



"Who We Are: Devoted To Christ"
Rev. Lisa Kruse-Safford
Luke 14:25-33
September 15, 2019
9:15 AM Service

Today we begin a three-week journey in looking at our trinity of a mission statement:
 Devoted to Christ. Connected to Others. Sent to Serve.

So, of course we begin with "devoted to Christ".

"Hopelessly devoted to you..."

Seems redundant....to be devoted, doesn't that mean that you're already all in?

DEFINITION of "devoted"

- 1) very loving or loyal
- 2) given over to the display, study, or discussion of

Jesus looked out at all the people seeking to "follow him" as disciples (talmidim) and wondered if they really knew what following *him* meant. He wanted to make sure they understood the "fine print".
 Let's listen:

Luke 14:25-33

²⁵ Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said:²⁶ "If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

²⁸ "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?²⁹ For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, ³⁰ saying, 'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish.'

³¹ "Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? ³² If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. ³³ In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.

As I said, Jesus is wanting to make it clear to the crowds who were following him, what it means to be his talmidim

Talmidim:

A talmid – or disciple – is really more than a student. A talmid is one who seeks to not only learn from the teacher, but actually wants to become what the teacher is. This means that students were passionately devoted to their rabbi and watched everything the rabbi did or said in order to become like him.

But to follow this rabbi, to be so devoted to his teachings, to follow him, to imitate him, wasn't necessarily the same as following other rabbis. Most other rabbis in Jesus' day taught as Torah teachers – teaching accepted interpretations of the Scripture. But Jesus was recognized as a s'mikhah – a rabbi who had authority within him to teach new interpretations of Scripture.

For example, at the end of the sermon on the mount, Matthew writes that people were amazed because Jesus taught as "one with authority" and not as their teachers of the law. And remember how the Pharisees and Sadducees asked him where his authority came from?

So, to follow this rabbi – well it was certainly a unique opportunity at the time; to learn from a rabbi who had "authority". Many people sought to follow him.

But similar to other rabbis, Jesus wanted to make sure people knew what it meant to follow him. Rabbis would examine their prospective students to see if they had what it would take to learn what the rabbi had to teach. Some potential students were turned away by rabbis.

In Jesus' case, when he talked about what it meant to follow him...some people turned away themselves -----

Remember the rich young ruler who asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life? They talked about the requirements of the law...then Jesus said, that he must sell all he had and give it to the poor and come follow him. And the man walked away sad because he had a great many possessions.

To follow Jesus – that is to be devoted to Christ – is not a superficial commitment and it's not for a crowd of tagalongs. To be devoted to Christ takes your whole being.

And Jesus wanted them to understand what it would cost them first,

Like someone who is building or someone with great plans...need to contemplate if you can finish what you've started

So, it is crucial for Jesus' followers to know a couple of things. First:

1) To follow Jesus, that is to seek to imitate him – to be his talmid - is to put him first.

Regardless of personal relationships

Jesus doesn't really mean you have to "hate" your family in the way we think of hating. What it means is that if there is a conflict between you and a family member when it comes to the demands of discipleship, well, imitating Jesus takes precedence.

Regardless of what you own

You have to be willing to give it up

Because you can't love others and care for them if you love your stuff more.

Regardless of any of our affinities

To be devoted to Christ is to ask ourselves:

What are my personal impediments to following Jesus?

Culture, habits, addictions, relationships, politics, job requirements

And to be prepared to let all of that go.

It is crucial for Jesus' followers to know that:

- 2) To follow Jesus, that is to seek to imitate him – to be his talmid - is to carry a cross. Not a "thorn" or an illness or any kind of affliction that is placed upon you by life

A deliberate sacrifice for the sake of following Jesus

Redirection of time and energy

Even a change in vocation

Commitment of financial resources

For example: "buddies", food ministries, ASP, teaching children, giving

To be devoted to Christ is to ask ourselves:

What is impeding me from giving myself away?

Will I give myself over (give up my life) for the sake of God and others?

Today we consider the "fine print" of our mission statement – to be devoted to Christ.

Because to be Jesus' talmid is all-consuming.

But we recognize that it's a journey. We each may not be "there" yet, but today we recognize where we are headed in following Jesus.

Because there's no such thing as being partially devoted; that's an oxymoron. We're either devoted or we're not.

And so, Jesus wants us to consider what it means to follow the One who was completely devoted himself to God the Father.

We are devoted to the One who began a project and followed it through to its completion: His project was the redemption of the world.