



## Does Christ Accept You?

### Luke 14:25-33

25 And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,

26 **If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.**

27 And **whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.**

The title of my lesson last week was "Spoiled."

One of my key verses was;

### Colossians 2:8-10

8 Beware lest any man **spoil** you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

10 **And ye are complete in him**, which is the head of all principality and power:

I talked about Paul trying to share the Gospel to the Greek people in Corinth and Athens.

I want to review for just a couple of moments, then I want to continue teaching along the same thought line.

- Last week we learned that when Paul walked through the city of Athens he was deeply troubled by all of the idols he saw.
- These people had so many different gods, Paul didn't know how he was going to reach them with the message of Christ.
- But when Paul went to the Synagogue, he was surprised to find how receptive the people were to the Gospel. Paul learned that the Greek people loved to discuss the newest trends and ideas.
- They wanted to hear about Jesus.
- The Gospel was a cool new idea.
- Jesus was a cool new God.

What I taught last week was that it wasn't hard for the Greek people to accept Christ....it was hard for them to commit totally to Christ.

- They had a hard time letting go of their existing gods.
- They had a hard time giving up the things of the world.
- They wanted to keep their gods and have Jesus too.

They wanted to accept Christ....but **Did Christ want to accept them?**

That is the thought I want to talk to you about tonight...**Does Christ Accept You?**

- The statement "Accepting Jesus into your life" has become a popular statement in the Christian world.
- The popular teaching is, "All you need to do is accept Jesus into your heart and believe in Him and you will be saved."
- Of course the Bible clearly teaches there is a lot more to Salvation than that...belief and acceptance is only the first step.

Perhaps the better way to look at it is, **Does Jesus Accept Me?**

When I wanted to date my wife for the very first time, it didn't really matter how much I wanted to go out with her....it all boiled down to her accepting me or rejecting me...she accepted me.

That is what it is all going to boil down to at the Judgment day....it is not about me accepting Jesus, but it is really about Jesus accepting me.

**Recently I have been doing quite a bit of research on Church history.**

Beginning with Jesus' crucifixion, the Church entered into a time of great persecution.

- Every one of the Apostles except John was killed for their belief in Christ.
- Many of those who were totally committed to Christ became Martyrs.

Rome was the ruling power of the day and every Roman Emperor from Nero to Domitian made a sport of persecuting and killing Christians.

- Christians were sewn into the skins of wild beasts and torn to pieces by dogs.
- They were covered in tar pitch and burned at the stake.
- When the Colosseum was built in Rome, Christians were brought into the arena and fed to wild beasts for entertainment.

There were hundreds of thousands of Christians killed for their belief in the One True God.

This persecution continued for over 200 years.

Then in the year 312 AD, the Roman emperor converted to Christianity, his name was Constantine. He was the first Christian Emperor.

**In 313 AD Constantine published his Edict of Toleration.**

This Edict stated that Christians would be able to live in safety and security throughout the Roman Empire. They were free to worship God as long as they prayed to God for the well being of the Republic and provided they live in concordance with the laws of Rome.

For the first time in more than two hundred years, persecution against Christians almost completely ceased.

Because of this Edict, it quickly became popular to become a Christian.

Christianity was cool....it was hip!

- The Church grew very quickly.
- Pagan sacrifices ceased.
- Money was granted to erect magnificent buildings and shrines.
- Favors were showered upon Christians.
- The Roman Church became rich and increased with goods.

Because of the influence of Rome on the world, many other nations began to turn to Christianity.

- Pagan nations.
- Heathen nations.
- Nations that had many gods.

These heathen people accepted Christ and professed to be Christians, but they had not given up their old lifestyles.

- They were not really interested in Christ, their association with Christianity became a ticket to political, social and military success.
- They became Christian because that is what everyone else was doing.
- This new breed of "Christians" were not very concerned about what the Scripture said and eventually their heathen practices took precedent over scripture.

These people did not understand what it meant to be a Christian.

They did not understand what it meant to be a disciple of Christ.

**They accepted Christ...But did Christ accept them?**

**During Jesus' ministry, there was a period of time where it was cool to follow Jesus.**

Especially in the area around Galilee.

- Jesus was the newest thing in town....nobody had heard of Him before.
- o Jesus was exciting....He performed amazing miracles.
- o Jesus was dangerous....Whatever Jesus said and did went against the religious people of His day.
- o Jesus was cool....He shared amazing stories and life changing words.

Wherever Jesus went....thousands of people followed Him.

It was the "in" thing to do.

In the text I read, Jesus was being followed by one of these large crowds of people.

- They wanted to become disciples of Jesus.
- They thought it was cool.

These people were similar to the Greek people I spoke of last week.

They were similar to those I mentioned in the time of Constantine.

- They wanted Jesus on their own terms.
- They didn't understand what was required of them.
- They didn't understand what discipleship was going to cost them.

They really wanted to accept Jesus.....**But would Jesus accept them?**

Knowing what their thoughts were, Jesus turned around and spoke these words to them;

**Luke 14:26-27**

26 If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

Those are very strong words.

To be clear, the Greek word for hate in this scripture means to love less.

- Jesus has to be first.
- Jesus has to come before mom and dad.
- Jesus has to come before children.
- Jesus has to come before your own life.

If Jesus is not first in your life...you cannot be His disciple.

If you are not totally committed...Jesus will not accept you.

- These people really did want to follow Christ.
- But they didn't understand what it would cost them.

Jesus then shared a parable with them.

