

**Text— Luke 14:25-35**

Fellow redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

Many folks say they are Christians; however, merely saying one is a Christian does not make it so, for in Matthew 7:21-23 Jesus remarks, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” Accordingly, simply saying that one believes a man named Jesus once walked upon earth does not make one an actual Christian, for true faith in Jesus Christ means trusting with full confidence in Him as one’s personal Savior and Lord, which includes faith in His atoning work.

Yes, such is the case, for Romans 3:23-26 informs us: “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” Hence, one must believe on Jesus Christ who has paid for all sins with His own holy and precious blood, which was the infinitely high cost of our redemption.

Furthermore, genuine faith in Jesus Christ as one’s personal Savior and Lord is fruitful, since it will always be accompanied by works done in full accord with the dictates of God’s Holy Word, for James 2:26 plainly states: “as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” Yeah, simply believing in God is NOT saving faith, for we read in James 2:19, “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also

believe, and tremble.” My friends, the devils are NOT saved, and neither is any human being whose faith amounts to nothing more than believing there is one God.

Our Scripture selection can be of great help to us in having a right understanding of genuine Christian faith as it reveals:

**“EVERY TRUE CHRISTIAN’S FOREMOST LOVE”**

With that as our theme may we, in view of our text and with the help of the Holy Ghost, see—

- 1) Who every true Christian loves most, and how such love is shown
- 2) Why the true Christian loves whom the true Christian loves most

-1-

Verses 25 & 26, ----- (Luke 14:25-26)

At the time that which is reported in our Scripture selection took place, Jesus was popular with the common folks while the Pharisees and company were growing in their hatred and jealousy of Jesus, since ever increasing numbers of people were flocking to see Jesus and hear His wise words. Nevertheless, many folks were following after Jesus simply because He was a popular figure, and they were not really paying close attention to what He was preaching. Consequently, our text opens by informing us: *And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.*

Jesus knew that great crowds were following Him as He went about preaching, teaching, and performing miracles. However, Jesus earnestly desired that people would truly follow Him by laying hold of Him in sincere faith rather than merely being caught-up with following after Him because of His popularity. Accordingly, Jesus really laid the fact on them that He must be one’s

number-one love if one would actually be a person of faith in Him— that is, a genuine Christian.

Now, at first glance it might seem that Jesus was teaching contrary to God's Law which He summarized in Matthew 22:37-39 when He said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Hence, it cannot be that Jesus desires that His followers unequivocally hate their parents, spouse, children, brothers, sisters, and their own life also. So, notice in our text that *Jesus says: If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.* Thus, it's ONLY in COMING TO JESUS – it's only in regards to one's relationship with Jesus – that in comparison to one's love for Jesus one must hate one's parents, spouse, children, brothers, sisters, and one's own life also. Therefore, take it to heart that Jesus uses the strongest terms possible to emphasize the fact that HE MUST BE one's NUMBER-ONE LOVE if one would truly be HIS DISCIPLE, a genuine Christian.

Yes, in comparison to one's love of Jesus Christ one must even hate one's own life, one's self, which certainly flies in the face of the high self-esteem that is taught and pushed upon people by most public schools and colleges these days. Nevertheless, 1 Peter 5:6-7 instructs: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." God grant that each and every one of us humbly holds to Jesus Christ as our number-one love in sincere faith.

The name JESUS means SAVIOR, while the name CHRIST means ANOINTED. Accordingly, every true Christian recognizes, holds, and believes in Jesus Christ as his or her personal Savior and Lord. Oh, every Christian believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, the true man who is also true God, the Christ of whom Colossians 2:9 states in no uncertain terms:

"in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Yes, Jesus Christ is He about whom Acts 4:12 informs us, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Indeed, to be our Savior, Jesus Christ had to be true man in order that He might take our place under the Law and in order to be able to suffer and die for us; and, Jesus Christ had to be true God in order that His perfect keeping of the Law might be sufficient for all people, and that His life and death with the shedding of His blood might be sufficient ransom for all the sins of all people, and that He might be able to overcome death and the devil for us sinners. Therefore, every true Christian loves Jesus Christ more than anyone or anything else, for Jesus is the only Way to God and heaven.

Verse 27, ----- (Luke 14:27)

Think about what Jesus is getting at when He speaks about one's cross. Jesus suffered and died on the cross of Calvary. Therefore, when Jesus speaks to those who would be His followers bearing their own cross, He is referring to their bearing sufferings in this world, for Jesus plainly states: *whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.* Hence, following and loving Jesus Christ includes suffering afflictions because one is a Christian, for 2 Timothy 3:12 plainly states: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Thus, true Christians show their love for Jesus by willingly bearing their own cross of affliction, following Jesus and His humble and honest way of living in this world, testifying that repentance and faith in Jesus Christ are required if folks would be saved.

