

Lectionary Gospel Commentaries

By the Rev. Dr. Harry Wendt, Founder of Crossways International
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Based on the Lectionary Pericope Covering:

SOLA-LSB (Lutheran Service Book):
RCL (Revised Common Lectionary):

Luke 14:25-35

Year C - Proper 18, Text: Luke 14:25-35
Year C - Proper 18, Text: Luke 14:25-33

In the lead up to today's lesson, in Luke 14:16–24, Jesus emphasizes the limitless grace of God's election in describing the great Messianic banquet. In the present section, the contents of which are unique to Luke, Jesus lays down the conditions for discipleship — full-hearted response on the part of His disciples.

Verse 14:25: Jesus is still on His way from Galilee to Jerusalem. He leaves Galilee in Luke 9:51 and arrives in the vicinity of Bethany and Bethphage on the Mount of Olives in 19:29. He enters Jerusalem and the Temple in 19:45, while Luke devotes ten chapters to describing Jesus' journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, Mark only one chapter (10:1–11:1), and Matthew two chapters (19:1–21:1). John has Jesus visit Jerusalem on numerous occasions during His ministry.

Large crowds accompany Jesus along the way. One wonders what hopes they had in mind in relation to Jesus' ministry. No doubt many of them were hoping that Jesus would spearhead the move to establish the popular (but misguided!) concept of the Messianic Age which would, among other things, free God's people from Roman domination.

Verse 14:26: Loyalty to Jesus and commitment to reflecting His servant ministry are to supersede all other claims on the life of His followers, including those by father and mother, wife and children, and brothers and sisters.

Jesus' words do not imply that His followers are to ignore all family responsibilities. They imply that Jesus alone sets the standards for life and He alone defines family obligations. Where Matthew writes, "he who loves father... more than me" (see Matthew 10:37), St. Luke sternly demands, "whoever does not hate father and mother," etc.

The two versions agree in interpreting Jesus' words; those who follow Jesus in servant discipleship run the risk of being accused of being an undutiful son or a disloyal husband.

Verse 14:27: Jesus' reference to His followers "carrying their cross" does not mean that they are literally to walk through life with a heavy cross resting on their shoulder. To carry a cross and to follow Jesus has to do with devoting life to walking in His footsteps as full-time servants of God and others, even unto death.

According to Jesus, life's choices are as follows: Either we live to serve God by serving others full-time, or we live to serve ourselves. The Deadly Trio of Satan, the world, and our sinful hearts wants us to devote life to the latter.

Verses 14:28–32: Prospective disciples must ponder seriously the cost of going the whole way in following Jesus. The two parables in this section focus on the necessity of reflection before action. Any person planning to build a tower must give serious thought to the costs involved in completing the project. If he does not do that, he runs the risk of not being able to complete the project and of shaming himself in the eyes of the community. Any ruler with ten thousand soldiers contemplating confronting the army of an enemy power with twenty thousand soldiers had better think twice before undertaking such a campaign.

The message in both cases is that a prospective disciple should not take the first step in following Jesus without facing squarely what is involved in following Jesus at every step along the way through life.

Verse 14:33: The implications of this verse are profound. Jesus does not call on His followers to give away all their possessions. Rather, He wants them to understand that His Father owns everything and they own nothing. They are not owners or givers. They are *managers* (stewards) of God's property. They are not to ask, "What's in it for me?" but "What's in it for humanity at large?"

Christian stewardship is not about fund-raising; it is about faith-raising. Money is nothing more than storable, transferable servanthood. As long as some

on Planet Earth do not have access to safe water,
sufficient healthful food, and needed healthcare, our
mission remains unfinished.