The Cost of Discipleship

SESSION 4
Hope Christian Fellowship Church
September 29, 2016

LAST WEEK…

- The Call to Discipleship: "The call goes forth, and is at once followed by the response of obedience.
- Obedience: Obedience to Christ pulls us into a place where faith is possible.
- Costly Discipleship: Costly discipleship is not to be confused with human excellence or ability. Obedience to Jesus’ call is from His initiative, His grace, His power, and never our own.
Discipleship & the Cross

- The call to follow is closely connected to the passion of Jesus, who had to suffer AND be rejected so the Scriptures could be fulfilled.
- A Christian must deny self, be aware of Jesus and not of self. (Humility does not mean thinking less of yourself. It means not thinking of yourself at all.)

Discipleship & the Cross

- A Christian must deny self, be aware of Jesus and not of self. (Humility does not mean thinking less of yourself. It means not thinking of yourself at all.)
- Only when we become selfless, unaware of the pain of our own cross, are we ready to bear the cross for the sake of Christ.
Discipleship & the Cross

Read Mark 8:31–38

What Does Jesus Say About Suffering?

Can you think of examples of “trivial suffering”?

Peter says to Jesus, “You don’t need to die, no one will reject you, suffering isn’t necessary.”

“Suffering and rejection are laid upon Jesus as a divine necessity, and every attempt to prevent it is the work of the devil.”

(Bonhoeffer, 87)
Discipleship & the Cross

- Suffering for the Christian is the fruit of exclusive allegiance to Christ.
- The first suffering all Christians must suffer is the call to abandon all worldly attachments.

Jesus’ call for us to “take up our cross” is a call to suffering and rejection.

“Forgiveness is the Christ-like suffering which it is the Christian’s duty to bear.”
(Bonhoeffer, 90)

How does forgiving cause us suffering?
- Group 1: Galatians 6:1–2
- Group 2: James 5:15–16
- Group 3: 2 Corinthians 1:3–7
Discipleship & the Cross

We need to remember that grace (therefore forgiveness) is costly. **Grace is the giving of something.** If nothing else a gracious person will at times receive criticism from those who believe a stronger action is required.

Why is forgiving difficult? What is the cost associated with it?

Suffering for God is Redemptive

Everyone’s cross is different but it’s the same. It’s a call to obedience. A call to follow. A call to die. Some are called to martyrdom and others are tempted just as much as they can bear.
Suffering for God is Redemptive

“As we learn to think like Jesus, Bonhoeffer says our perspective on suffering and rejection will change from fearful avoidance to redemptive endurance. To endure the cross is not a tragedy; it is the suffering which is the fruit of an exclusive allegiance to Jesus Christ. When it comes, it is not an accident, but a necessity.”

Suffering for God is Redemptive

God is not surprised when we suffer!

“If suffering and rejection lead to intimacy with the Father, could it be the inability of so many of us to go deeper with God lies in our fear of suffering and rejection? Is it possible our avoidance of these things keeps us in the shallow waters of discipleship?”
Suffering for God is Redemptive

Group 1: Read Matthew 26:69–75

- Why did Peter lie? What was he trying to avoid?
- How did avoiding suffering impact his relationship with Jesus?
- How are you tempted to deny your relationship with Jesus?

Suffering for God is Redemptive

Group 2: Read Matthew 26:38–42

- How does Jesus’ attitude differ from Peter’s?
- What does Jesus have in his life that Peter’s missing that allows him to have this different approach?
Loyal Disciples

- Christ makes us individuals by calling us.
- All receive an individual call. Because we fear isolation, we attempt to align ourselves with others and their physical environment.
- We try to build a barrier that will prevent a decision from having to be made.
- We are not willing to stand alone before Jesus, but nothing can protect us from the moment of our call.

Loyal Disciples

- Christ wants to be at the center of our world. He is the Mediator, and no other relationship can be as important as the one with our Mediator.
- He is the Mediator between God and man, man and man, and man and reality. (p. 95)
Can we be immersed in Christ, and in direct contact with anything else?  

“The cost of discipleship is that from now on the only way you can related to anyone is as “one with Christ.” Your ability to love others, to respond to them as eternal beings, comes from your connection with Jesus.”  

(1 John 4:11–12)

Read Luke 14:26

How is it different? How is it similar?

Our immersion into Jesus or “oneness with Jesus” not only transform our loyalty, they also transform the way we interact with the world.
Discipleship Isolates Us

1 John 2:15 instructs us “Love not the world”, while John 3:16 tells us that “God so loved the world…”

How can we reconcile these contradictory ideas?

How would you describe God’s love for the world?

“When we buy into cheap grace, we assume, since we are forgiven, that we can now go back and relate to others as if we are not connected to Jesus.”

We think that we are still free moral agents. We are not and we cannot.
READ Genesis 22:1–14

How has your encounter with grace changed your view of the world?

CONCLUSION

- What is not given us through the incarnate Son is not given us by God. (p. 97)
- Anything I cannot thank God for, for the sake of Christ, I cannot thank God for at all. (p. 98)
CONCLUSION

- Discipleship is a complete attachment to Christ’s person. It means not looking to the law, or to personal piety, or to the world for fulfillment.
- If we take Jesus at his word and dare to become individuals, our reward is the fellowship of the church. (p. 101)

Next Week
Read Chapters 6 and 13