

The Cost of Discipleship

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Preacher: Shawn Woo

[0 : 00] Good morning, my name is Sean. I'm one of the pastors of Trinity Kendrick Church. It's my privilege to preach God's Word to you this morning. We are in Luke chapter 14. If you do not have a Bible, please raise your hand.

And Sungmin's going around right now with a few Bibles that you can use. You could grab one and read it this morning while we're going through. So we've been going through the Gospel of Luke and we are in chapter 14, verses 25 to 35.

Let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's Word. Heavenly Father, we are a people that are governed by your Word.

Because we worship not a mute idol that cannot speak, but a God who speaks. A God to whom we are accountable. God who is Lord over our lives and over the universe.

We come to you humbly, desiring to submit ourselves to your laws, to the guidance you provide in your Word. So please now teach us this morning what it means to be a follower of Christ.

[1 : 43] What it means to be a true disciple. And shape us more and more to be the kind of disciples you want us to be. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. Amen. Luke 14, 25 to 35. Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother, and wife and children, and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build and was not able to finish.

Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with 10,000 to meet him who comes against him with 20,000?

And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

[3 : 13] Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is of no use, either for the soil or for the manure pile.

It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. This is God's infallible authoritative word.

We've all made decisions in our lives that have proved costly at one point or another. Going to college, for example, is costly. It's not only a commitment of your next four years.

It's, for many people, a commitment to repay debt for the next 10 or 20 years. Making that decision means that you're not going to be able to do a lot of other things.

It's a consequential decision. It's a costly decision. Similarly, getting a pet is costly. Not only the cost of the pet itself, but the cost of vet visits, food, pet sitters, grooming, and time spent in walking and cleaning and entertaining the pet.

[4 : 20] It's a choice with consequences. Getting married is costly. Having children is costly. It transforms all of your relationships and radically reorients your life.

Of course, there are many benefits to all these decisions. But there are also significant costs. The costs vary, but all of our decisions to varying degrees, small or large, have costs attached to them.

And it's wise to think about those costs before we make those decisions. And our passage for today is a turning point in the Gospel of Luke. Because from chapter 11 until now, Jesus has spent most of the time really engaging in debate with the Jewish leaders, the Pharisees.

And having kind of controversial conversations with them. But from now on until he dies on the cross for the sins of his people, the focus is really on Christian discipleship.

What does it mean to be a disciple? To be a follower of Jesus? Jesus. And here in Luke 14, 25 to 35, Jesus teaches the crowds that are following him that they must renounce all other allegiances in order to follow him.

[5 : 33] That's the main point of our passage. We must renounce all other allegiances in order to follow Jesus. And it's a full commitment, not a halfway commitment. And in this passage, it talks about the impossibility of a halfway discipleship.

And then a foolishness of halfway discipleship. And the uselessness of halfway discipleship. So first, let's talk about the impossibility of halfway discipleship in verses 25 to 27.

Verse 25 begins this way. Now great crowds accompanied him, and Jesus turned and said to them. Luke frequently notes the presence of large crowds following Jesus.

But instead of regaling the masses, entertaining them with a crowd-pleasing speech, often Jesus preaches his most hard-hitting messages when he has crowds following him.

And that's because Jesus is not looking for adoring fans. Jesus is not looking for fans, but for committed disciples. He's not looking to boost his numbers or his approval ratings.

[6 : 40] And Jesus explains in the parable of the weeds in Matthew chapter 13, that whenever God plants the seed of the gospel, things grow. But within the wheat that grows, among the wheat that grow, there's also weeds.

The weeds and the wheat always grow together. And so Jesus, because he understands this reality well, he's not impressed or swayed by the crowds, the size of the crowds that follow him.

Instead of seeking to appease the crowds, so then Jesus appeals to them with this high call to discipleship. And actually he is actively trying to dissuade people who have not counted the cost of following Jesus from following him.

He wants everyone that follows him to count the cost before following him. So Jesus says to the crowds in verses 26 to 27, If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother, and wife and children, and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. This is the most blunt statement on Christian discipleship in the Gospel of Luke.