He begins by asking some questions that cause them to really think;

**Luke 14:28-30**

28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?

29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, **all that behold it begin to mock him,**

30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

About ten years ago I was doing a lot of construction work in the subdivisions along Route 6 between Meridian and 149.

I drove down Route 6 to and from work almost every day for about five years.

- One day I noticed a foundation being poured next to a home along Route 6.
- It kind of stuck out to me because it was not in a sub division...it was on the lot of an existing home.
- Being a contractor myself, I like to observe others who have the same profession.
- I was able to observe this home as it was being constructed because I passed by it twice every day.
- After the foundation was poured, they backfilled and began the framing.
- I was watching real close....this was my competition.
- I wanted to see how fast they framed this home.
- Within a couple of days the floor was framed.
- A couple of days later, I noticed some walls up...progress was slow.
- I felt better because they made my crew look good.

For the next couple of weeks though, there was no progress whatsoever.

- I figured the framing crew got fired.
- I was even going to stop by and see if they need another crew...but I was too busy.
- It really bothered me that this house was only partially built.
- After a month or so I stopped looking.
- Then one day a couple of months later I noticed the second floor was on.

- They were working on it again.
- A couple of days later there were some second floor walls up.
- And then construction stopped again.
- A month or so later, after a thunderstorm, I saw the second floor walls knocked over and broken into pieces.

I began to think to myself, "What kind of builder is this? Who would leave a house half built, with the wood exposed to the sun and the wind and the rain for weeks and months, This guys is nuts!"

- This house would never be fit to live in.
- The wood would become moldy and lose its strength.
- The fasteners and nails would rust through...it bothered me.

The house sat for well over a year and through the winter before the framing was completed.

It took about three years before the home looked complete on the outside, I don't know how long it took to finish the inside.

### **But do you know what this experience caused me to do?**

In my own mind I began to mock whoever this builder was.

I was even tempted to find the owner and tell them not to purchase this house.

I wondered how many people drove by that home and thought the same way I did?

Then I thought of this scripture....

### **Luke 14:28-30**

28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?

29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, **all that behold it begin to mock him,**

30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

.....somebody didn't count the cost.

And when they couldn't finish, people began to mock them and they became a joke.

As much as this person wanted a new home, they didn't sit down first and figure out if they had enough money to finish it.

- Maybe they didn't go to the bank and secure a proper loan.
- Maybe they lost their job and ran out of money.
- I don't know for sure.

But somehow the cost was miscalculated.

Jesus was saying, "If you decide to follow me without counting the cost, you are going to be made to look a fool."

Jesus was saying...

- When you realize that this is not all about walking on water and miracles, then you are going to want to quit.
- When you understand the sacrifice that is involved, you will change your mind.
- When you understand what you have to give up, you might not like this.

And when that happens, people are going to mock you!

Your relationship with Christ will become a joke!

Jesus knew that most of those in the crowd that day were not ready to totally commit to Him.

At the first sign of trouble they would be gone....that actually happened to most of the 12 disciples....they deserted Him after the crucifixion.

- It wasn't that Jesus was trying to scare everybody off....Jesus wanted them to become disciples.
- But Jesus was trying to make these people think about commitment.
- Jesus was questioning their motives...their desire.

He continued the questioning;

**Luke 14:31-33**

31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?

32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.

33 **So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.**

- The questions Jesus asked were questions that would caused them to search their own heart.

Jesus wanted to make them think.

Jesus wanted them to count the cost.

Jesus wanted to know if they would forsake all to follow Him.

Jesus wanted them to really examine their motives.

I believe that every so often we need to self examine our commitment to Christ.

- Why am I following Christ?
- Why do I come to church twice a week?
- Am I in this for the right reasons.
- Have I counted the cost?
- Am I ready to forsake all that I have?

**I want Jesus in my life....but Will Jesus accept me?**

What I want to do in closing is a little different...I want to do what Jesus did.

I want to turn this lesson into a interactive lesson of sorts and ask you some questions that will cause you to think and examine your own heart.

- Call this a parable.
- Call this a test.
- Call it whatever you want.

But I believe we ought to do this more often so we can be sure that Christ will accept us.

As I ask each question I am going to pause for 10-15 seconds so you can reflect and examine your own heart.

No talking please. Let's have quiet.

**This series of questions is called "Isn't it funny?"**

**These ten questions will make you think:**

1. Isn't it funny how long 60 minutes is during church, but how short it is when we are fishing, playing golf or watching a movie?
2. Isn't it funny how hard it is to read a single chapter in the Bible, but how easy it is to read a magazine or novel cover to cover?
3. Isn't it funny how we can't think of much to say when we pray, but don't have any trouble talking about somebody else?
4. Isn't funny how busy everybody gets on outreach Saturday?
5. Isn't it funny how \$20.00 seems so big when the offering plate goes by, but so small when we are out shopping?
6. Isn't it funny how difficult it is to share the gospel with others, but how simple it is to talk about the ball game with a stranger?
7. Isn't it funny how we need four or five weeks to fit a church event into our calendar, but have no problem adjusting our calendar for a social event at the very last minute?
8. Isn't it funny how we get excited when a football game goes into overtime, but complain when a sermon goes into overtime?
9. Isn't it funny how almost everybody shows up for the Church Picnic, but very few show up for prayer?
10. Isn't it funny how everyone wants to go to heaven provided they don't have to do what the Bible says?

**Funny isn't it? Or is it?**

- Are You all in?
- Are you totally invested?
- Have you counted the cost?

Will Jesus Accept you as His Disciple?