HOMEWORK: Read Luke chapters 13 & 14

**Main Point**

Following Jesus means choosing to follow Him no matter the consequences or cost.

Read Luke 13:1-17.

* **Why does God value repentance so highly? What do we communicate to God when we are repentant?**
* **In light of verse 5, what are some ways we can communicate this urgency to the people in our lives who do not know Christ?**

Illustrating the urgency of repentance, Jesus told a parable about a fig tree. It was to be cut down for not bearing fruit, pointing to the judgment of sinners who do not repent. As with all parables, Jesus used a situation familiar to His hearers to make spiritual application.

This parable emphasized the point that although God is patient, continued refusal to repent will result in doom. Because we too are sinners, we need to be concerned first about our spiritual condition. Once we address our need to turn from sin, we also should be concerned about the spiritual condition of others.

Read Luke 13:18-35.

* **What does the contrast between the seed and tree teach us about the power of God’s kingdom?**
* **What does the imagery of the yeast teach us?**

The verses leading up to this parable detail Jesus’ healing of a crippled woman on the Sabbath. Here, Jesus made a statement about His power to heal. In Jesus, the kingdom has come near where people can see it. But during His time on earth, it was so small it was not obvious. Soon, Jesus said, this almost invisible nucleus would expand into a grand kingdom no one can miss—a kingdom that will eventually determine salvation or eternal punishment for the entire world.

Yeast, like the mustard seed, starts off very small. But, also like the seed, yeast grows. While the seed grows into a tree that benefits all those around it, the yeast infiltrates all of the surrounding dough. Just as yeast transforms the dough it is added to, so the power of Jesus transforms the lives of His followers.

Read Luke 14:1-14.

* **According to these verses, why should followers of Christ be humble? What was Jesus’ motivation for teaching His disciples about humility?**
* **When have you encountered situations similar to the wedding party in Jesus’ parable? In those situations, how did you (or the other people involved) respond?**

We live in a culture that encourages people to do whatever it takes to get ahead. However, in God’s kingdom, the person who humbles himself will be exalted by God. Of course, Jesus did not advise adopting a veneer of humility to gain honor from God. To do so would be self-seeking ambition. Humble people draw their sense of self-worth from their relationship with God. They don’t seek or need honors bestowed by humans. They know who they are—God’s children—and are secure in that confidence. Such solid self-identity carries with it strength to serve others in Christ’s spirit.

Read Luke 14:15-35.

* **Why do you think that Jesus cautions us to ‘count the cost’? What are the costs we will pay to be His disciples?**
* **If salvation is free, why does Jesus talk to us about what it will cost us?**

It isn’t always easy to be a Christian. Paul told Timothy, “In fact, all those who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Timothy 3:12). Jesus never hid the true challenges of following Him. He told us the true cost of eternal life right up front. If we choose to follow Him, it will mean taking up our cross and dying.

Read Luke 14:25-35.

* **What actions can you take to ensure that your relationship with Jesus takes precedence over all other relationships?**
* **What costs keep people from following Jesus today? What things in your life would you find most difficult to give up for the sake of following Christ?**
* **Read Hebrews 12:1-2, verses that give us additional insight into the cost of discipleship. What do these verses call us to cast aside in order to follow Christ? How does this encourage you in your effort to follow Jesus wholeheartedly?**

In this teaching, Jesus emphasized that His followers were to love Him above everyone else, including their own families. Following Christ is giving Him primary allegiance. This truth is easier to understand than it is to practice. As disciples of Christ, we must understand and accept that our relationship with Him takes precedence over all other relationships.

Jesus’ two parables in these verses stress cost analysis. Jesus’ point in these two stories about the builder and the king is aimed at those in the crowd who were considering becoming His disciples. They should count the cost of following Jesus before they embark on a life of following Him.

In His concluding remarks about discipleship, Jesus compared discipleship to salt that has gotten wet and lost its flavor and its effectiveness. In reality, the salt really wasn’t salt at all. Similarly, a disciple who values his or her earthly possessions more than Jesus is really not a disciple at all. One enters into discipleship and continues in discipleship when he or she understands Jesus’ uniqueness and infinite worth and thus puts Him above all. Anything less is not true discipleship; anything less is like salt that’s salt in name only.