[7 : 56] And it's intentionally phrased in a way that's shocking and diametrical. When we hear the word hate, and as English speakers, we immediately think of it in terms of our emotion, right?

Having a malicious intent towards someone or really despising someone. But Jesus is not teaching us here to despise our family members.

Rather, the love and hate dichotomy is a Hebrew idiom that is frequently used to indicate the choice of one over another.

When you're making an important consequential decision, and you're choosing one thing over another, that's often described in ancient Hebrew in terms of love and hate.

So in English, we might say something like, I love God more than I love my family. But an ancient Jew would say, I love God and hate my family. It's to show the way they have made a clear choice to prefer one and to prioritize one over the other.

[8 : 55] It's not unlike a jealous sibling. Many of you guys have siblings. A jealous sibling that protests to his or her parent, you don't love me. Of course, what they really mean is, you don't love me as much as you love my brother or my sister.

But they put it that way to communicate the fact that they have made a clear preference, a choice of one over the other. You don't love me. And so that's what's going on here.

And you see this throughout the Bible. Genesis 29.30 says that Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah. But then it describes that priority this way in the following verses.

It says, Jacob went into Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah, and served Laban for another seven years. When the Lord saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb, but Rachel was bare.

So the reality is, he loved Leah less than he loved Rachel, but that is described in terms of hate, that Leah was hated. It says, And Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben, for she said, Because the Lord has looked upon my affliction, for now my husband will love me.

[10 : 05] So that's what this is referring to. That's the same expression that is used later in Malachi 1.2-3, quoted in Romans 9.13, As it is written, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.

Here God's not saying that he does not love Esau in an emotional sense. Rather, it's the language of covenantal election, that God chose to fulfill his promises to his people through Jacob, and not through Esau.

That God chose Jacob over Esau. That's what that's expressing. It's a language of choice. And that's why, if you look at the parallel of this Luke passage in Matthew 10.37, the Hebrew idiom is explained in a more understandable way, this way, whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.

And whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. So then Jesus is not telling us literally to hate our family members. In fact, one of the Ten Commandments is to honor your father and mother.

And 1 Timothy 5.8 teaches us that if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. So you should love your families and take care of them.

[11 : 26] That's not what Jesus is talking about. But let's not water down what Jesus is saying, however. Because he is demanding that we make a clear choice.

Because if you love your family more than you love Jesus, then you cannot be a disciple of Jesus.

Notice the language that is used. It doesn't say that if you love your family more than you love me, that's not ideal. It says that it's impossible. He doesn't say that if you love your family more than me, then you'll be a bad disciple.

No, he says if you love your family more than me, you cannot be my disciple. You must make a clear choice to prefer Jesus and following him over all other commitments and relationships.

And this was particularly important in this context, in the ancient world, because Christians would encounter all kinds of persecution. And most Jews who would convert in this context to follow Jesus Christ would then be subsequently disowned and rejected by their own family members.

[12 : 41] And so this was a cost that they had to count and to bear. And in our church, actually, there are several people in our church that have experienced similar persecution or pressure from their own family members for following Jesus.

But for most of us, we haven't experienced that. But even for us, this is an important requirement to heed. Do you love God more than you love your father and mother?

Because Jesus says, if anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother, he cannot be my disciple. Karen Fingerman, who teaches human development and family sciences at the University of Texas, Austin, published a paper last year entitled Millennials and Their Parents.

We have a lot of millennials in our church. I think I barely made the cut. You guys don't believe me. So she's documenting the changes that have taken place in society that have made young adults more dependent on and closer to their parents than ever before.

Some of the changes that she notes is that first, there was a rise of helicopter parenting and tiger moms who are involved in every facet of their kids' lives and really trying to dictate the course of their lives to the nth degree.

[14 : 10] So that's the first phenomenon. The second phenomenon was the simultaneous rise of the perceived importance of education and the cost of education, which means more and more people end up going to college and getting higher education and also end up being more in debt for a long time.

