

Counting The Cost

Witnessing To The Lost



Rock Hill Baptist Church
605 Rock Hill Road
Lexington, Tennessee 38351

Pastor David Buffaloe
731-845-6104
online at bibleteacher.org

FOCAL Luke 14:28-35 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have [sufficient] to finish [it]? (29) Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish [it], all that behold [it] begin to mock him, (30) Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. (31) Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? (32) Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. (33) So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. (34) Salt [is] good: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned? (35) It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; [but] men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.^{KJV}

I have heard this text used many times in many different ways – yet rarely used in the way that our Lord Jesus meant it to be used. “Count the cost” has been used in building programs and financial management courses throughout Christendom, yet this is not how God meant it to be used. When Jesus referred to “count the cost” He defined His message by saying:

FOCAL Luke 14:33 **So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.**

To be a **disciple, a student of Christ** means to **forsake everything that you hold dear** for Him. Our God is a Jealous God, and He will not give greater blessings to those who will not trust Him to the greater degree. It is sure that salvation is by Grace, given freely by faith in Christ Jesus.

John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, [even] to them that believe on his name:

You are a son of God by faith in Him – but the deeper things of God are given only to the surrendered. If you will be His disciple, His student – if you will learn more of God – then you must surrender all to Him. A *student* willingly gives up his freedom to sit and listen attentively to his teacher if he wants to learn.

ILLUSTRATE I remember as a young man *squandering* my education because I daydreamed, I willfully refused to do my homework, I kept my mind on what was going on *after class* instead of paying attention *in class*. As a result I barely passed subjects, and departed High School – leaving a number of relieved teachers behind. I had not learned to art of *surrender to the teacher* – and therefore could not be taught. Listen Beloved: **If you expect to be used of God, then you must do as God has so directed. You must forsake all of you, all that you have, to be the disciple of Christ.** These are His Words, not my words. Read them again:

FOCAL Luke 14:33 **So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.**

The late **Vance Havner** made a wonderful point when he said that (and I paraphrase from his sermon¹):

“We must have better Christians. The word 'Christian' is both a *noun* as well as an *adjective*. When we say “I am a Christian” this is a noun, but when we say “He is a fine Christian man” this is an adjective. We must have more Christian Christians!”

That is so *profound*. We must have **more Christian Christians** in the Church. This is what our Lord was emphasizing when He said:

FOCAL Luke 14:34-35 “Salt [is] good: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned? (35) It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; [but] men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

Have you ever wondered why the Master would use **salt** to describe the Christian? There's several reasons:

1. Salt makes all things better. Salt seasons food so that we can eat it. Salt also *preserves* food. There was a time in my life when I ate a lot of salt cured ham, what we call today “Country Ham”. This

¹ *Home Before Dark*

stuff could hang from a nail in the house it seemed like forever without ever spoiling. When we got ready to eat it momma had to soak the salt out of the meat before she cooked it – it was that salty.

2. Salt is a substance made by God. Even the man-made reduced sodium “salt” comes from the natural product. God makes salt.
3. Salt *must be mined* and separated from the world before it can be used. You can mine salt from the sea, but unless you filter it it's just not fit to eat. Salt can be mined from the ground but again, it must be filtered.

So it is with the Christian:

3. The Christian, like salt, *must be separated from the world in order to be useful*. The Christian mired in worldliness is the **enemy of God**. The Bible says:

James 4:4 Adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? So whoever wants to be the world's friend becomes God's enemy.^{HCSB}

2. The Christian, like salt, is *made by God* – and I thank God for this! God has made us by Grace, and God continually works *in us* – if we will be obedient – to make us more *Christian Christians*. The Scripture says

Ephesians 2:10 For we are His creation-- created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them.^{HCSB}

God *created you, O Christian*, to do His work. Now, you may need to grow. You may need to **forsake where you are and go back to where you came from** - “**unless you forsake all you have you cannot be Christ's disciple**” - but this is not a mountain that cannot be climbed! You are made to bear “**much fruit**”. Jesus said:

John 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in Me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without Me.

1. And finally, the *Christian, like salt, makes all things better*. The Christian also *preserves society*. Jesus said:

Matthew 5:13-14 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. (14) Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

You, dear Christian, are **the salt of the earth**. You have been mined from the world by the preaching of the Gospel and by the power of God's Holy Spirit. As long as God has a presence on this earth *through His salty people*, the Lord preserves that earth for your sake. America – which is rapidly turning into a modern day *Sodom and Gomorrah* – has been preserved as long as it has *because God has a remnant of people here*. God would not destroy the original Sodom and Gomorrah *because He had a remnant of faithful disciples there*. God told Abraham:

Genesis 18:32 ... **I will not destroy [Sodom] for ten's sake.**

This country yet stands because God has a remnant.

