



SPRING 2024 // WEEK 4

Life Group Questions

Kingdom Stories: Living in the One True Kingdom // April 27-28, 2024

Count the Cost // Luke 14:25-35

Introduction

This week's sermon took us to several parables that emphasize the cost of being a disciple of Jesus. By using all-or-nothing examples, Jesus is challenging His followers—then and now—to choose between the kingdoms of this world or the Kingdom of Heaven and its One True King.

We invite you to look over all the questions on the following pages and write your thoughts down before you meet with your group. Some people even use these questions to take notes during the sermon. The questions are meant to stir your thinking and prompt open discussion and we do not expect you will cover every question each week.

Warm Up *(Suggested time: 30 min)*

- 1) Have you ever spent money on something without worrying about the cost? (a special dinner out, a luxury spa treatment, an extravagant gift). What was that experience like for you?

- 2) Have you tried any of the Personal Spiritual Exercises this session? How did God use it in your life in a specific way? Or what have you heard God saying to you in your personal time in quietness, prayer and scripture reading?

Getting Started

Transition into group discussion.

Open group discussion with prayer. Here are a few potential prayer items:

- a. For the Spirit of God to lead you in truth
- b. For the fruit of the Spirit to be cultivated in your lives
- c. For grace to hear and apply what the Spirit says to you

Read the full passage together with your group.

Study Questions *(Suggested time: 40 min)*

- 1) This passage is packed with potent parables. **Who is Jesus speaking to and what is the significance of the time and place in which these are given?**

- 2) Though Jesus' popularity was running high, He was about to teach that the cost of following Him was also very high. In verse 26, Jesus says that a person cannot be His disciple unless they "hate" their family and their own life. **How did Pastor Bryan explain this dramatic use of language by Jesus to this audience?**

What would be an example in your own life of following Jesus with that kind of commitment?

- 3) "Take up your cross" wasn't just a figure of speech in Jesus' world. **What real life images would the people hearing this example have in mind when Jesus said this?**

How should we relate such a strong image to our own lives these days?

What might Jesus be asking you to do or say in order to carry your cross for His sake this week?

- 4) Calculating the cost of building a tower and counting opposing troops in battle are two other examples of counting the cost. **How are they similar and how are they different ways to understand what it takes to be a committed disciple of Jesus?**

Why do you think Jesus introduced the idea of agreeing to peace in verse 32? What might that have to do with counting the cost of discipleship?

5) In the final parable, Jesus speaks of salt. **How was salt used in the ancient world?**

In what ways might salt have been an apt description for the life of a Christ-follower?

All of these parables taken together show the value system of a person who commits their life to follow King Jesus. **How would you describe that value system in your own words?**

Practically speaking, what is the cost for you to follow Jesus here and now?

Personal Spiritual Exercises

Just like physical exercises help strengthen and stretch our bodies for healthy living, these spiritual exercises are meant to move us spiritually in ways that may be new so we might experience inner growth. Since God longs for us to experience Him with our whole selves—mind, body, spirit—we invite you along each week to strengthen your souls with suggestions and prompts. **Next week in Life Group, take a few moments to share how the Lord may have used this exercise in your life.**

Prayer Focus: Counting the cost can look differently in each person, but God is the one who truly knows when we have surrendered our whole self to His leading. A meaningful prayer of surrender is given to us in *Psalm 139:23-24*; make this your prayer this week.

*Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
Point out anything in me that offends you,
and lead me along the path of everlasting life.*

Scripture Focus: There are various references to salt in scripture. Take a dive into the study of salt by looking up the verses below. Notice how these references relate to the parable about salt in this week's sermon and what it looks like to live as a faithful disciple of Jesus.

Leviticus 2:13

2 Kings 2:20-22

Psalm 107:34

Matthew 5:13-16

James 3:11

Prayer *(Suggested time: 20 min)*

A significant part of “coming together” is being open and honest with our lives. Sitting in a group of people for prayer may be new or it may be familiar to you. If you would rather not pray aloud when it is your turn, feel free to pray silently and then say “Amen” aloud signaling the next person in the group to pray. Whether or not you choose to verbalize your prayer, everyone is a participant in sharing this time before God together.

Take a few moments to prepare a prayer request. What did the message, working through the above questions or the discussion cause you to notice about your own relationship with Jesus? Would you be willing to share your prayer request with the group?