And the third phenomenon is the lack of high-paying job opportunities when millennials first began to enter the workforce. And so all of these things have conspired together to make young adults stay with their parents or remain dependent on their parents for much longer than previous generations have.

And through that, they also develop very close relationships at times where sometimes adversarial kind of love-hate relationship but still very much desiring to please their parents.

But if you desire to please your parents, if your desire to become something, to make them proud, is more important to you than pleasing the Lord Jesus Christ, you cannot be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Similarly, Jesus says, if anyone comes to me and does not hate his own wife, he cannot be my disciple. Of course, the vice versa is also true.

[15 : 27] If your life revolves around your boyfriend or girlfriend and you cannot give them up even though they are unbelievers drawing you farther and farther away from the Lord, if your desire to please your husband or to please your wife outweighs your desire to please the Lord, then you cannot be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

If your spouse is the center of your life and your purposes and priorities flow from them and not from God, not only is it detrimental to them because then you're drawing them away from the Lord, you cannot be a disciple of Christ.

If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own children, he cannot be my disciple, Joseph Epstein, not to be confused with Jeffrey Epstein that's been in the news, is an acclaimed author who writes in a weekly standard, in the weekly standard, and he wrote this article entitled Kindergarchy, and he writes in it that for the past 30 years at least, we have been lavishing vast expense and anxiety on our children in ways that are unprecedented in American and in perhaps any other national life.

Such has been the weight of all this concern about children that it has exercised the subtle but pervasive tyranny of its own. This is what I call Kindergarchy, dreary, boring, sadly misguided Kindergarchy.

Kindergarchy, a rule by children, that parents, our societies, are ruled by children. If going to our children's Little League baseball game on a Sunday morning is more important than bringing them to a worship service, what message are we sending to our children?

[17 : 24] That their extracurricular activities are more important than God? That their future success, worldly success is more important than their faith and godliness?

That God can be kept on the periphery because they have more important things to do? God told Abraham in Genesis 22 verse 2, Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering on the mountain of which I shall tell you.

God fully intended to continue Abraham's line through Isaac and he had explicitly promised him that. Yet God says this in order to test Abraham because his allegiance to the Lord God must proceed, must be prioritized over his love and allegiance to even his only son.

God will be to the Lord. We parents in the church should love our children like the apple of our eyes, but we should never love them more than we love the Lord.

When we do, we teach them that they are the center of this universe, not God. And their attitudes and their actions and their future will be shaped by that dangerous delusion.

[19 : 00] Moreover, if anyone comes to me, Jesus says, and does not hate his own brothers and sisters, he cannot be my disciple. Maybe this is not as much of a prominent issue, but there are times sometimes siblings really, they have this kind of shared identity.

They call, you know, they're like the Smiths or we're the Smiths. I use these names because there's no Smiths, I think. Right? We're the Smiths or we're the Joneses. We are like this.

My family is like this. We roll like this. We stick together. And that can become idolatrous. Their family identity, their identity with their siblings becomes stronger than their Christian identity, their lordship to Christ, their allegiance to Christ.

Their allegiance to their brothers and sisters trump their allegiance to Jesus. And if they do, they cannot be a disciple of Jesus. And lastly, Jesus says in verse 26, If anyone comes to me and does not hate even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

If we love ourselves more than we love Christ, if we seek our glory more than we seek Christ's glory, if we live for ourselves rather than living for God, then we cannot be his disciple.

[20 : 24] Jesus continues that thought in verse 27, Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. A true disciple of Christ bears his own cross.

Just as Jesus bore his cross and died to save his people from sin and death, we as followers of Christ must bear our own crosses. And the cross is a picture of total submission.

We must surrender completely to God's authority. Paul puts it this way in Galatians 2.20, I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.

And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. to bear one's cross is to die to oneself and to live to Christ.

We cannot remain the Lord of our own lives and make Christ our Lord at the same time. If Christ will be Lord, then we must be his servants.

[21 : 36] We must be willing to make sacrifices for Christ. We must be willing to suffer for Christ. We must be willing to say, no matter what it costs me, I will follow Christ.

