

---

# BIBLE TALK

---

This week the question is: **Is your religion costing you anything?**

The Bible indicates that religious service to God is a very expensive thing! In fact, it is so expensive that many people are not willing to pay the price.

## THE RICH YOUNG RULER

The story is told in the Gospel of Mark about a rich young man who wanted to be a disciple of Jesus; he wanted to be saved in heaven, but he expected heaven to come with a cheap price tag. This rich young man wanted salvation and heaven and all the glories of eternal life, but he didn't want it to interfere with his present earthly life. He wanted all the riches and joys of this life as well as the riches and joys of the next life.

### **Mark 10:17-23**

17 Now as [Jesus] was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

18 So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.

19 "You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Do not defraud,' 'Honor your father and your mother.'"

20 And he answered and said to Him, "Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth."

21 Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."

22 But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

23 Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!"

Do you see the moral of this story? This young man is just like many people are today. Many people want heaven and eternal life and they go to church and keep many of the commandments of God. But there is a limit to this church business. When religion begins to cost them and begins to interfere with their personal lives, they neglect their service to God and set about to please themselves.

## **THE APOSTLES**

Now, contrast this rich young man with the apostles of Christ.

### **Mark 10:28-31**

28 Then Peter began to say to [Jesus], "See, we have left all and followed You."

29 So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's,

30 "who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time; houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life.

31 "But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

Here is the religion that will save men and women: a very costly and expensive religion. The religious service that offers eternal life is one that requires men to leave their father, mother, brothers, sisters, spouses and children. The religion of Christ requires that men forsake their land and money and follow after Jesus.

What does this mean? It means that Jesus and God must become more important to you than your own father. For example, Jesus taught that men must believe and be immersed in order to be saved (Mark 16:16). If your father should stand in your way and persuade you that immersion is not necessary, or that sprinkling would do just as well, you must be willing to forsake your father and obey Jesus instead.

Again, Jesus taught that it is vain to worship God by following traditions of men (Matthew 15:9). In the Bible Jesus taught us exactly how to worship, how to sing, how to observe the Lord's supper, how to teach the Scriptures, who can speak in the services and who must remain silent and even what day to worship on. Now, if your mother, or your spouse, or your children should tell you that these things don't matter and if they should tell you that you can worship God any way you want, you must be willing to forsake them and their advise and obey Jesus instead.

This is difficult and it is costly isn't it, but this is exactly what Jesus was teaching in Mark chapter 10. The religion that leads to eternal life is very expensive! Jesus taught that true religion was like:

- A pearl of GREAT price which required a man to sell all that he had in order to buy it (Matthew 13:46).
- A TREASURE hidden in a field which required a man to sell all that he had in order to buy it (Matthew 13:44).

Think about this! If your religion is not costing you very much, if you don't have to sacrifice anything and you aren't required to deny yourself anything, you are not a true disciple of Jesus - for He taught that following Him was a very expensive thing to do!

### **COUNTING THE COST**

Jesus Himself warned men to count the cost and consider carefully what they were getting into before they followed him.

#### **Luke 14:25-33**

25 Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them,  
26 "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.

27 "And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

28 "For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it;

29 "lest, after he has laid the 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 to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand?

32 "Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace.

33 "So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.

My friend, we of the "church of Christ" would like for you to attend our services and become a disciple of the Lord, but you must first count the cost. You must not come with the attitude that you can be a Christian without sacrifice. You cannot be a member of the Lord's church without making significant changes in how you think, in how you talk, and in how you act!

To be a member of the Lord's church, His people:

- You may have to quit your present job and find another job that will allow you to assemble and worship on the 1st day of each week.
- You may have to come to services without your spouse because your spouse may not agree with you. In fact, your spouse, in time, may threaten to leave if you don't give up your religious notions and come back to your old way of living, but you must be prepared to pay this price.
- You may have to forsake the teachings and religious affiliations of your forefathers for the Lord expects you to do things His way and not their way!
- You may have to throw out your video collection, your tape collection, your CDs and all your record albums in order to be a disciple of Jesus. Some of these films and music Jesus would not approve of. Are you willing to pay the price?
- You may have to stop living with your present roommate if you are not legally married with to this person with whom you co-habit. Are you willing to pay the price?
- You may have to start working and earning a living instead of living off society and expecting your friends and your government to pay for your food and shelter.

The religion of Christ is extremely expensive; it is very costly, but it is the only religion that will do you any good when life is over and you must stand before the Lord in judgment.