

The Cost of Discipleship

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 25 August 2024

Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0 : 0 0] You can open with me and your Bibles to Mark chapter 8. We want to read the last part of Mark chapter 8 as we prepare to hear the word preached from it.

We'll begin reading in verse 27. Mark 8, verse 27.

Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way, he asked them, Who do people say I am? They replied, Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and still others, one of the prophets.

But what about you? he asked. Who do you say I am? Peter answered, You are the Christ. Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him. He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.

He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. Get behind me, Satan, he said.

[1 : 2 0] You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men. Then he called the crowd to him, along with his disciples, and said, If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?

Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels.

And he said to them, I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power. We enjoy having mail brought to our homes, put into the mailbox, close at hand.

I wonder, kids, if you've heard of the Pony Express. This was a way of delivering mail as well. Private company that started in 1860 and only lasted for a year and a half.

[2 : 3 4] They carried mail by an organized relay of horseback riders. Maybe you saw some relays in the Olympics. This was quite a relay, 2,000 miles stretching from Missouri to California.

And it was made in 10 days. Now, it was no easy job. Each rider was expected to ride 75 to 100 miles a day in all weather, hot or cold, sleet or snow, rain or shine, changing horses every 15 to 25 miles.

They carried the mail along with a small lunch bag and then also a first aid kit for the attack of Indians and wild animals.

How would you recruit riders for such a difficult and dangerous job? Well, one San Francisco newspaper ran this ad for the Pony Express.

Big letters. Wanted. Young, skinny, wiry fellows, not over 18, must be expert riders and willing to risk daily.

[3 : 51] Orphans preferred. Probably so there'd be no mothers weeping at the grave. Now, how many of you are signing up? The owners did not want recruits who would, upon suffering the first hardships of the job, would then drop the job.

Some mountain pass in Colorado, just leave the mail there and go home. I sure didn't know it would cost me this. I didn't know this was involved.

No, so the owners laid out the cost, didn't they? The cost that's involved to have this job. And they didn't hide the cost.

But they put it right up front for all to see. Now, today here in Mark's Gospel, chapter 8, we see Jesus Christ recruiting. He's calling men and women, boys and girls, to be followers of Him, to be His disciples.

And He does not just present the privileges and benefits of being His disciple, though those are many. He doesn't hide the difficulties, but He lays out the cost of discipleship.

[5 : 05] And it's not in some fine print, but it's right up front where no one can miss it. If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up His cross and follow me.

Now, in our soft age of Western Christendom, the cost of following Jesus is often hidden, downplayed, ignored. And only the benefits of following Jesus are presented.

It's the way to gain more recruits. But it's also the way to multiply false disciples who fall away when the reality of the cost of discipleship confronts them.

I surely didn't know this was involved. And they're gone just as quickly as they came. Or they carry on their old lifestyle and convince themselves that they're still Christians.

They're just not those super-dedicated Christians. They're not disciples, perhaps they'll even say. And so they live out their lives deceived, self-deceived, as to their real identity as being lost, headed to hell, and needing a Savior.

[6 : 17] Make no mistake about it, all real Christians are disciples of Jesus. They're followers of the Savior. Wherever He leads them, they will go.

Now, these requirements were not just for the twelve, but also for the crowd, all followers of Jesus.

And that's why Jesus called both to Himself, as the text tells us. Both His twelve disciples and the crowd are now gathered together because both have wrong ideas and expectations about the Messiah that need to be corrected.

Remember how we've seen in this chapter how Peter and the twelve had correctly identified Jesus. Who do you say I am? And Jesus said, You're the Christ.

You're the Messiah. They were right on. But they couldn't be more wrong about the mission of Messiah, the agenda of Messiah.

[7 : 17] They had no place in their thoughts for a Messiah who would suffer and be so rejected by the religious leaders as to be killed. And for such an idea, Peter rebuked Christ.

You see, all of them were expecting the Messiah to powerfully free them from bondage to the Roman government and to bring in the glory days for Israel by promoting them to be the head instead of the tail, to be the leader over all the nations of the world.

We saw last week, they ignored all the Old Testament scriptures prophesying Messiah's suffering and death. And they clung only to the glory passages that spoke of the good things that Messiah would bring.

