

Matthew 10:32–39

"Counting The Cost"

April 18, 2010

Matt 16:13–28 John 12:24–26

Today we want to look at the idea of what it cost to live a particular life style. We all live a certain way and with certain standard of living in mind. Yet when it comes to the Christian life, we sometimes just exist or have no particular plan in mind on how to achieve a stable and productive Christian life. So let's see what God has to say about what it costs to live a Christian life.

When you count the cost of living a life that makes a difference you see that it is someone that . . . .

*I. Has Died – John 12:24; Matt 16:24* Jesus said in both passages that we are to die to self. We are to put the old, natural man away and live as new people. Listen to what He says. He compares the Christian life to a seed or grain of wheat, planted in the ground and watered and sprouts up and lives. Just as the seed must first die in the ground before it can bring about new life, we also must die to the old things that separated us from God. It is only when we die that we can truly live. Paul says in 2 Cor. 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

*II. Is Separated – John 12:24; Matt 10:37* This is one of the hardest conditions of the Christian life that we can possibly face today. Once we have died to self and the things of the world, we must separate ourselves from the things of the world. It is only when we do as the grain of wheat after it is planted in the dark ground, alone and separated from the farmer's care that it springs forth with new life. We all have a sinful nature and we possess the ability to sin at any time. However, we have the strength and the power of the Holy Spirit to resist if we keep ourselves pure. David said, "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee." It is through the power of the word of God that we have at our disposal that we can resist temptation. Now here is one of the most difficult passages to understand. Look at verse 34. Jesus says that your family will be your enemy. Why? Well, it was prophesied years earlier by the prophet Micah. In the 7:6 we read the same words. God is telling us that if we believe and our family doesn't believe that they will not understand the spiritual things that we do. They will not understand our wanting to go to church and to help others and all those things that we as Christians want to do. Families who are not saved can be unmerciful to a new Christian. And Jesus is saying that to love God is more important than even your mother or father. That may sound like harsh words, but look at Matt 8:21. Jesus is saying that the world can take care of the world; you need to take care of the things of God. Whatever God has called you to do, do it.

**III. Bears Fruit – John 12:24; Matt 16:32–33** Just as the seed dies, is buried, and then springs to life, it then bears fruit. If it doesn't bear fruit, how will you know it is a grain of wheat or a sunflower seed? Jesus is referring to the outward expression of the inner person, deeds or duty that will make one worthy of salvation. Look at the order in which He gives us this. "If it dies, that is dies to self, it bears much fruit." What kind of fruit? Fruit of the Spirit. Those things that are Godly and that separate us from the world. Paul said that we are "saved by grace through faith, not works." Then James comes along and says, "Show me your faith without works, and I'll show you my faith by my works." Now these are not contradicting statements. God has promised that when we become a Christian we become different people. We just saw in 2Cor 5:17, we become new creations. It is the Christ-likeness inside of us that makes

**IV. Is willing to lose their life – John 12:25 Matt 16:24–27** What does it mean to lose your life? How does one lose his life? Jesus is again telling the disciples that eternal life is for those who have forsaken the world's way of living and followed Jesus. Losing your life is not that hard to do, but keeping it lost can be. That's why Jesus said that we have to daily deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow Him. That was a big order for the disciples and for us, but it's the only way.

**V. Is able to find new life – John 12:25; Matt 16:24–27** If we lose our life, we must find a new life. Christ showed us that the only way to have new life is to believe in Christ and follow Him. The new life is given by God to those who believe and turn from their old way of living. Paul says in *Gal 3:20* "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life that I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me." You see, it is the power and strength of the Holy Spirit in us that gives us our daily ability to follow Christ.

**VI. Is a servant – John 12:26; Matt 16:24** Jesus says that we are to be servants to all. He says that God will honor those who serve. Even at the Last Supper, Jesus gave an example of servanthood. He washed the disciple's feet. He then said, "a servant is not greater than his master, but if you want to be first, be last, and if you want to be great, be a servant." A life that makes a difference is a life that costs. It has a price to pay, but is willing to make the sacrifice for the promised reward of eternal life.