

CAPITOL STUDIES

JANUARY 28, 2026 • WEEK 3



LUKE FOR LEGISLATORS SECOND SESSION

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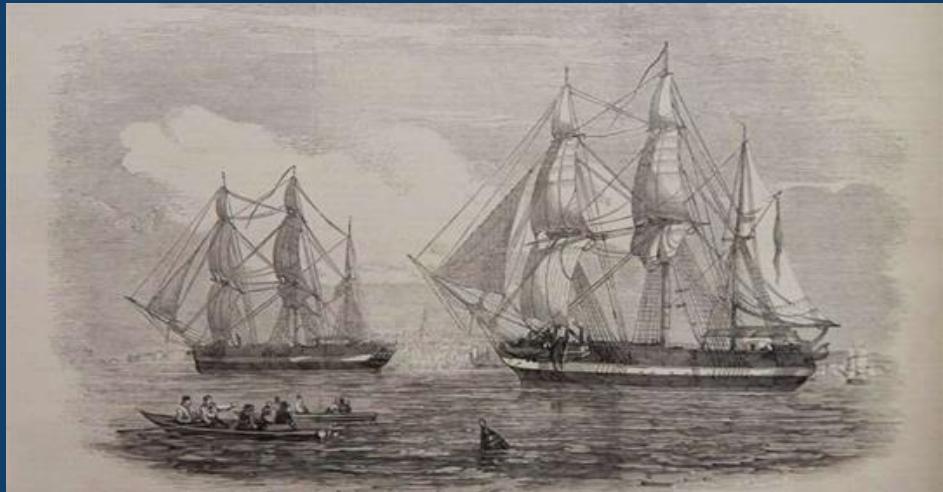
Theme Verse

Luke 19:10

For the Son of Man has come to **seek** and to **save** that which was **lost**.



The Parables of Discipleship



RKENT HUGHES, IN HIS COMMENTARY, relays the following account: “Annie Dillard, in her essay *An Expedition to the Pole*, describes the ill-fated Franklin expedition that perished because its preparations were adapted to the posh conditions of the Royal Navy officers’ clubs in England rather than to the harsh realities of the Arctic.

“In 1845, Sir John Franklin and 138 officers and men embarked from England to find the northwest passage across the high Canadian Arctic to the Pacific Ocean. They sailed in two three-masted barques. Each sailing vessel carried an auxiliary steam engine and a twelve-day supply of coal for the entire projected two- or three-years’ voyage. Instead of additional coal, according to L.P. Kirwan, each ship made room for a 1,200-volume library, ‘a hand-organ, playing fifty tunes,’ china place settings for officers and men, cut-glass wine goblets, and sterling silver flatware. The officers’ sterling silver knives, forks and spoons were particularly interesting.... Engraved on the handles were the individual officers’ initials and family crests. The expedition carried no special clothing for the Arctic, only the uniforms of Her Majesty’s Navy. The ships set out in high dudgeon, amid enormous glory and fanfare....”¹

Pastor Arin Hess, *Chaplain, Capitol Studies*



“Years later, civilization learned that many groups of Inuit—Eskimos—had hazarded across tableaux involving various still-living or dead members of the Franklin expedition. Some had glimpsed, for instance, men pushing and pulling a wooden boat across the ice. Some had found, at a place called Starvation Cove, [a] boat ... and the remains of the thirty-five men who had been dragging it. At Terror Bay the Inuit found a tent on the ice, and in it, thirty bodies.

“For twenty years, search parties recovered skeletons from all over the frozen sea.... Accompanying one clump of frozen bodies... were place settings of sterling silver flatware.... Another search party found two skeletons in a boat on a sledge.... With the two skeletons were some chocolate, some guns, some tea, and a great deal of table silver. Many miles south of these two was another skeleton, alone. This was a frozen officer.... The skeleton was in uniform: trousers and jacket ‘of fine blue cloth... edged with silk braid, with sleeves slashed and bearing five covered buttons each. Over this uniform the dead man had worn a blue greatcoat, with a black silk neckerchief.’ That was the Franklin expedition. Sir John Franklin and 138 men perished because they underestimated the requirements of Arctic exploration. They ignorantly imagined a pleasure cruise amidst the comforts of their English officers’ clubs. They exchanged necessities for luxuries, and their ignorance led to their death.

“Jesus did for his followers what Sir John Franklin failed to do for his. Any would-be disciple who listened would understand that discipleship would cost him dearly, though the benefit of following Christ would make it all worthwhile.”¹

INTRODUCTION

“I don’t know what your thoughts are about the Transfer Portal.... I am going to give you just a brief synopsis... chaos! That’s what it is. The Transfer Portal in college athletics basically means that if you don’t like where you are, you can just go somewhere else, almost any time you want. And now there’s a lot of money involved, and so people, it seems like, are just trying to do what is best for them. But the irony of the situation is you often see people post on social media #committed.... I have no idea what that means. They don’t really know what that means. We’ve kind of lost in our culture today a general understanding of what words mean.... We turn them into whatever is convenient for us at the moment, and so words like committed don’t mean what they used to mean.”²

A true disciple is commitment strong. Gary Inrig says, “While Third-World Christians are information-poor, they are commitment-rich. Sadly, Western Christians are information-rich, but they are commitment-poor.”³ What does it mean to be a committed follower of Jesus? To be a disciple? In today’s study, Jesus clearly defines what it means to be His disciple.



I. COMPARING THE COST

Luke 14:25-27

Now large crowds were going along with Him; 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. ²⁷Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple”⁴

By this time in His ministry, many people follow Jesus simply to receive or see His miracles. Others follow because they hope He will be the leader who would liberate them from Rome. Jesus does not care about the number of disciples. “In the matter of saving lost souls, He wants His house to be filled (Luke 14:23); but in the matter of personal discipleship, He wants only those who are willing to pay the price.”⁵ Jesus brings the crowd face to face with the cost of true discipleship, total commitment.