Unused Salt Has No Purpose

Last Sunday we memorized the Ten Commandments of God, and I explained how you could use those commandments to lead others to Christ. The Ten Commandments are a wonderful tool that God has given mankind to convict of sin so that people will see that they need a Savior. Some people define witnessing as “Being a good role model for others”. They feel that by *living their lives as good Christians* they will lead others to the Lord. Others define witnessing as *spiritual mugging* – jumping on somebody about a pet sin that you hate like *homosexuality or adultery*. Witnessing is neither of these things. Remember salt? For it to be effective it *must be used effectively*. When I sit down to eat and my food needs salt I don't look at the bottle and

say,

“My, that's a pretty bottle of salt. Look how white it is, how clean, how granular! I'm sure that salt will make my food better.”

No friends – salt *must be used to be effective*. I can look at the bottle of salt forever, but unless I transfer the salt from the shaker to the food I don't get anything out of it. But there's another principle with salt – *it must not be overused*. I know some people who are constantly berating the unbeliever about everything in the world. Listen Beloved:

1 Corinthians 2:14 But **the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know [them], because they are spiritually discerned.**

The unbeliever is *spiritually dead* – and dead things can only do dead things. Some of you are jumping up and down because Wal-Mart gave \$25,000.00 to a homosexual rights group. Yes, it irritates me, too. But Wal-Mart is an entity run by *unbelievers* – and \$25,000.00 is like a quarter to a company that makes as much as Wal-Mart makes. Protest it if you like, but dead things do dead things. Take your business elsewhere if you want – that's your business. But dear friends, do not expect the unbelieving to be salt. Salt is *God made, not man-made*. And on another front, Wal-Mart is also one of the few stores who allow good groups like *the*

Salvation Army and the Lion's Club to solicit donations. As Vance Havner said, **“A bull dog can always win a fight with a skunk, but it's just not worth it!”** God never expects the unbeliever to act like a believer – but He does expect believers to be salt.

Unused salt has absolutely no purpose.

What is the purpose of the Christian? What is our main focus? We are supposed to be learning more about Jesus, so that we can:

“Compassionately share the good news of Jesus Christ with lost people in the power of the Holy Spirit, for the purpose of bringing them to Christ as Savior and Lord, that they in turn might share Him with others.”²

How are we to do this, especially in this day and age?

Share Your Own Experience With Jesus

One of the best ways to tell others about Jesus is to share what He has done for you in your own life. Toward that end may I suggest that each of you *write down your testimony*. Writing down your testimony gives you an opportunity to think – really think – about what Jesus means to you.

One of the greatest walls to witnessing is the **barrier of fear**. Why do we fear telling others about Jesus? Many times we're not sure what we should say, or how we

should say it. We're afraid that others will laugh at us, mock us, or belittle our Lord. That's why it's not only important to write down your testimony, but also to

1. Spend consistent quiet time with God before you witness

Quiet time is time alone with God in His Word and in prayer. Think about the lost person you would like to witness to. Pray for them, and pray that God will open a window of opportunity for you to speak. Your handout #2 gives you an abbreviated chart on “Quiet Time” - and why it is so important. If you try and witness to others without getting close to God first you will end up hurting yourself and possibly the one you are trying to talk to.

2. Witness to those you know best first. In his book



Concentric Circles of Concern W. Oscar Thompson tell us that we should begin by witnessing to those closest to us – then move outward from there. Before you

*W. Oscar Thompson, *Concentric Circles of Concern*, p. 21

start with the stranger in the grocery store, talk to your family, relatives, friends, etc. Work from the

2 Dr. Timothy Beougher, Personal Evangelism 32100 Course Notes, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Louisville, KY, version 1.05

familiar to the unfamiliar and you will feel better.

3. Use your own testimony, how Jesus has made a difference in *your life*. Tell about meeting Him, falling in love with Him, feeling His presence through all the trials of life. Your testimony is the most powerful witnessing tool you have, for it cannot be disputed. **You are salt because God made you salt.** If those you are witnessing to counter by pointing out failures in your Christian walk remind them that *salvation is of the Lord* – and that you

Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Do not get into an argument with the unbeliever. Remember – **a bulldog can win a fight with a skunk, but it's just not worth it.** The issue is to lead this person to the Lord if possible.

Not all people will be led to the Lord. Jesus preached:

John 6:53-58 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. (54) Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. (55) For my flesh is meat

indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. (56) He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. (57) As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. (58) This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

After Jesus taught this the Bible says:

John 6:66 From that [time] many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

If people walked away from Jesus, they will walk away from you, too. Remember, it is not your job to save them. It is your job to *tell* them, and God will save them.

Jesus' own brothers did not believe that He was the Messiah until after His resurrection. Expect the unbeliever to throw what they perceive to be your failures back in your face. Be honest. If you have failed as a disciple of God, do not debate this. Just remember to stand firm on the issue – You are saved, and THEY are NOT. This is the main issue – they must come to know the Lord.

May God bless you as you reach out to others.