

A Disciple's "Business" Plan

Intro. Before committing to a big project, like building a home or starting a business, it is smart practice to get some idea of the cost in money as well as time. Common wisdom suggest several estimates. And the least expensive may not be the automatic choice. The other part is deciding if the goal is important enough to sacrifice for. In this gospel the Lord strongly encouraged the people to estimate the cost of going to Jerusalem with him. He was talking about personal costs, not food and travel expenses.

I. The journey to Jerusalem became like a big carnival, a traveling road show. Some of people were there for the excitement of it but not at all committed to the Lord's message. Like Woodstock fifty years ago, some people went because of the

music. Others went because it was going to be a cool place to be. For this crowd it was time for a dose of reality and the partiers to find some other place to go. The language is meant to be strong. The Lord wanted to be clear his mission was serious and even dangerous. In this context the word "hate" is **not** an emotion, it is "not how one *feels* toward parents and family." It is an *attitude* about making a serious choice *for* the kingdom of God. [L.T. Johnson, *Sacra Pagina*, p. 229] The Lord said his disciple had to be willing to look at all that she or he valued as important and put him first; before family, friends and work. Those *are* very high costs. People do leave behind family and friends and even good jobs when there is a serious reason such as getting married or entering religious life or moving away to start what one hopes is the dream job. All these

decisions take serious thought and prayer. And if the heart and soul is willing to sacrifice, and the goal worth it, these hard decisions are made.

Concl. The Lord was suggesting anybody thinking about following him should make a kind of “disciple’s business plan.” Figure what the cost of getting to heaven would be and how much we are willing to “invest” to get there. The costs are mostly non-monetary. It would be in prioritizing family, friends, job and home in order to focus on the mission of salvation with the Lord. It is likely the “great” crowds became significantly smaller when people did the “math.” Joseph and Mary gave up their plans for a simple life in Nazareth and the carpenter’s shop. We must also make tough choices like not getting so caught up in having the latest and newest shiny things that we forget about the Lord.

Or being with people who do not share the values of the Lord’s commandments and beatitudes. Some of those choices *can* cost us personally and even financially and would be an occasional sign we are on the right track. But for disciples of the Lord there is no other path to salvation. Discipleship is more than collecting all the sacramental certificates of Baptism, Communion and Confirmation, Marriage or religious profession. [M.McGlone, NCR] To be with him means re-defining our relationships with people and our possessions and facing the difficulties – our crosses – to follow him. Like our financial plan, it seems like a good practice to regularly evaluate and update our spiritual plan as well.

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