

Luke 14:25-35

²⁵ **Now great crowds accompanied [Jesus], and he turned and said to them,** ²⁶ **“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.** ²⁷ **Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.** ²⁸ For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? ²⁹ Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, ³⁰ saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ ³¹ Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³² And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. ³³ So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

³⁴ **“Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? ³⁵ It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”**

In the Name of Jesus.

Jesus gives gifts—the gift of family, of husband and wife, of father and mother, of child, of brother and sister, of friend and neighbor.

This our Lord gave us in the orders of creation. He created the man and the woman; he gave the man and the woman marriage—the male and the female made one flesh; and in this he gave the gift of family and of ongoing generations as he told them to be fruitful and multiply. Genesis 1:26:

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

**So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.**

And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it.”

Family, marriage of man and woman, children—all this is gift from our Lord.

We know what happened. The man and the woman, Adam and Eve, rebelled. Their sin is our sin, for we are brought forth from them. In their rebellion against the God of all gifts, they brought sin into their own bodies; we are of the fruit of their bodies.

So we know what happened. The fruitfulness and multiplying given as gift by our Lord is now brought forth from our sinful bodies, in our sinful lives.

The Lord still gives the gifts, there is still marriage of man and woman, still procreation given to the male and the female, still the gift of family, and of looking forward to ongoing generations—it is all being brought forth by our Lord, yet being brought forth through our sinful lives.

So marriage is pressured with conflict and division. This belongs to all who are of sinful flesh. Families are brought forth in conflict and brokenness. It belongs to all.

And the sin is so deeply set in our flesh, in our bodies, in our lives, that we may even forget that it’s there, or forget just how profound it is.

The sin? The sin is the creature rejecting the gifts of the Creator, and caring about self over others. That's the person acting in self-interest, instead of as servant receiving every good gift from God.

The sin? The sin is us receiving our families not as gift from God, but as what good we think they are to us. Receiving our neighbor not as gift from God, but as what we can get out of him.

The sin is us loving persons not for who they are, as who God gives us to serve, but loving others for what worth they are to us.

So Jesus says to the crowds—we can stop there for a moment. Jesus says to *the crowds*. He involves all in this. This is no private sin Jesus is addressing, some sin we can act as if it belongs not to us personally, but to someone over there in the corner—it's the crowds, it's everyone, it's you and me.

Jesus said to the crowds,

"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

[Luke 14:26]

Jesus, God the Son, created our fathers, our mothers, our children. He was in that conversation of creation with the Father and the Holy Spirit, Genesis 1:

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

**So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.**

Jesus, God the Son, spoke through the prophet Moses, saying,

You shall honor your father and your mother. [Exodus 20] ***And you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.***

Then later the Lord said more through Moses, Leviticus 19:18:

You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

Then later our Lord said this by his own mouth, Matthew 19:19:

"Honor your father and your mother," and, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

And now Jesus says these words of Luke 14:

"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple."

Our Lord is here giving us a great gift.

He is restoring to us our families. He is giving us our father and mother, our wife or husband, our brothers and sisters, our children—he's giving them to us as gift. As gift from him.

For Jesus knows our sin. He knows we love people for what they are to us, for what we can get out of them. Our sin turns us into users of others, including our own families, our own neighbors. Our sin makes us narcissists caring about self.

And Jesus knows this. So as we love others for what worth they are to us, for what we can use them for, Jesus says, *You need to hate them. You need to hate even your own father and mother, your own wife and children.*

Then, pick up your cross, says Jesus. Follow me.

Pick up your cross?

Yes. Be done with your own works, with your own worthiness, with your own watching out for yourself.

And pick up your cross. Have faith in Jesus. Look at his works, his taking of your sin, your self-love, your self-focus—he taking of it all, and bearing it on his back himself.

He crucified your sin in his own body on the cross. He atoned for your sin with his own blood. He redeemed your life, all of it, and made you his own.

So now he is your Lord.

Your faith is in him. In his word of forgiveness, in his absolving of your sin, in his cleansing of your conscience. Your faith is in him alone.

And in this life of faith, this life apart from our sinful flesh in which we still live, we look at Jesus, and we see our Lord. We see the One who said through Moses, ***You shall love the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.***

And in loving the Lord our God who has redeemed us and made us his own, we then look at our families, our father and mother, our children, our neighbor, and we now see them as gifts from our Lord. And that is love.

But we love them not for what we think they are worth to us, but we love them as gifts to us from our Lord, who created us and created them, who redeemed us and redeemed them, our Lord who makes us all to be one in receiving gifts from our giver-God.

In the Name of Jesus.