God grant that each and every one of us loves the Lord Jesus Christ more than anyone or anything else; and, that we show our love by bearing our own cross of suffering, following after Jesus who is the ONLY SAVIOR!

As we ponder the remaining verses of our text, let us see why the true Christian loves whom the true Christian loves most.

The true Christian loves Jesus Christ most because by God's grace, mercy, and power the true Christian has sincere heart-deep faith in Jesus Christ as his or her personal Savior and Lord, and subsequently has honestly counted the cost of following Jesus, for Ephesians 2:8-10 declares: "by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Fellow Christians, realize that it is by God's grace, mercy, and power that we have true faith in Jesus and we love Him and have counted the cost of following Him, for Philippians 2:13 clearly states: "it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." We would not and could not seriously consider the cost of discipleship without God's giving us the ability to do so, and yet it is necessary that the cost of following Jesus be seriously considered, as we shall see is plainly evident as we continue with our text.

Verses 28-30, ----. (Luke 14:28-30)

Observe Jesus' illustration in driving the point home about taking matters of faith in Him very seriously, for Jesus says: *which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.*

Think about what Jesus is getting at. If a person in building a tower takes such an earthly project seriously so as to complete it rather than becoming a laughing-stock, so much more seriously should

the person graciously gifted with faith in Jesus Christ earnestly endeavor to remain in the faith, grow in the faith, and be fruitful in the faith, being fully aware that it will cost as he or she must willingly forfeit a life of acceptance and ease in this world.

Verses 31 & 32, ----. (Luke 14:31-32)

Here again Jesus by way of illustration drives the point home about taking matters of faith in Him very seriously, for Jesus says: *Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassador, and desireth conditions of peace.*

Hence, Jesus emphasizes the need to very seriously think about the cost of following Him as the Christian earnestly endeavors to remain in the faith, grow in the faith, and be fruitful in the faith.

Fellow Christians, we need to do as 2 Peter 1:5-11 instructs, where we read, "giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." We Christians would be quite foolish not to take matters of faith very seriously, remembering at all times that concerning our love for the Lord Jesus Christ, "We love him, because he first loved us." (1 John 4:19) Let us keep Jesus our number-one love!

Verse 33, ----- (Luke 14:33)

Notice that Jesus emphasizes the need to be all-in for Him with Him being one's number-one love at all cost, for Jesus says: *So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.* Note it well: JESUS CHRIST MUST BE AND REMAIN OUR NUMBER-ONE LOVE! ALL that we have must be forsaken in our heart and considered as nothing in comparison to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. It's as we read in 1 John 2:15-17, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." So, I repeat: JESUS CHRIST MUST BE AND REMAIN OUR NUMBER-ONE LOVE!

Verses 34 & 35, ----- (Luke 14:34-35)

Our text concludes with Jesus using an illustration to teach us Christians the necessity of keeping Him our number-one love, tenaciously clinging to Him in heart-deep God-given faith, and being fruitful in that faith, for Jesus says: *Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

Think about salt and its primary uses. Salty salt provides good flavoring, acts as a preservative, and can cleanse wounds and other articles of dirt. When you eat various vegetables and meats you know that some salt adds good flavor to it. Meats and cheeses sometimes have salt added to them to preserve them during storage. And, if you've ever had a cut in your skin and have gotten salt in it, you know that it stings as it cleans and purifies the wound.

Now, in Matthew 5:13 Jesus says to His followers: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have

lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." Hence, Christians supply their unbelieving neighbors in the world with a taste of God's will as revealed in God's Word, the Holy Bible. Christians actually help to preserve the world as they see to it that God's Word – Law and Gospel – is proclaimed so that other people can come to repent of their sins and believe on Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord. And, Christians sting the unbelievers throughout the world by serving as a reminder of what is God-pleasing behavior and what is not. Thus, Christians are to be the salt of the earth.

However, if Christians lose their saltiness by compromising God's Word and failing to be positive witnesses for Jesus in Word and deed, they will lose their faith altogether and be cast "into outer darkness"; the darkness of hell, where "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 22:13) Let us therefore endeavor to continue in the faith of Jesus Christ and in being fruitful in the same as salt that is good, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Romans 6:23; Mark 16:16)

Let us daily and sincerely repent of our sins. Let us cling to Christ Jesus in heart-deep faith as our personal Savior and Lord. Let us go forward endeavoring to be fruitful in the faith in full accord with God's Word. And, let us persist in keeping the Lord Jesus Christ as our foremost love, for He has been and remains so very loving toward us undeserving sinners. Amen.

m.e.l.