And it is in that submission and obedience that we are to go after Jesus. Note the sense of movement in this description of discipleship. Verse 26 speaks of coming to Jesus and then verse 27 speaks of coming after Jesus, following in his footsteps, right?

The coming to emphasizes the initial entry, coming after emphasizes the ongoing pursuit of God. It means to follow the pattern of Christ. Sometimes people think that they have come to Jesus and that that's the end of their Christian story.

They believed, they've been baptized, but then they become complacent and stagnant. But that's not how Christian discipleship works.

We come to him in order to go after him. There's a journey, a movement, growth that's supposed to happen year after year. Hannah and I keep several plants in our house and after having had several plants die under my expert care, I now can guess fairly accurately when plants are about to die.

[23 : 08] Because a plant usually stops growing before it dies. I know that doesn't sound revolutionary at all.

It was to me. It still looks alive for a little while. It looks alive for a while, but if it's not growing at all, that's a warning sign to me.

Okay, that thing is going to die. Because a plant that's not growing is dying. In contrast, I can know that a plant is alive because it's growing.

It grows imperceptibly. I don't see, I've never, you know, I've never caught it in the app. I never see the plant growing. You know, but then I see it one day, I'm like, okay, there's a leaf, new leaf that's just unfurled.

Oh, here's a new shoot that I had never noticed before. It grows imperceptibly, but undeniably, every plant that is alive grows. grows. The Christian life is much the same way.

[24 : 08] Those who come to Jesus in earnest continue to go after Him. And they become more like Him because they are pursuing Him and following in His footsteps. Their words and actions reflect Jesus more and more.

They might not see themselves growing. They might not catch their growth in the act. But as they look back, months ago, years ago, they notice that they have grown.

So unless we love Jesus more than we love our family, we cannot be His disciple. Unless we love Jesus more than we love even ourselves, we cannot be His disciple.

There's one more concrete requirement that Jesus lays down for us in this passage, and it comes toward the end in verse 33 as kind of a summary statement. It says, So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

Notice the parallel structure. This too is a requirement for Christian discipleship. Unless we renounce all that we have, we cannot be Christ's disciple. Not just our family, not just ourselves, but also our possessions.

[25 : 22] everything that we have, everything that belongs to us. If we're preoccupied with accumulating wealth, if we love saving and or spending money more than we love Christ and serving Him, if we are more about maximizing our earning potential than following Jesus Christ, then we are not Christ's disciples.

We cannot be. remember from earlier in Luke 14, 18 to 20, that the primary excuses that people gave for not following Jesus and entering into the kingdom of God, the banquet of God, were one's possessions, one's vocation, and one's family.

It is no wonder then that here Jesus puts this requirement so starkly. Halfway discipleship is not merely sub-ideal, it's impossible. we must renounce all other allegiances, including our family, ourselves, and our own possessions, to follow Christ.

And having spoken of the impossibility of halfway discipleship, he now comments on the foolishness of halfway discipleship in verses 28 to 33, using two illustrations.

Our first illustration is in verses 28 to 30, please read with me. It says, for which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it.

[26 : 53] Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, this man began to build and was not able to finish.

The word tower here likely, most likely refers to a watchtower that people in the ancient world built over their vineyards or over their houses. It's a protective measure so you can stand guard at the watchtower and see from afar when people are coming.

It was not a small financial undertaking. It speaks of foundations. It has a foundation. It's a massive structure. Maybe it's similar nowadays in modern days like a home addition that you pay for.

It's a major cost. The average cost of adding a room nowadays, they say that it costs \$44,000. So it's not a small sum of money that this person is speaking of.

And it's not money that you just happen to have lying around inside a piggy bank somewhere. And sometimes I walk into a grocery store without checking how much money I have in my wallet because I'm just buying a few small things and I assume that I have enough money in my wallet.

[28 : 03] But imagine if you were trying to add room to your house. house. That's not something that you just kind of casually stumble into and think, okay, I think I'll add a house, you know, add a room to my house today.