Though, as Acts 3.18 says, God foretold through all the prophets that His Christ would suffer. But with such wrong views of Messiah's agenda, you can see then why Jesus warned the twelve in verse 30 not to tell anyone that He was the Messiah because to do so would only fan the flames of a revolutionary spirit that had often been quenched in blood by the Greek and the Roman governments.

But you also see how the disciples' wrong ideas about the agenda for Messiah would also feed wrong ideas about the agenda for Messiah's disciples, themselves.

[8 : 45] If Messiah is bringing in the glory days for Israel, well then it will be glory for us, His followers, and especially for us, the twelve, the inner band. We'll see in chapter 10 of Mark's gospel how James and John came privately to Jesus with a request.

Let one of us sit on your right and the other on your left in your glory. You see, the glory days are here. Luke 19, 11, the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once, elevating Israel to this glorious position.

And it was that fervor that stirred the Passover crowd to rush out on Palm Sunday and to shout as Jesus rode into Jerusalem, hail to the king!

Hosanna to the king of David! The name of the Messiah! So here in Mark 8, these twelve disciples had their heads in the cloud as to their expectations both for Messiah and for His disciples.

They were minding the things of men, not the things of God. So Jesus calls the disciples and the crowd who shared the same expectations and He plainly lays out the cost of discipleship to Christ.

[10 : 06] So just two points today. First, the cost of discipleship to Christ. Second, two encouragements to embrace the cost of discipleship. First, the cost of discipleship.

If anyone, once again we see this is for anyone, the twelve, the crowd, for me, for you. If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

You see, what Christ is saying is that the disciples of Christ can expect the same basic agenda for them as He is facing. He's facing suffering now and then the glory to come.

And He's telling them, it will be the same for you. If you're following me, it will be the same for you. Sufferings now and glory later. Well, they weren't expecting sufferings now.

That was the last things they were expecting. They were expecting the kingdom and glory to shine. Now, I used to think that this was holding forth three requirements to take up or to deny yourself, take up your cross, and to follow me.

[11 : 20] But to come after me, whoever would come after me, is the same as following me, isn't it? So, if you're coming after me, you're following me.

So, those are not separate things. Rather, I see just two requirements here. Deny yourself and secondly, to take up your cross. And those two really are very much the same, just expressed in different terms.

So, let's look at both of them. The two things as the cost of following Jesus. Two requirements first, you must deny yourself.

Sometimes we speak of self-denial in ways like very small ways. We think of, well, this is not just denying yourself some ice cream during Lent.

Oh, that's self-denial. No, no. No, Jesus is talking about a far more radical self-denial. It's the self-denial mentioned in Isaiah 55, 7 and 8.

[12 : 27] Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Why? Because my thoughts are not your thoughts and your ways are not my ways, declares the Lord.

You see, the whole way you've taken is wrong. It's not just a little thing here and a little thing. No, the whole way is wrong and it must be denied, forsaken. And your whole way of thinking is in conflict with mine and must be forsaken and denied.

For you have in mind the things of men, not the things of God. And that's because as Isaiah says in chapter 53 and verse 6 that we all, like sheep, have gone astray.

We have turned each one to his own way. And so our theme song was, I did it my way. I do it my way. And so having strayed from God's way to go my way, if I'm ever to follow Christ, it's going to require a forsaking and denying of my way, isn't it?

And that's what Christ is making plain to them. I must turn and go his way and that means forsaking my way and my thoughts of what I want to do for his thoughts and what he wants me to do.

[13 : 53] It means I get off the broad way because it leads to destruction and I get into the narrow way that leads to life. And by the way, Jesus said, I am that way.

So that's what, a yes to Jesus requires a no to self, you see. And that's what our Lord is showing us. Right up front is the cost of being one of his followers.

Now it might help you to think of it this way, to deny self is to do what Peter did to Christ three times. It's the same word. Kids, what did Peter do to Christ?

Well, he denied him. He disowned him, didn't he? He renounced any connection. I do not know the man. I don't know what you're talking about.

I don't know who he is. Now that's what you must do to yourself, Jesus is saying. That old you whose thoughts and ways were to be followed, that you were following, that must be renounced.

[14 : 58] I don't know that way anymore. I don't know that self anymore. I deny it. I renounce it. No more doing life my way. I'm going God's way.

