

Message for Sunday, September 7, 2025

Scripture: Luke 14: 25-33

Title: What You Give is What You Get

Welcome

Announcements: Giving Options-Special offering for September is Jerome/Haven Food Bank. New member class after worship on Sunday September 14th. Angels Attic Sale is coming Soon, October 17-19. The ladies could use help with set up, sale work and baked goods. Wednesday 5PM Bible Study in Pastor's Office.

Fellowship of Love

Song

Call to Worship

L: Did you hear the whisper of God calling us to worship?

P: God, help us listen as you call.

L: Do you sense the beautiful people God is creating us to become?

P: God, help us to see your image within.

L: Are we ready to listen, learn, and grow?

P: God, open our hearts and minds to your loving and challenging guidance.

Unison Prayer

Creator God, you have crafted us in your image and created us for greatness, as we share your love, justice, and compassion.

Help us to live into this creation. Strengthen us, as we seek to answer your call.

When we go astray, guide us back to your ways. When we fall apart, put us back together again.

When we shrink in fear, lift our heads, that we may see your love and grace welcoming us home.

Amen.

L: As we come to our time of offering, let us remember that giving is an opportunity to respond to God's generosity with our own.

Offering

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²⁵ Now large crowds were traveling with him, and he turned and said to them,

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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.

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

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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?

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²⁹ Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him,

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³⁰ saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'

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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?

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³² If he cannot, then while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace.

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³³ So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.

Meditation: What You Give is What You Get

When was the last time you gave up something? I don't mean giving up the larger slice of pie to someone else, I mean giving up something you loved or need so that another person would not have to go without? The scripture we get into today with Luke is one that is about giving things up to follow Jesus. It is a confusing passage for many of us today and seems to attract a certain type of Christian, one that wants to be persecuted in order to say they are a special type of Christian. Instead, they give things up and somehow that makes them better than other people.

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The scripture today is one where Jesus reminds his followers that there is a cost to following him. There were all sorts of ways suggested that I could talk about this passage. It could be a list of what you need to give up. It could be to talk about the things you may be asked to or need to sacrifice to remain true to the gospels. I think this passage is slightly different. I think it is really about what you put into being a Christian and, is what you are going to get out of it.

I watch people all the time think about what they are going to do with their lives, or in a given situation. Often what people do not take time to stop and think about is what it will actually cost to achieve those goals. I am not only talking about my students for this applies to what you want out of your relationship with God and with others around you. This is a perennial human problem.

Jesus is well aware that the journey he is on ends on the cross. Jesus was surrounded by disciples who did not understand the cost of what he was doing, and he was trying to help them understand that to follow him and do what he is doing will cost them something. You see I have heard this passage interpreted as Jesus telling us to leave family for the gospel and that is not what is going on here. What is really happening is Jesus is saying that for some of us to follow the gospel, it will cost our families.

You see what we are ultimately talking about is priorities. Do you value yourself as a follower of Christ or as something else? I don't have the answer to that for you. Instead, all I can do is point to what Jesus says that if you are going to follow him, then there will be a cost to you. It does remind me of a scene from a movie. In the movie Men in Black Agent K is recruiting a new agent, Agent J. At the beginning J asks K if its worth it, and K says "yes...if your strong enough."

Only you can set the value of your relationship with Christ. Christ has paid his value for that relationship; it is up to you to live up to that value. Amen.

Communion Litany

L: The Lord be with you.

P: And also with you

L: Lift up your hearts.

P: We lift them up to the Lord

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L: Let us give thanks to the Lord Our God.

P: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

L: O God, you created the universe with a shout of joy, a word of delight, and a big bang. You made gravity holes and antimatter, swirling electrons and dancing quarks, shooting stars and sapphire blue planets.

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You filled the ocean with clown fish and sharks, with dolphins and killer whales.

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You filled the air with doves and hawks, songbirds, and hummingbirds. You covered the land with shimmering aspen and weathered pine. And You blessed all the creatures of the earth:

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The bugs, snakes, lizards, the lions, tigers and bears, the puppies and the hippos, the zebras, and the penguins.

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And You blessed all the children of the earth every shape and size, every color and complexion, every makeup and mood, every style and substance.

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But we, O God, preferred to go our own way. We messed things up. We wanted to be in charge. We wanted to be in control.

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We thought everything belonged to us. We polluted the environment. We destroyed each other.

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We turned playgrounds into battlefields, school yards into mine fields, hospitals into death camps, and children into killers.

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But God, you never gave up on us. You never walked away or walked out. You always honored your promises even when we broke ours.

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You always welcomed us home with open arms and a warm heart even when our fists were clenched and our minds still closed.

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When we walk through sorrow and chaos, You are with us. When we live through moments of war and acts of terror, You walk with us.

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When our homes are destroyed, You help us to build new homes and finally lead us home to you.

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And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise Your name and join their unending hymn:

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P: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord,

God of power and might,

Heaven and earth are full of your glory,

Hosanna in the highest.

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**Blessed is the One
who comes in the name of the Lord.**

Hosanna in the highest.

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L: In the right time, in the fullness of your time, In the nick of time, you sent your Son to bring us back to life. He opened a window into your new creation.

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HE showed us a vision of your way: where every child has enough to eat, and can sleep safely all through the night,

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where every graveyard is a front porch of heaven, where the untouchable and unlovable are given the seats of honor, where tears of mourning become tears of laughter,

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where grievous wrongs and horrid suffering are made right and fair, where children hunt Easter eggs on playgrounds made from battlefields, and where everyone is welcomed and loved.

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L: In the dead ends of our lives,
Jesus clears a way ahead.

In the dead spots of our relationships, Jesus speaks words of hope and renewal. In the dead zones of our cities, Jesus calls forth a new kingdom.

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L: When we are dead tired, Jesus picks us up and carries us to a place of rest. When we are dead wrong, Jesus confronts us with the truth.

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When we are dead last, Jesus tells us that he has won us for eternal life.

And so on the night in which he gave himself up for us...

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L: Jesus took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said,

"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

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L: When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said,

"Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

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L: And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

P: Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ will come again.

L: Pour out Your Holy spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by His blood.

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L: Renew our communion with all your saints, especially those who now live with you. Since you have refreshed our souls from the waters of life. Help us refresh and renew others. Since you have given us strength for the journey, Help us to strengthen others on their journey.

(Congregational Response)

Send your Spirit to renew our faith and transform our souls so that we may hear your music, work for justice, delight in heavenly food, and strengthen one another in love and grace. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Communion

Benediction

Song

Goodbye