No, you have to check your bank account. You have to check to make sure that you have enough money to complete the project that you're about to start. Sitting down and counting the cost, whether I have enough to complete it.

A half-built bathroom that has a toilet and a faucet but no water pipes is useless. So he says, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him saying, this man began to build and was not able to finish.

It's foolish to undertake something so consequential, so big, so costly without first estimating the expenses. There's a skyscraper in Pyongyang, North Korea.

It's called Ryugyeong Hotel. It's the tallest skyscraper in North Korea, 1,080 feet, 105 floors, but it remains to this day unfinished.

[29 : 14] Construction for it began in 1987, but problems with building materials as well as a prolonged economic crisis have prevented its completion to this day. So according to the Guinness World Records, Ryugyeong Hotel holds the dubious distinction of being the tallest unoccupied building in the world.

It's embarrassing. The skyscraper that was supposed to be a monument to North Korean technological advancement at the 13th World Festival of Youth and Students in 1989, instead now stands to this day in 2019 as the monument to their poor planning.

men. This is the foolishness of halfway discipleship.

If you wear the name of Christ and call yourself a Christian, but you live in contrast to his teachings, it's embarrassing to Christ.

Christ. If you say that Christ is your Lord, but you're not willing to do what he commands, then it's pointless. If you don't persevere in your faith and obedience to the end of your life, and you fall away from Christ, it's futile.

[30 : 41] It's like having an unfinished tower. The second illustration, verses 31 to 32, makes the similar point.

It says, Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with 10,000 to meet him who comes against him with 20,000?

And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation that asks for terms of peace. Just think about how foolish that is. This king and his kingdom is under attack and he only has half the number of soldiers as the invading king.

But imagine that in spite of that clear numerical disadvantage, this king without counsel lunges headlong into battle without strategizing with his generals about how to overcome this deficit.

He's going to get destroyed. war is not a video game that you can start over anytime you want. Foolishly going to war without adequate preparation will have devastating consequences and so any king with any common sense will carefully assess the dire situation and determine whether he has enough to go to war.

[32 : 03] And if not, he will send for a delegation to ask for terms of peace. Likewise, following Christ is not a stroll in the park. It's not a video game.

It's not a casual undertaking. It requires, it determines one's eternal fate. It raises the stakes, asks questions of life and death and it may come with suffering and persecution.

It may come, it will come at great personal cost to yourself and to your own life and for these reasons it requires serious consideration.

Have you considered becoming a follower of Christ? Do you know what Christ demands of you? Do you know what the Christian life entails?

If you're not yet a follower of Christ, I urge you this morning to answer these questions for yourself, to consider, to deliberate seriously. the Christian life is not for the faint hearted, it's not for casual observers and lukewarm fans.

[33 : 15] In order to be a disciple of Christ, we must renounce all other allegiances because Christ the King will have no life. You can only pledge allegiance to one King.

Think about it this way, at a U.S. naturalization ceremony, which I got to attend at Red Sox for my naturalization ceremony, it was really cool, but that's irrelevant, sorry.

One of the things that you have to say in your vow of allegiance is this, it begins like this, I hereby declare on oath that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince potentate or sovereignty of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen.

I don't think people actually think about it when they recite that oath. That's a serious commitment. It's exclusive. You're renouncing all your other previous allegiances.

Why? Because you cannot be a U.S. citizen while pledging allegiance to a foreign country. in order to enjoy the privileges of citizenship in this country, you must renounce your obligations to other nations.

[34 : 40] In order to enjoy the protection provided by this country, you need to pledge to not support another country, which is undermining your very own protection, which comes from this country.

That's the nature of relationships, nature of citizenship, and these allegiances. becoming likewise a citizen of the kingdom of God requires the renunciation of our citizenship in the kingdom of this world.

You cannot serve two masters. others. So it's foolish to try to do otherwise.

That's the foolishness of halfway discipleship. And the last point Jesus makes is of the uselessness of halfway discipleship in verses 34 to 35.

He says, salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is of no use, either for the soil or for the manure pile.

