

1 Kings 19:15-16, 19-21; Galatians 5:1, 13-25; Psalm 16; Luke 9:51-62

Reading newspaper want ads for jobs – most written in such a way that they want people to respond to ads

What about this? Wanted – someone to be called “Christian.” Must give up all that you have – home, job, family, and friends. May not know the place that you will be sent. Must follow a man named “Jesus.” Receive no monetary payment. Could cost you your life.

How many people would answer that ad? Would you?

Is this the cost of discipleship?

In gospel, man approaches Jesus and says, “I will follow you wherever you go.” Most of us hope that we would be like that, but Jesus is pretty realistic to this eager follower and does a bit of truth-telling – it won’t be easy and you won’t have a permanent home.

More of us would probably be like the man who Jesus approaches and tells him, “Follow me.” Yeh, sounds great, but first. . . let me bury my father; let me first say farewell to those at my home; let me first get my home organized and packed; let me first do some traveling; let me first get my garden planted – you know what it’s like to make the excuses. They sound good to our ears b/c we aren’t technically saying no – we just want it to be our timing.

Is that the cost of discipleship – following Jesus the way WE want it to be?

What is the cost of discipleship?

A young woman in high school decides to live her life by faith and makes decisions based on her faith and not on peer pressure. It doesn’t make her popular, but she learns a lot about what it means to live for Jesus.

A couple decides to spend their retirement volunteering for children in need and fighting the battle against hunger.

A man from Cameroon follows the call to seminary even though it will be a great sacrifice to do it. When he hears that his father has died, he postpones his studies to support the rest of the family, as his culture has taught him, and only returns to seminary when it is done – ten years later – knowing that his particular call to care for his family is also a call from God.

Someone continues to work for a company, not for personal gain, but for the betterment of hundreds of employees and their families – knowing that in the tough economic times, those saved jobs will keep people in their homes.

What is the cost of discipleship?

These stories are about sacrifice and living out your life according to your faith. But there's more to the cost of discipleship.

The cost of discipleship means living in God's grace and God's unending love. The "cost" of discipleship has already been paid for in full by the life and death of Jesus Christ.

Our discipleship is the way in which we live out our faith in the freedom of that good news.

Laurie Beth Jones in her devotional book, *Jesus in Blue Jeans*, writes: "We would do far more for the world if we spent less time straightening our crowns and more time washing others' feet, just as Jesus did."

Because of what Christ has already done for us, we don't have to worry whether we have crowns or not – most of our crowns would be cracked and broken anyway – God, amazingly enough works through us – forgiven sinners. Christ paid the cost for us!

That freedom is what we are left with – "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then and do not let yourselves be burdened again by the yoke of slavery (Gal. 5:1)."