lives can be so comfortable, especially if you're, you know, you've made a pretty good go through life that suffering just is farther and farther away.

If you listen to the way people talk about their suffering, the miseries of life, their miseries are things like lower back pain or shoulder pain because they've been hunched over their computer too much and they haven't done proper stretching exercises. Oh, my shoulders hurt and the traffic on 280 will kill you. No, it won't kill you. The traffic on 280 is mildly unpleasant. It will not kill you. It's not real suffering. Go talk to the people in China. They'll tell you about real suffering. The Christians in China. And so we need to be aware of how our affluence influences us. We see it a different way. People choose their churches in a variety of ways. And sometimes when they choose their church, they say, well, I'm at this church because I have friends here.

Fine, good, or, the gospel is preached here, great opportunities to serve here. Wonderful. But they also lapse into consumeristic talk sometimes they'll say, I'm at this church because I like the music here. Now, by the way, just a comment. There's no church where you're going to like all the music. Nobody likes all the music anywhere, as long as it's heartfelt, which it certainly is, and done well to the glory of God.

Be content with that. But people say, I choose my church for the music. I choose my church for the children's programs, for the youth programs, for the, friendships I have here. And if you listen, it sounds kind of I like I choose because it serves me, serves my consumeristic influences and interests. And what we need is more people who are willing to say things like, I want to follow Christ here, which means I may take up my cross and follow the Lord here.

I may do things that are uncomfortable or even painful here, which, by the way, you'll have a chance to do if you stay here a while. As you know, if you've been here a while.

Not just receiving, but giving at a cost. People may say things like, I want to serve in this place because I see needs here, because I can help meet needs here. That's better. Now, verse 28 through 32, Jesus tells two parables that people talk about one freely and the other almost never. The first one is, what about a man who wants to build a tower?

Isn't he going to sit down and take up an evaluation of the cost? Because how? How preposterous. How makeable it is to build a tower, we'd say today a mansion or a, you know, big, glorious house and be unable to finish it. Now, that's a very clear parable. What it means is when you talk about the gospel, somebody, you're following Jesus, you have to say, look, Jesus will save you and you have a relationship with him, and it's good to belong to Jesus.

But there are costs. And you have to say that when you're talking to somebody about Christianity. And so we say it. But what we don't do is look at the next little parable, verses 31 and 32. What are you're going to go on your screen now? What King going to encounter another king in war will not first sit down and deliberate.

Whether he's able to go with 10,000. That's his army against the king with 20,000. Now we think, okay, that's an invasion. what are you going to do? He's coming against me. Am I going to resist or not? And we get caught up in the might say, this military strategy. But the point is to understand who we're talking about here.

Who's the king with 10,000 troops? Us. We're the weak king. Who's the king with 20,000 troops? God!

With whom we have to do. Whom will meet in the last day. So the first parable is saying, count the cost of believing, the second parable saying, and count the cost of not believing. And that's a gospel presentation. People don't make a whole lot. They say, count the cost of being a disciple. That's great. Oh, by the way, friend, count the cost of not being a disciple because you're all going to meet God in the last day and you don't want to be his enemy.

You want to make peace with him. We make peace with the Lord by faith through the cross, by repenting, by believing him, by saying, I'm on your side. That's not the whole gospel, but it's part of it. And we need to remember that Jesus said those words. It's not as if you could just say, I don't want to be disciple, and that's that.

You go about your life. You say, I don't want to be a disciple, and then you're at war with God. I urge you to make peace with God. And so do we. Have we have we have a full blooded description of what it means to belong to Jesus and to be his disciple. It's free. It's going to give you everything you want.

Life, a relationship with God, direction of life, eternal life. Friendships belong in the family of God. The benefits just go on and on and on. But it'll cost you. Because belonging to Jesus means you don't belong in some other places. And so I urge you to hear and receive the call of God and take warning from the Pharisees who wanted to dabble in religiosity and good deeds and their opinions, and didn't want to actually receive Jesus as he is. Receive him, love him all you who walked with him for a long time, keep it up and know Jesus more and more and live with him both now and forever.

Let's pray. Heavenly father, I thank you for giving our Lord these words. Striking words, very familiar in some ways and very unfamiliar in some ways. I pray, Lord, that we would delight in the free, offer the gospel, and receive a relationship with you that will go on and on, with benefits on every side. And Lord, I pray that we will have the courage to hear everything you're saying about what it means to follow you, and to tell those around us and to say it in an honest and winsome and true way, so that people would not, and we would not dabble with religion, but actually belong to you. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen.