And that's what it requires, you see. To go God's way is to deny my way. So we must not only say no to Satan as Jesus did, away from me, Satan. We must not only say no to the world that is under the control of the evil one, but we must also say no to our sinful self, which we crowned king and made our God and we did whatever it thought.

I was free to do what I wanted to do, whenever I wanted to do it, and with whomever I wanted to do it. That must be forsaken, denied. So that now we say, not what I wish to be or where I wish to go, for who am I that I should choose my way?

The Lord shall choose for me. Tis better far I know, so let him bid me go or stay. That's the first cost of discipleship. We must deny ourself.

But secondly, if anyone would come after me, you must take up your cross and follow me. Now, what's this cross that we must take up?

[16 : 17] You know, a cross has come to mean many things in our day that it never meant in Jesus' day, so we need to shed ourselves of those thoughts. We think of a cross as a beautiful necklace or a piece of ornamentation that we hang around our necks or around our wrists as a symbol of Christianity.

But when Jesus spoke of a cross in Mark 8, the cross, the stauron, was one thing and one thing only.

It was an instrument of torture and execution devised by the Romans for their worst offenders. It was worse than other forms of capital punishment.

like the guillotine or the firing squad or the electric chair or drugs. They killed a man instantly. But this was a vertical torture rack that would torture you to death.

And the criminal was made to carry his own cross to the place of execution where they would die the slow and painful and shameful death of the cross.

[17 : 32] So to take up your cross means death. That's what it means. The cost of discipleship to Christ is a denial of self but now we're seeing that that is nothing different than death to self.

Let's not forget where's Jesus going? Why has he come? He's going to Jerusalem. He'll be there in about six months from this point. And why is he going there?

What's he going to do there? To be despised and rejected and killed on a cross of shame. So you see what Jesus is saying. I'm heading to the cross.

That's why I've come. And I'm going there and if you're going to follow me you're going to need a cross of your own. So take up your cross. Notice it's not my cross. It's your cross. I have a cross to die on.

You will need a cross to die on if you're following me. You see the imitation of master and disciple. The agenda is much the same. So the cross is not a symbol of Christianity that they were to take up.

[18 : 47] That's not what he meant then even though that's what it stands for today. And neither is it every difficulty that I have in my life. You know this bum knee that I've got or allergies or rebellious child.

Oh I guess it's just my cross to bear. We speak of it. Don't we? No, no. That's not it. That's not what he's talking about here. Rather Jesus' cross was the suffering and death that he must endure in order to do his father's will.

And your cross is the suffering and death that will come to you because you are following Jesus and doing his will. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness.

Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me Jesus says. Matthew 5, 10, and 11.

That's your cross. All who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. Why does the persecution of the world come upon the Christian? It's because of the godly life in Christ Jesus.

[20 : 05] That's your cross. And if the world hates you keep in mind it hated me first. If you belong to the world this world would love you as its own but as it is you do not belong to the world because I have chosen you out of the world.

That is why the world hates you. Remember the words I spoke to you? No servant is greater than his master. If they persecuted me they will persecute you also.

They will treat you this way because of my name. So your cross is the cost of discipleship to Jesus. It's the ill treatment you receive because you belong to Christ.

Or as he'll say in verse 38 it's because you're not being ashamed of me and my words. You're not ashamed to identify with me to say I am a Christian I'm a follower of Jesus.

You're not ashamed to identify with his words. You do what I command and you believe what I say. And that will bring you suffering just as it did for Jesus.

[21 : 09] That's the cross you must be willing to take up and bear if you want to be a disciple of Jesus. Jesus. The cross a painful instrument of death.

And so Jesus is saying there is there is a death to die for following me. A death to die. Now for all the disciples except John church history says that it was a literal martyr's death.

That was their cross. They were all martyred for Christ. John was the only one out of the twelve that was spared that but he was persecuted and exiled to the island of Patmos he tells us because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

He didn't escape the cross did he? He too had a cross to bear and he took it up. But for all Christians our cross involves a death and it's that death to self you see.

Death to what you want and a willingness to endure pain that you don't want to suffer. A death to your desires to have it otherwise to be spared from that mockery and suffering from the world.

[22 : 28] Even as our Savior who in Gethsemane pleaded Lord if there's Father if there's any other way let this cup pass from me. Oh but not my will but yours be done.

that was his cross and he took it up willingly. There was a death to die in Gethsemane that led to the death on Golgotha for our Savior.