[35 : 41] It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. Salt is good, it says. What does it mean for salt to be good? Luke uses the word good earlier in his gospel to tell us that we are to be like good trees planted on good soil in order to bear good fruit.

So good is a word that he specifically uses to refer to the right Christian discipleship. A true Christian that bears fruit, that is responsive to the word of God, that grows on good soil.

So saltiness is the mark of the Christian because salt is good. This is quite appropriate metaphor for the Christian because of its preserving properties, you know, disinfecting properties, especially in a day when they didn't have refrigeration, it was a sign, really a symbol of permanence.

A salt, that's what preserves food. And it's extremely important and essential to life for many of these reasons, but the primary function that Luke seems to have in view is spelled out in verse 35.

It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. What's in view here is salt's function as a fertilizer. A little bit of salt can activate nutrients in the soil for the plants but control the growth of weed.

[37 : 09] It can also be used to enrich manure to make it more effective as a fertilizer. However, he says, if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?

And the Greek word translated here as lose its taste literally means to become foolish. He's saying salt when it becomes foolish, what good is it anymore?

What use does it have anymore? It's a metaphor for Christian discipleship. The answer is, of course, it cannot be restored. We have some chemists in the room, they might object that salt cannot lose its saltiness by definition because when it does, it would cease to be salt.

And that's true if I did my Google research correctly. But that defeats the point of the metaphor. In this part of the ancient world, salt was likely derived from the Dead Sea by evaporation.

And so the residue would have contained salt, real salt, but it will also be mixed with other minerals that are not salty. And that can be mistaken for salt. So often people saw this as salt losing its saltiness.

[38 : 20] And this was a common problem in the ancient world. And salt that is mixed with these other minerals that are not salt would be useless for preserving and purifying, flavoring, and even as in view here, fertilizing.

Similarly, a Christian that loses his Christ-likeness, a halfway disciple, the so-called Christian that becomes foolish, loses his usefulness.

He's useless for preserving what is good and right in this world. He's useless for halting the moral decay of society. He's useless for purifying the sinful world and bringing the light of Christ, his healing, to this world.

He's useless for flavoring this world with the goodness of God. But beside all of those things, a halfway disciple is useless for the primary purpose that Luke has in view of fertilizing.

A true salty Christian fertilizes the soil so that people's hearts are fertile so that they respond to the seed of the gospel and produce good fruit that pleases God.

[39 : 34] A true disciple is a good tree that sits on good soil and bears good fruit, but to lose our saltiness is to lose our Christian identity, to have no good.

That's the uselessness of halfway discipleship. And here's the reason why Christian discipleship is so all or nothing. We can think about it in relational terms.

The level of intimacy that you enjoy in a relationship is directly proportionate to the level of priority you accord to that relationship. Can you imagine a man proposing to a woman this way?

Would you like to marry me and become the second most important woman in my life? I will love you very much. I'll love my mom a little more, but I will love you very much.

Or can you imagine a man saying, hey, I'm going to love you. You're going to be the second best woman. I love my sister more. But I'll also love you. You'll always be second in my heart. Who would say yes to such a lousy proposal?

[40 : 52] The depth of commitment and intimacy involved in marriage demands primacy and priority. It's not enough to love your spouse second best.

She must be first. Among all your human relationships. In the same way, God has loved us with a consuming, jealous love.

love. We have sinned and rebelled against him. We have been unfaithful to him. And as a result of that, we have been unlovable, unworthy.

And yet God the Father sent his only son, Jesus, to die for our sins on the cross, to woo us. Jesus' life, death, and resurrection is the divine proposal.

follow me. Follow me. Be the bride of Christ. That's how the church is described in God's word.

[42 : 00] And because of what Christ has done, because he bore his cross for us, he cannot demand that we bear our cross to follow him.

Because that's the kind of relationship that he has offered to us. That's the kind of commitment and cost he was willing to pay for us. And so now he says, the only way you can have this kind of relationship with me is you must make me first in your heart, in your life.

That's the privilege. But the privilege comes with the cost. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.