Our love for Jesus must be so great that our love for ourselves and others looks almost like “hate.” Jesus must have *first* place.

“This does not mean that I will demean my family or neglect it. The very opposite is true if I take Scripture seriously. But no relationship, no matter how wonderful, must compete with my allegiance to the Lord.”⁶ “And He said to them, ‘Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times as much at this time, and in the age to come, eternal life’” (Luke 18:29–30). How then should we respond if our family opposes our decision to follow Christ?

Our love for Jesus must be so great that we are willing to take up our “cross” daily—to die for Jesus.

When a person was sentenced to crucifixion by the Romans, he was required to carry his own cross to the place of judgment. “Bearing the cross meant you were set on a journey to the death. Death to all of self.”⁷ “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself up for me” (Gal. 2:20). “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship” (Romans 12:1).

II. CALCULATING THE COST

Luke 14:28-30

For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? ²⁹Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, ³⁰saying, “This man began to build and was not able to finish.”





Jesus wants His would-be followers to count the cost, so He tells the story of a man who wants to build a tower. Before the man starts building, he figures out how much it will cost. He doesn't want to be embarrassed. He wants to be sure he has enough money to complete the project. If he only goes part way and stops, others will immediately see his failure to calculate the cost. Jesus basically asks the crowd, "Do you have what it takes to be one of my followers?"

III. CONSIDERING THE COST

Luke 14:31-32

Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? ³²Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.

Jesus does not want people who join His band in the emotion of a moment and later abandon the cause when the going gets tough. He wants those who have clearly thought about what may lie ahead and still commit to being His disciple, no matter what. "Warfare looks thrilling in the movies; it looks very different in the trenches."⁸ "If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small" (Proverbs 24:10, ESV). Jesus asks, "Are you in it till the end?"

IV. COMMITTING TO THE COST

Luke 14:33-35

So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions. ³⁴Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned? ³⁵It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

"This may be more literally translated, 'Whoever does not take leave of all that he himself possesses cannot be my disciple.' Most commentators say that this forsaking of possessions means simply giving up our own control over them. Yet for the first followers of our Savior these words were taken literally. Their discarded fishing nets bore witness to the high cost of discipleship."⁹ "Peter began to say unto him, 'Behold, we have left everything and followed You'" (Mark 10:28). To be a true disciple of Jesus, it will cost you everything you are and have. Everything is placed under the control of Jesus. Everything is given to Him for His use.

We see similar words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount: "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men" (Matthew 5:13). "...[P]ure salt cannot lose its taste. In the ancient world, however, what was often sold as salt was highly adulterated and the sodium chloride could leach out in humid weather, in which case the residue (normally a form of lime) would be useless."¹⁰ It had no redeeming qualities. It was worthless!



Jesus asks His disciples to be salt of the earth that is salty. Salt heals. Salt preserves. Salt seasons. It is up to us to be a source of healing and preservation in our world. We must do our part to make the world a better place. Above all, we must be ambassadors of heaven, sharing the goodness of salvation through our great King, Jesus. “I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ” (Philippians 3:8).

CONCLUSION

“Jesus’ words here are tough and sobering! We all fall short, but we must honestly work at applying them to our hearts. Is there any relationship that comes ahead of Christ in your life? If He is first, then obviously you will be spending consistent time alone with Him in His Word, in prayer, and in devotion. You will be fellowshipping with Him every day. You won’t allow any other relationship to draw you away from obedience to Him. You will confess and forsake every sin that hinders fellowship with Him.

“Is He the Lord of your plans, your thoughts, and of all that you do? Or, could you selfishly be clinging to your plans, to your way, instead of seeking to please Him in all things, beginning with every thought that you entertain? If you don’t hate your own life and daily carry your cross, you’re not His disciple.

“Is He Lord of your finances and possessions? Are you faithful in managing these things for His purposes? Do you give generously and faithfully to His work? Or, could the love of money be choking out the Word in your life?

“Salvation is absolutely free, but once you receive it, it costs you everything. To truly follow Christ, we must consider the cost and put Him above everything else. ‘He who has ears to hear, let him hear.’”¹¹

Chaplain Arin Hess

FOOTNOTES

1. R. Kent Hughes, *Luke: That You May Know the Truth*, Crossway Books, 1998, pg. 122–125.

2. Jon Hess, “Believer’s Baptism,” Sermon at Heritage Bible Church, Lincoln, NE, Jan. 18, 2026.

3. Gary Inrig, *The Parables: Understanding What Jesus Meant*, Discovery House Publishers, 1991, pg. 80.

4. All Scripture quotations, unless noted, are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, 1995 Update.

5. Warren Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, Victor Books, 1996, Vol. 1, pg. 231–232.



6. Inrig, *The Parables*, pg. 85.
7. Earl Nutz, “Biblical Viewpoint: Focus on Luke,” Bob Jones University, April 1994, Volume 28, Number 1, pg. 30.
8. Inrig, *The Parables*, pg. 88.
9. Gavin Childress, *Opening up Luke’s Gospel*, Day One Publications, 2006, pg. 136.
10. Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, United Bible Societies, 1996, 2nd Edition, Vol. 1, pg. 51.
11. Steven J. Cole, “Lesson 70: The Cost of Discipleship (Luke 14:25-35)”, Bible.org, <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-70-cost-discipleship-luke-1425-35>.

Personal Study Notes



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WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

Meeting during the 109th Legislature's Second Session

SENATORS

6:45 – 7:45 A.M.
Wednesdays
Capitol Office #100

STAFF

12:00 – 1:00 P.M.
Wednesdays
NE State Office Building
Morrill Room