

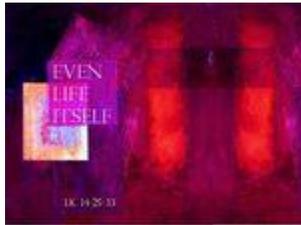
Holy Textures

Meeting Jesus in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
Short, easy to use, faith-provoking insights.



Luke 14:25-33

So at a minimum these sayings of Jesus ought to draw us up short. Cause us to reflect how much the choices we have already made are costing us - and our planet; and to consider whether the costs of following Jesus might be a better investment.



Year C

Pentecost 16

September 8, 2013

Sunday Between September 4 and September 10 Inclusive

Proper 18, Ordinary Time 23

Read the passage at the bottom of this post: [Luke 14:25-33, The Message](#) or [Luke 14:25-33, The New Revised Standard Version \(NRSV\)](#).

Click here, [Luke 14:25-33](#), for an easy to print or email Adobe PDF version of this note.

Sermon by the [Rev. Dr. George Hermanson](#), "[Passion](#)."

This text begins and ends with an "all or nothing" injunction about following Jesus, with two practical illustrations in between.

Given that at this point in his ministry, Jesus is beginning to sense the "all" that lies ahead for him personally (betrayal and denial by his closest companions, followed by false arrest, torture, and brutal execution), perhaps it is no wonder that his response to the large crowds is to challenge any hopes they may have for an easy entry to the messianic age. The way ahead will be hard, not magical.

The word "hate" (as used in the NRSV) is clearly being used in an exaggerated sense and not literally. The Good News Bible's "love me more" is better, but doesn't capture the sense of total commitment that the underlying Greek is saying.

These are hard sayings for us who are also trying to honour commitments we have also made to spouses, children, parents and bankers. We are in no position to literally follow the itinerant Jesus, who, as far as we know, had no property of his own, no home, no wife, no children, no job.

This saying is also hard because we live in a culture and climate where we are bombarded with goods and promises for wonderful benefits with no mention of - much less any expectation of - paying a cost for them. We are spending and living as though there is no cost, no downside, no long-term consequences.

So at a minimum these sayings of Jesus ought to draw us up short. Cause us to reflect how much the choices we have already made are costing us - and our planet; and to consider whether the costs of following Jesus

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might be a better investment. Indeed, the examples Jesus gives seem to invite this sort of sober, practical assessment.

Am I really willing to re-assess and change my commitments and priorities so that my commitment to following the way of Jesus is actually reflected in my marriage, parenting, working, spending, socializing?

That's a big question.

For most of those who were with Jesus that day the answer was, "No."

I wonder what our churches would be like if everyone sat down and made a sober re-assessment of what it takes - and what they are willing to give - in order to follow the way of Jesus?

David Ewart,
www.holytextures.com

Note: Historical background information is primarily from Bruce Malina and Richard Rohrbaugh, Social Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels (see link below), page 287.

* [Link to Amazon.com Bibliography for Bruce Malina, Richard Rohrbaugh, et. al.](#), Social Science Commentary on ... The Synoptic Gospels; The Gospel of John; The Book of Acts; The Letters of Paul; The Book of Revelation; and others.

Luke 14:25-33 (NRSV)

²⁵ Now large crowds were traveling with him; 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."

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Luke 14:25-33 (The Message)

²⁵ One day when large groups of people were walking along with him, Jesus turned and told them,
²⁶ "Anyone who comes to me but refuses to let go of father, mother, spouse, children, brothers, sisters—yes, even one's own self!—can't be my disciple. ²⁷ Anyone who won't shoulder his own cross and follow behind me can't be my disciple.

²⁸ "Is there anyone here who, planning to build a new house, doesn't first sit down and figure the cost so you'll know if you can complete it? ²⁹ If you only get the foundation laid and then run out of money, you're going to look pretty foolish. Everyone passing by will poke fun at you: ³⁰ 'He started something he couldn't finish.'

³¹ "Or can you imagine a king going into battle against another king without first deciding whether it is possible with his ten thousand troops to face the twenty thousand troops of the other? ³² And if he decides he can't, won't he send an emissary and work out a truce?

³³ "Simply put, if you're not willing to take what is dearest to you, whether plans or people, and kiss it good-bye, you can't be my disciple."

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