

## COUNTING THE COSTS

-Ryan Parsons-

As you know, I have been swamped rebuilding a house over the last year. It was a monumental endeavor that took no shortage of patience, grace, hard work, and money. However, one of the most critical aspects of building a house is determining what you can and cannot afford. Everything adds up quickly, and unforeseen expenses pop up regularly. So, before you begin, it is necessary to count the costs to see if (1) you can afford it. and (2) do you want to afford it?

On the other hand, if you can't afford it or don't want to afford it, what is your plan B? You must have a place to live. Every choice to say no conversely means a YES to something else.

Read Luke 14:25-33. Jesus again likens discipleship to building a house. He calls us to build the house and explains that the price is HIGH. Those who want to be faithful disciples are forced to ask the questions: "Can we and WILL we?"

Mark 8

*34 And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 35 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. 36 For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? 37 For what can a man give in return for his soul? 38 For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."*

Again, Jesus challenges his disciples. He tells them it may cost us everything, but it is absolutely worth it. The often dreaded cross-carrying life calls us to forfeit everything we would place upon the throne of our hearts. All to follow Jesus. He explains there is wonderful life on the other side. Are you able and willing? If the answer is no, have you considered what you are saying "Yes" to? Can you really afford that?

I love the song "God Help Me to Be" by Cloverton. Today it is my prayer for us. Verse 3 leads the listener to beg God for the help we need to count the costs and to be radically obedient to his call.

*God, help me to give  
Everything to You that I'm unable to give  
And make my life the life I've been created to live, oh God  
And God, help me to go  
And follow where You lead me so all nations will know  
The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of this world  
Oh God, my God  
Hallelujah*