And some of you because you're a disciple of Christ and following him and his word will be insulted will be slandered falsely accused scorned as a religious bigot despised and even cancelled in our cancelled culture today.

For what? For just holding to Jesus words about gender and sexuality and marriage and abortion and euthanasia and lying and stealing.

Some of you might lose your jobs for being faithful to Jesus and his words. Some of you will lose promotions because you're not willing to lie to get further up the ladder.

[23 : 35] you're not willing to sacrifice your Lord's days for some more money or to sacrifice your family just to be promoted in your work. Some of you might be fined money for so-called hate speech as it is in many nearby countries.

Some of you might even go to prison. And yes, our brothers and sisters around the world, many of them, are going to their death.

And why? Just because they're not ashamed to identify as Christians, followers of Jesus, following him and his word.

So according to Jesus, this is the death we must die to follow him. Death to the smiles and praises of the world, to be mocked instead. Death to popularity and being respected, having all men think well of you.

Death to a life of ease and rest without being hassled by the world. Death to die to your own remaining desires to sin. Death to die to your own rights. Death to die to the desires to be free from all of this suffering.

[24 : 46] You must die. You must die. This is the cross. And Luke records Jesus' words as saying that you must take up your cross daily.

Interesting, isn't it? It's not a one and done thing. It's not going to the altar one day and say, okay, I surrender all. No, it's waking up every day and dying and saying, I surrender all.

That's why Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, I die daily. Because Paul finds like you and I find that we somehow manage to crawl off the cross, don't we? We don't want to pay the price.

We are ashamed of Jesus at times. Jesus. So his agenda as Messiah finds a likeness and echo in the agenda of his followers.

And the reason is simply because we live in the same Christ-hating world as our master did. And so if we would follow him, it's going to be suffering before glory, the cross before the crown.

[25 : 53] Well, that's the cost of discipleship. And our Lord knows it can be painful to die and to die to self. And so he gives us two encouragements to embrace the cost of discipleship to him.

This is the last of the two points. Some considerations to stir us up, to make every effort to deny ourselves, to take up our cross, to motivate us, to not be reluctant to bearing this cross.

And there are two encouragements, consider the cost of non-discipleship to Christ. And secondly, consider the benefits of discipleship to Christ.

And the two are really mixed together in the remaining verses of our text. And so to some of you who may be stumbling over the cost of discipleship, as if it's too high to pay, Jesus says, yes, the cost of being my disciple is high.

But have you considered the cost of not being my disciple? It is infinitely higher. For, verse 35, whoever wants to save his life will lose it.

[27 : 07] But whoever loses his life for me in the gospel will save it. So you might try to save your life. It's got to be my way. It's got to be life the way I want it.

You're trying to save your life, avoiding the cross, avoiding any difficulties, any cost of following Jesus. But all attempts at saving your life will be the cause of losing it.

It cannot be done. It's like trying to grab a handful of sand, dry sand, up at the dunes, and the tighter you squeeze it, the more it falls out of your hands. You try to hold on to life your way, and you're going to lose it, man.

That's what Jesus is saying. Isn't it kind of him to tell us that? Because there's a lot of people holding on tight, thinking that's the way to life. You think that following Christ will ruin your life, but it's actually just the opposite, because whoever loses his life, his life, his way, is actually the one who finds it.

It's just not the way that we think. You have in mind the thoughts of man, not the thoughts of God, you see. It's in letting go of the controls of your life that you find life.

[28 : 25] It's in following Jesus Christ by faith, embracing him and his gospel that we actually find life that is really life, life that is abundant life, life that is eternal life, which is to know the one true God and Jesus Christ whom he sent.

All else is just a living death to be followed by an eternal hell. You know, Jesus knows better than you how to really live the good life.

It's the way you were meant to live, with him. You were never meant to be separated from him. That's what sin does. So consider the cost of non-discipleship to Christ.

It is infinitely greater than the cost of discipleship to Christ. Oh, here, you might have 50 years of mockery from the world. You may even suffer pain and fines and financial loss and even death, but then eternal glory.

Believers, how the benefits of following Christ far outweigh the cost of following him. Because in denying life as you wanted it, you actually find your life saved from the destruction of that way.

