

Luke 14:25-35

“Carrying the Cross for You”

16th Sunday af. Pentecost

September 4, 2016

Our Redeemer

Rev. Brent Hartwig

Grace, mercy and peace be unto you from God, our Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

[Introduction]

There were big! Ginormous crowds! Following that Preacher Jesus. It doesn't get any better than this, does it?

Humongous mobs of people throng to hear the Preacher preach. This is every preacher's dream! Mega. Massive. Mammoth. Super-sized crowds. Enough to fill a major league stadium.

That's the ticket when you're doing church and ministry, isn't it? That's all that matters, right? The bigger the gathering, the better the pastor, right?

“So, better do a headcount Jesus! Keep track of the numbers. Total up the score. Take a poll. Find out what these seekers want. Give them what they want. Keep this gig going and build on it. You've got whopping crowds following you. Don't do or say anything stupid, Reverend! You've got a mega-church of all mega churches in the making! Don't blow it!”

And so goes the “good” advice!

[Good Advice]

We all want to be a part of a church ...

Where everything is success, prosperity, and boom.

Where following this Preacher Jesus is a piece of cake?

Where being a Christian is a bed of roses, easy street?

But it is the Preacher Jesus who gives you a wake-up call. Doing church, being a Christian, or a disciple of Jesus means enormous sacrifice. There is a great cost involved.

Do you really want to be His disciple?

Do you have ears that hear?

All right, then be prepared. You'd better "count the cost."

Being a disciple of Jesus means hating your family...

It means hating your own life more than Jesus [see Matthew 10:37].

It means carrying a cross and leaving behind all that you have.

It means forsaking all.

When the ancient Greek saying "forsake all" was used...

Well to put it into modern parlance it means to "say goodbye" to everything we have, entrusting it to Jesus.

Goodbye to security.

Goodbye to control.

Goodbye to being in charge.

Goodbye...

Goodbye because Jesus' ministry is going somewhere.

His preaching will get Him somewhere.

After all Jesus has already set his face to Jerusalem [Luke 9:51].

And He will go to Jerusalem, to Golgotha, to hung upon the cross.

Crucified.

Dead as a door nail.

Giving His divine life into death ... for the life of the world.

And what Jesus says ... is a hard sell.

"Listen. I don't want to waste your time here.

***Now that I've got your attention with all this hate language
maybe you'll listen for a change.***

I'm laying out for you the best offer of salvation you've EVER seen.

In fact, it's the only one that actually works.

Salvation is only through me. Only through me.

With my suffering, dying and rising."

"Hang with me in my death and salvation is yours. But you contribute nothing.

***Everything that's yours counts for nothing
when it comes to your salvation.***

Not even your family. I'm the only one that counts.

Got ears. Listen up."

So go ahead. Count the cost. Plan accordingly.

A salty disciple hangs on to nothing of his own before God.

A salty disciple believes that his salvation is only in Jesus.

Salvation is Christ's doing

only in His Bloody Suffering, Calvary dying and Easter rising.

Anything that would hinder, block, or thwart faith's trusting in Jesus
has to be dumped. Put to death. Repented of!

Trust only in Jesus and you the salty disciple will suffer the cross.

You will be treated like your Lord.

Mocked. Rejected. Persecuted.

Maybe even killed.

No wonder the large crowds dwindled. Who wants a God like that?

And so at the Cross only a tiny congregation remains.

The Marys and John. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus.

The centurion that gave the good confession: "Truly, this Jesus is righteous!"

(Luke 23:47)

You're a part of that first little congregation.

You're died for.

You're Baptized.

You eat and drink the Savior's Calvary Body and Blood.

You belong to a church family that clings only to Jesus for salvation.

Yours. The world's.

[Conclusion]

His sacrifice for you, His salty disciples, is everything.

That is why here at Our Redeemer we are about equipping disciples to make
disciples for Jesus.

Jesus carries the cross for you.

And He leads and carries you to eternal life.

And that is immeasurably more than we could ever imagine. Amen.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, ...
to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations,
for ever and ever! Amen.