

Following the King

Studies in Luke's Gospel

Luke 14:25-35

Discussion starter

1. Take a moment to think of your friends, family members, colleagues etc who are not Christians. What are the various reasons these people have for refusing Jesus' call to follow him?

Review

2. What did you learn from our study last week (Luke 12:1-34) about what it means to live as a follower of Jesus?
3. Does anyone have any questions or comments about the sermon based on today's passage?

Rejection & inclusion, 14:15-24

In Chapter 14 Jesus finds himself sharing a meal with representatives of Israel's religious establishment (Pharisees & teachers of the law). Jesus' words are harsh, and he effectively accuses those present of religious hypocrisy. Then, in vv 16, Jesus begins to tell a parable about Israel's rejection of God's invitation to a share in his kingdom.

Read Luke 14:15-24

4. What is it that causes some people to miss out on a place in God's kingdom?
5. How do these 'excuses' compare with your discussion in question 1 above? Are there similarities and/or differences?
6. According to vv 21 & following what is the result of Israel's refusal of a share in God's kingdom?¹

¹ There is a clear contrast going on in Jesus' story between 'insiders' and 'outcasts'. The insiders are the invited guests and represent the Jewish people. They end up excluded from God's kingdom because of their refusal to follow Jesus. The 'outcasts', represented by the poor, crippled, blind and lame, are the people's from all the nations (Gentiles). It would have been a surprise to many Jews of Jesus' day that God would open up his kingdom to such people. But that is the consequence, according to Jesus, of Israel's rejection.

The cost of following Jesus, Luke 14:25-35

7. Australian kayaker, Andrew McAuley, appears to have tragically died whilst attempting to cross the Tasman from Australia to New Zealand. It's reasonable to assume that before he took to the water, he thought long and hard about the dangers and potential costs involved in such a dangerous journey. What sorts of things do you think Andrew considered?

Read Luke 14:25-35

8. Have you ever been in a situation where you carefully weighed up the costs before embarking on a course of action?
9. Jesus' words in vv 26 & 27 are VERY strong. How do you react to them? What do they mean? How are they linked to Jesus' teaching in the verses that follow?
10. Jesus uses some good illustrations to make his point in vv 31-32. If you were trying to make the same point to a friend today, can you think of another, more modern, illustration to help you?
11. Think of the experience of Christians in countries like China, Saudi Arabia, North Korea & Iran – all countries where openly following Jesus is illegal. What costs do Christians in these countries incur for their commitment to Jesus?
12. Has following Jesus been costly to you? If so, in what sense?
13. Do you think this passage explains why some Christians appear to 'fall away' (ie. stop following Jesus)?

Conclusion – a hypothetical

When Elizabeth started coming to church just under a month ago she wasn't a Christian. In fact she had heard very little about Jesus her entire life. Last Sunday, however, she heard a sermon that convinced her of her need to follow Jesus. It's now Wednesday and Elizabeth has come to you for advice about what to do next. In light of what you have learned from tonight's study, how would you talk to her?

Pray it in

- Two or three people should pray out loud, asking God to help us all become the disciples He has called us to be.