

**Sermon Notes – September 7, 2025**  
**The Holy Gospel of St. Luke 14: 25-33**  
**Peace Lutheran Church**  
**“The Cost of Discipleship”**

The word *hate* is not used in Luke 14: 26 the way we use it in twenty-first century North America. Jesus is not asking His followers to feel a negative emotion toward their families in a way that would lead to irresponsibility and harm. We are still called to love our neighbor as ourselves; our family is our closest neighbor. Jesus is, however, asking these “large crowds” (v. 25) to seriously consider whether they are prepared to prioritize their discipleship above all else when it may cost them “even life itself” (v. 26). He has “set his face to go to Jerusalem” (9: 51). Those who follow will watch Him be arrested, tortured, and killed and, by their association with Jesus, they will be at risk of the same things. Jesus tells two parables in which the characters “sit down” (14: 28, 31) before acting to consider whether they are able to take on the enormity of the task at hand. These parables beg Jesus' followers to sit down and consider: if following Him brought conflict or worse within their families, would they keep following? Even more, are they prepared to let their relationship with family be shaped by the cross of Christ like “clay in the potter's hand” (Jer. 18:6)?

This passage, it should be clarified, is not about family in particular, but rather about our abiding commitment to Christ above all. Comparisons might be made to our relationship with our employer. These relationships are not unimportant, but they should be subservient to our discipleship and transformation by the cross of Christ. As comes to us today through Philemon – if Philemon follows this call, his choice will be counter cultural and costly.

Any preacher will want to ensure that the summons to costly discipleship grows out of the clear proclamation of the gospel, lest the gospel be confused for works of righteousness, or that the reason we follow Jesus be forgotten and our discipleship feel like one more thing on our to-do list. Jesus “sat down first” and, knowing it would cost Him His life, walked to His death so that you and I might be forgiven when “your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray” (Deut. 30: 17). Jesus died to “choose life” - your life – “so that you and your descendants may live, loving the Lord your God” (vv. 19-20). Your relationship with God is forever reconciled through the Cross of Christ, regardless of the cost of your discipleship. Following Jesus is not one more thing to squeeze into an already-packed schedule. It is an invitation to “sit down first” and let that entire schedule be shaped by what God has done in Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit, for you, trusting that doing so “means life to you” v. 20).