

Christ Jesus Has Paid the Cost of Discipleship for You



Background: After a number of lessons from Hebrews, where the minister teaches that the Old testament laws and sacrifices no longer apply for our salvation. Rather we have a Savior, who defeated death and the devil and paid the full price for our sins. Furthermore, we don't need some person to intercede for us, as we are invited to go straight to Christ, who is our advocate to the Father, and He has paid the full price for our sin. All we can do is trust that His sacrifice paid the full price for our sin. This weekend, the theme is "Choose Life!" Not that it is easy. Human nature wants us to prove ourselves or do something to earn God's favor. But all 3 lessons emphasize living the sanctified life with Christ in charge of our life. Most interesting is the Epistle: Onesimus, a slave, apparently stole from Philemon and ran away from his home. This subjected him to the

Onesimus and Philemon (Artist unknown)

death penalty. Paul's letter asks Philemon to not only spare his life but to consider him as an equal in terms of recognizing that each of them are forgiven children of God. Thus, he also recommends freeing Onesimus from slavery. Christ has also freed us from the slavery of sin. In speaking to a crowd, He emphasized letting go trying to do it "my way". Rather he tells us to take up His cross and follow Him. This we are able to do by heeding the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

The Lessons: Deuteronomy 30:15–20, Philemon 1–21, & Luke 14:25–35

A disciple of Jesus Christ will *"bear his own cross"* (Luke 14:27) and follow the Lord through death into life. Discipleship is costly because it crucifies the old man with *"all that he has"* (Luke 14:33), in order to raise up the new man in Christ. The disciple disavows *"his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life"* (Luke 14:26), in deference to Christ. That way of the cross is impossible, except that Christ Jesus has already paid the cost. His cross is set before you as *"life and good, death and evil"* (Deut. 30:15). Taking up His cross is to *"choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him"* (Deut. 30:19–20). To live that life in Christ is also to bear His cross in love, *"that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord"* (Philemon 14).