

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

Psalm 1

Philemon 1:1-21

Luke 14:25-33

Sermon September 4th 2022

The Cost of Discipleship Leads to New Life

In our gospel this morning, Jesus doesn't hold back. Being a disciple of Jesus is costly. Maybe you spent eight to ten hours this week working on the slides for today's service. Maybe you were at the church way before everyone else this morning to make sure the livestream and sound are working properly. Maybe you have committed to being on the board, teaching Sunday School, and running the ProPresenter Sunday mornings this coming year. Maybe you have three different roles during Sunday morning worship. Maybe you find yourself spending more time at the church during the week than at home. Cutting grass, shovelling snow, fixing things, changing banners, looking after the altar cloth, prepping for baptisms and communion, attending Bible Studies, meetings (**Image**), band practices, congregational events. Maybe you are running low on energy, because you used to do 101 things for the church.

Or maybe you are struggling financially, and yet, you feel the need to support the ministries of the church. So, you end up giving up on something you could really use to find the money to give.

Or maybe your faith moves you to stand up for someone who is being mistreated. Someone who has been rejected by your community. Leaving you vulnerable to be mistreated and/or rejected by your community.

We are no strangers to the cost that comes with committing to the ministries of the church. We know for the church to run efficiently. For our ministries to breathe life into people. We need to commit our money, time, and energy to the ministry. We need to sometimes put ourselves out there to help those who stand on the margins of our society (**Image**). Even though it is really hard for us to do.

Being a disciple is costly.

And yet, for some reason we do it. We continue to be part of this community. We continue to live out our lives as Christians. Christ's disciples.

Sometimes we ask ourselves why? But we do it.

And I think the reason we do it is because when we follow Jesus. When we live out our discipleship, we see God working in our lives, and in our community. We see God's healing, touch the life of someone who has suffered. Giving them health and

wholeness. We see God's healing, transform an unhealthy community into a thriving community. We see God's healing, reconcile two people, two communities whose relationship had been severed (**Image**). We see God's healing, tend to, heal, and restore the land, water, trees, animals. We see God's healing, touch our own lives in so many ways.

When we live out our discipleship, we see God's hospitality breathe new life into people who have felt rejected by society. Reconciling them with their community. Like we see with Onesimus in Paul's letter to Philemon. We see God's hospitality create opportunities to build bridges with those who are different from us. We see God's hospitality transform our polarized world into a harmonious and peaceful world. We see God's hospitality breathe new life into us when we feel rejected, when we need a bridge to walk on, when we feel divided from our neighbours.

When we live out our discipleship, we see God's grace help people work through their shame. Their insecurities. Their addictions (**Image**). Giving them new opportunities to be all that God created them to be. We see God's grace help us work through our shame, our insecurities, our addictions. Giving us new opportunities to be all that God created us to be.

When we live out our discipleship, we see God's promise of new life being fulfilled in the people we minister to. In us. Seeing their/our broken lives transformed into something new.

When we bear the cost of our discipleship, we also, bear the witness of all that is possible with God. And it is in this witness of God's healing, hospitality, grace, and new life that gives us the motivation to bear the cost. Because seeing how God's healing, hospitality, grace, and new life changes people's lives, changes us, is so worth it.

Today, Jasmine received the waters of baptism (**Image**). Today, Jasmine received the promise that God will be with her always through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Today, Jasmine accepted her invitation, through her sponsors, to live out her discipleship in the world. Today, Jasmine starts on a journey where one day she will find herself bearing the cost of her discipleship. But also, where one day she will bear witness to God's healing, hospitality, grace, and new life.

As we witness Jasmine's baptism, we remember this same promise that we received in our baptism. This promise that reassures all of us that God is with us through the Holy Spirit. God has given us what we need to bear the cost. So, that we will also be able to bear witness to God's promise of healing, hospitality, grace, and new life.

Let us pray, gracious God, reassure us of your presence through the Holy Spirit when the cost of discipleship is overwhelming. Help us be witnesses of your healing, hospitality, grace, and new life. **Amen.**

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