[29 : 45] to enjoy this life as it was designed to be in fellowship with God. So, whatever you lose in this life, due to your faithfulness to Christ and his word, will more than be repaid.

For if we share in his sufferings, we will also share in his glory. And I consider that our present sufferings are not even worth comparing to the glory that shall be revealed in us.

So, there are benefits to the disciples, the followers of Jesus, and he doesn't hide those either, that we might be encouraged to bear the cost.

But Jesus still has a question for those still thinking that the cost of discipleship to him is too high. Verse 36, well, what good is it then? Answer this, what good is it then for a man to gain the whole world and yet forfeit his soul?

What's the worth of your eternal soul to you? Would you trade it for the paltry sum of this world's smiles? Even if you could get the whole world in exchange for your soul, it's still a terrible deal.

[31 : 03] Whatever you get for it, to forfeit your soul, nothing, nothing in the world is worth that. A certain Puritan preacher was discouraged with the lack of results from his hearers as he preached the gospel to them and looking out of his window one day, he saw a farmer leading his pigs to slaughter and they just followed right behind him.

And so, when he saw him coming back from the butcher alone, he ran outside to talk with him. And he said, you have better success getting your pigs to follow you to slaughter than I do trying to get my people to follow me to heaven.

How do you do that? He says, oh, it's simple. I just drop out a few kernels of corn and they'd follow me anywhere for that corn. The trivial things that men sell their souls for.

The little kernels that the devil's dropping behind. And you don't know it, but you've got a hook through your nose and he's got you. Just the little things.

Avoiding any suffering for Christ's sake. No, no, I don't want that. And so, I am going to protect myself from any trouble with this world, you see. Wasn't it Esau that sold his birthright for a bowl of soup?

[32 : 40] People are selling their souls for not much more than that today. Just to have a life of ease and rest. Uncomplicated by the troubles that come to Christians when they follow Jesus and his word.

What profit is there in that? To lose out, to not have to suffer with Jesus. What profit is that? If it's going to mean losing your soul.

Weeping and gnashing. Of teeth. In hell. A terrible price to pay for avoiding the cost of discipleship. And again, our Lord is saying, stop and consider.

What is the cost of not being my disciple? He says it in verse 38 and another way. If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the son of man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his father's glory with his holy angels.

You see, some are ashamed to identify with Christ in a world that hates him and sees no glory in him. And so they avoid the shame at any cost. Oh, but what a high cost.

[33 : 53] Jesus says, because if you're ashamed of me now in this wicked world, I'll be ashamed of you when I come in glory to judge you. You see, in that day, your whole eternal destiny, heaven or hell, will hang on whether or not the glorified son of man owns you as his.

What will it be worth then to have him say of you, father, this one is ours. I died for her. I paid for all of her sins.

She trusted in me. She was unashamed to be known as a Christian, a follower of me. So, father, look on me and pardon her.

Then, as Watts says, then, then will he own my worthless name before the father's face. And in the new Jerusalem, appoint my soul a place.

What will that be worth, Christian? But for those who in life were too ashamed of Christ to own him and to follow him as their Lord and Savior, they'll find him ashamed.

[35 : 08] I don't know her. I don't know him. Depart from me. I never knew you. Oh, the smiles of the world won't mean a hill of beans to you then.

But the smile of Jesus will mean eternal life for you forever. No, there's the cost of discipleship. And there's the cost of non-discipleship to Jesus.

Do you see then why these words of Jesus were a needed corrective to the earthbound expectations of the disciples of Messiah? And to the crowd, they expected glory for Messiah now and glory for us now.

Wrong. It's suffering now and glory to come. I wonder if you're considering following Christ. It's encouraging to hear the testimonies of several young people that are wanting to follow Jesus and to be identified with him in the waters of baptism.

Glorious miracles. No less supernatural than the raising of the dead. The giving sight to the blind. Hearing to the deaf. Walk to the lame.

[36 : 21] But be sure to count the cost. That's what Jesus is saying. We have a sub-Christian culture today that's allergic to suffering.

It's unwilling to endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Ashamed of standing with Christ against the world and his word. And his word. Standing with his word.

No, we want it easy now. We want that easy life now. Well, that can get you in trouble, as our Lord is saying. We want rest now.

