

The Cost of Discipleship
Mark 6:7-30
Series: Christ our Focus

1. Introduction:

- a. Through the following story we are going to be privy to the price of Discipleship
- b. In counting the cost, we must be aware of the price of discipleship less we begin with all good intentions and then falter:
 - i. **Luke 14:28-30** For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, 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 begin to mock him, (30) saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'
- c. Mark here uses that Sandwich method of teaching
 - i. A1 – The disciples are sent
 - ii. B – The story of John the baptizer's death
 - iii. A2 – The continuation of the sending of the twelve
 - iv. Section B is to illustrate to us that as ministers of Christ, we can expect harsh treatment for the sake of speaking the truth – we will make enemies – we will be despised – we might ultimately have to pay a terrible price for the sake of truth.

2. Verse 7 -

- a. Jesus was teaching from village to village
 - i. The dominant purpose of the ministry of Jesus was teaching and preaching and here he is going to commission his disciples to do the same.
 - ii. Christ calls “proskalein” and sends “apostellein”
 1. The authority for any disciple embarking on any ministerial mission is found not in training or a commission but in Christ as Lord and Savior
- b. This sending seems premature and the disciples do not seem ready.
 - i. This is a testimony to you and I that the fulfillment of the word of God depends not on the perfection or merit of

- the missionaries but on the authoritative call and equipping of Jesus.
- c. The authority conferred is an authority to act.
3. Verses 8-9 – Mission Instruction – What to take and not take
- a. The four items required of the twelve are the same items required of the Israelites when they left Egypt.
 - i. **Exodus 12:11** In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover.
 - ii. These items speaks of haste and expectation
 - iii. Disciples must be as free from encumbrances as were the Israelites, to serve their God in a new venture.
 - b. They are also instructed on what not to take:
 - i. The barest of essentials ensures that their trust is on Christ and not their supplies.
 - ii. True service of Jesus is characterized by dependence on Jesus, and dependence on Jesus is signified by going where Jesus sends despite material shortfalls and unanswered questions.
4. Verses 10-11 – How are they supposed to act
- a. They are to be grateful guests
 - i. We trust in Jesus and trust that Jesus has designated those that are to take care of the needs
 - b. They are to shake the dust off when not received
 - i. The Jews shook of the dust of gentile lands lest they pollute Israel with heathen dust
 - ii. This is tantamount to calling a Jewish village heathen
 - iii. Israel is not saved on the basis of being Israel but in listening to the word of God preached
 - 1. **Romans 9:6-8** But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, (7) and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." (8) This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.

5. Verses 12-13 – Preaching and Repentance
 - a. As the key to ministry by which the lost truly enters the kingdom of God. Both elements must be present.

6. Verses 14-17 – Sandwich part B – John The Baptizer
 - a. Introduction
 - i. John is the forerunner of Jesus’ death—the disciples’ deaths—and those that would follow.
 - ii. Both John and Jesus are executed by political tyrants that vacillate and finally succumb to social pressure.
 - iii. Both die silently “as sheep before the shearers”
 - iv. Both die as righteous and innocent victims.
 - v. Mark sandwiches this story in the middle of the sending and returning of the disciples to highlight to the readers the cost of discipleship.
 - b. Herodias was the wife of Herod’s half brother Herod Philip whom she divorced and then married Herod Antipas
 - c. Herod holds a higher opinion of Jesus than his own town and relatives and yet he has not come to the truth.
 - d. His conscience bears witness against him.

7. Verses 18-20 – The price of preaching truth
 - a. Herod arrests John for criticizing his marriage to his half-brother’s wife.
 - i. **Leviticus 20:21** If a man takes his brother's wife, it is impurity. He has uncovered his brother's nakedness; they shall be childless.
 - b. Herod is reluctant to hurt John
 - i. The people love him
 - ii. He finds John to be an accurate preacher and yet he remains unconverted
 - c. His weakness of character are exploited by Herodias

8. Verses 21-23 – avarice ruins us
 - a. The top brass of Israel is present
 - b. Herod cared more about appearance than doing what was right.
 - i. What kind of dance prompted this man to promise such favor.

9. Verses 24-29

- a. The death of John
 - i. John was a prophet without price whose thundering call exposed unrighteousness in any quarter. Like the courageous prophets before him, John understood that the proclamation of God's word included moral responsibility. There were no untouchable subjects for him; he did not read the polls before speaking and acting; he protected no special interest; nor did he predicate what he said and did on chances of success.
- b. Verses 24-25 – we see how low a human being can descend. When we hear God's word and refuse to repent, we sear our own consciousness.
 - i. **Romans 1:18** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.
 - ii. **Hebrews 2:3-4** how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, (4) while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.
- c. Verses 26-28 – bowing to pressure
 - i. Here we see the cowardice of a heart not devoted to God
 - ii. He is going to have to live with this decision the rest of his life
 - iii. Many people, because of cowardice, do not come to Christ.
- d. Verse 29 – The cost of discipleship –

10. Verse 30 – The apostles return

- a. Victorious
- b. Having paid a price

11. Benediction—

- a. **Philippians 3:8-11** Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ (9) and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the

righteousness from God that depends on faith-- (10) that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, (11) that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.