

DID JESUS JUST NOT LIKE LARGE CROWDS?

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2025

In Pastor Mark's sermon on Sunday, we explored the challenging teachings of Jesus found in **Luke 14:25-33**, where Jesus addressed the large crowds following Him. Instead of welcoming them with open arms, He posed a startling challenge: true discipleship requires radical commitment, even to the point of hating one's own family and life. This hyperbolic language is designed not to advocate hatred but to emphasize the necessity of prioritizing our relationship with Jesus above all else.

Pastor Mark explored the paradox of Jesus' relationship with crowds. While contemporary churches often seek to grow their congregations, Jesus seems to thin the crowd by issuing demands that reveal the cost of discipleship. He compared following Him to building a tower or going to war, encouraging potential disciples to count the cost before committing. This stark message is not about numbers but about the quality of faithfulness and devotion.

The message challenged listeners to reflect on what it means to love Jesus above all and to be willing to sacrifice for that love. Pastor Mark emphasized that Jesus desires followers who fully commit their lives to Him, not just those who view Him as a convenient addition to their lives. This call to discipleship is radical and transformative, urging believers to consider how they can live out their faith with complete allegiance to Christ. Ultimately, Pastor Mark concluded that the true measure of discipleship lies in unwavering loyalty and devotion to Jesus, who offers the abundant life to those who follow Him wholeheartedly.

GOSPEL READING: LUKE 14:25-33

Large crowds were traveling with Jesus and turning to them He said: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters — yes, even their own life — such a person cannot be my disciple.

And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who

sees it will ridicule you, saying, 'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish.'

"Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace.

In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples."

QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION

1. How do you personally interpret Jesus' call to "hate" family and self? What exactly is Jesus asking us to do here?
2. How do you reconcile the idea of loving Jesus more than your family or yourself with the commandment to love others as we love ourselves?
3. Is following Jesus costly? How?
4. Can you share a time when your commitment to your faith required you to make a difficult and costly choice? What was the cost?
5. Have you ever had to step away from family, the crowd or popular opinion for the Lord's sake? What was that experience like?
6. So what does it mean for you to "carry your cross" in your everyday life?
7. Are there areas in your life where you struggle to put Jesus first?
How can you begin to address those challenges emotionally and spiritually?

PROMPTS FOR ACTION & RESPONSE

1. Reflect on a specific relationship or area of your life where Jesus might be asking for greater allegiance. Consider writing a prayer or commitment to express your desire to prioritize Him in that area.
2. This week, identify one practical step you can take to live out your commitment to Jesus, whether through service, sacrifice, or a change in your daily routine. Share this commitment with a trusted friend for accountability.