Sadly, I find the same seeds of all this in my own heart. Seeds that sometimes sprout that make me ashamed to stand up for Jesus. To say a word for him when I ought to.

To say, to stand for his word and what he says on a subject. I need this reality check. We live in the same world that crucified our Lord.

[37 : 25] And if we're faithfully following him, we should expect ill treatment, as Peter says. And not be surprised as if something strange is happening to us. No, it's just par for the course of following Jesus through this world.

So, you see the kind grace of Jesus to make the cost of discipleship plain to us, right up front. That there's no surprises down the road.

No bait and switch with our Savior. And how kind is it for our Lord to forgive his faltering disciples when we sometimes are ashamed of him, if we confess our sins.

That was Peter. He was ashamed of Jesus. So ashamed, he says, I don't know him. He said it three times and with curses. But one look from our Lord when the cock crowed.

And Peter melted and went out and wept bitterly and later confessed and received mercy with the Lord. For whoever covers his sin will not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces their sins will find favor.

[38 : 35] Favor with the Lord. What a kind master he is. To forgive even the sin of being ashamed of him when he was not ashamed to identify with us.

And do you see how kind of Jesus to warn us of the cost of non-discipleship to Christ? Somebody might be sitting on the fence and you've got one foot in the world and one foot you think in Christ.

Well, wake up. You don't. Because Jesus says you cannot serve two masters. You'll either love the one and hate the other or you'll be devoted to the one and despise the other.

You cannot serve two masters. Wake up. Wake up. It's Christ or the world. You can't have both. What a kindness for him to tell us that now rather than just waking up to that in the day of judgment and to realize I live for the wrong world.

I live for the wrong reason. The wrong persons. And if following Jesus seems too difficult for you, let me just tell you flat out, it is.

[39 : 41] It is. Too difficult for you, my sinner friend. You cannot live the life of discipleship to Christ without Christ. John 15, Jesus says, I'm the vine and apart from me, you can do nothing.

You don't have within you what you need to live a life of a disciple. No, you must be like a branch that's grafted into the vine. You must by faith become attached to me.

And if so, then then you will find the same supernatural divine energy that flows in me, flowing to you. That grace, that sap of grace that will enable you to say, yes, I'm the vine I'm a follower of Jesus.

I'm not ashamed of him and his word. But so many non-Christians, they look at the life and the cost of discipleship and they say, I could never do it.

You're right. You can't. But with him, you can. And with him, you'll find his yoke is easy and his burden is light. As he's in the yoke with you. He knows how to enable you.

[40 : 44] To deny yourself, take up your cross. Remember, he did the same himself. Not my will, but yours be done. And embrace the cross.

When we talk about the cost of discipleship, please let me make plain, we're not talking about paying a price to earn your discipleship, to earn salvation.

No, that's impossible. We were dead in sins, unable to atone for sin. No, Jesus paid it all. And you must come with nothing good to say for yourself, with empty hands of faith, and just receive him and eternal life in him.

And then with him, you will be enabled to bear the cost of discipleship, you see. Once you are his disciple, yes, you'll find that Christ enables you with his almighty power.

A word for you young people. You're growing up in a world that's more and more outwardly opposed to Jesus Christ. And if you choose to follow Jesus, you will suffer more than I have had to suffer so far in this world, and many of your parents and grandparents have had to suffer from this world.

[42 : 05] So count the cost. Seriously. Right up front. But count the cost of not following him.

And count on the benefit of having Christ with you to bear that cross. He knows the encouragements we need, and he gives them to us.

So let us then not be ashamed of our Savior and Lord. He endured the cross, hung naked on the cross for us, under the shame and mockery of people saying he's getting what he deserved.

No, he was getting what we deserve, dear disciples. He was suffering that shame for us, endured the cross, scorning its shame, treating it as nothing. Oh, the shame that he bore.

And though we are poor, faltering disciples of Jesus, he is not ashamed to call us brethren. Isn't that something? Hebrews 13, 13, let us then go to him outside the camp.

[43 : 14] Despised, outside the camp. Let's go to him outside of this world that looks down their noses at Jesus and his followers. Let us go to him bearing the disgrace he bore and counting it a privilege.

If ever we should suffer anything, that we were counted worthy for suffering for the name. Amen. Amen. Amen.