



Counting the Cost of Discipleship

Luke 14:25-35

July 28 , 2019

We are going to spend time in the Word together, being in Luke Chapter 14. Please join me there.

As we prepare to dig into the Gospel of Luke once more, I want to remind you of this week's teaching theme for Vacation Bible School. The overall theme is *In the Wild*. The teaching focus and theme is *Encounters with Jesus*. Each day of the week through the Word there will be a different encounter with the Messiah.

Day 1: There is going to be an *Encounter in the Temple* between a twelve-year old Jesus and all the wise teachers in the capitol city of Jerusalem.

Day 2: Will be an *Encounter at the River* as Jesus approached John for baptism.

Day 3: Is going to be an *Encounter on the Water* as Jesus approached His disciples who were out in the middle of the Sea of Galilee in the midst of the storm, and Jesus walked out to them on the surface of the sea as though the water was as solid as concrete. When you are God in a human body, the Creator of all things visiting your creation, you can do things like that.

Day 4: Is going to be an *Encounter at the Tomb* between Christ and Mary Magdalene.

Day 5: Will be an *Encounter on the Road*. Once again, the Risen Christ with two of His disciples who did not recognize Him as being risen from the grave and He taught them all about what the Scripture said about the coming of the Messiah throughout the pages of the Old Testament.

It will be an exciting week. It will be a Christ-centered week ahead. We are looking forward to these encounters of Jesus, *but I want to let you know that there is an encounter with Jesus that is to occur right here* and this very morning during this worship service.

Jesus wants to speak into your life through the text of Sacred Scripture. There is an encounter with Jesus before us this morning. This is an encounter that some people would just as soon avoid, even a great many church people, because in this text, Jesus is going to encourage you to count the cost of walking with Him in this world.

As we see the strength of what comes to us in this portion of Scripture, Jesus wants all of His would-be disciples to know that walking with Him in a world that is fallen in sin is not going to be a cakewalk.

The blessings are immeasurable. Read Ephesians 1, *We have been blessed in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms*. We are eternally blessed in the Kingdom of God. But it is a fallen world, and those who follow Christ in this world will take some shots, and there will be some sacrifices made. It is the nature of following Christ in discipleship, serving His Kingdom. And Jesus wants to get this across to anybody who would follow Him.

So let's look at this portion of Scripture. As we do, put on your seatbelts! Prepare yourself for what is here in this text because it is serious, but comes from the heart of the Lord of love to His people.

Luke Chapter 14 and Verses 25 through 35:

²⁵Now great crowds accompanied 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 bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. ²⁸For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? ²⁹Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, ³⁰saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ ³¹Or 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? ³²And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. ³³So 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? ³⁵It 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.”

Here we have an intense portion of Scripture. Would anybody agree with me that that is fairly intense? These are some of the most challenging statements of the Lord Jesus Christ recorded, preserved, and sent through history for you to hear and to consider, even here this very morning. Jesus wants to speak to us through what is said here in His Word.

First of all, I want for us to notice how this passage of Scripture starts off as we seek to understand what was going on here. That portion of Scripture opens up by saying, *Great crowds of people accompanied Him*. That's how it starts.

Massive numbers of people were walking with Jesus as He was on His marching path toward Jerusalem where he was going to die on the cross for our sin and be raised on the third day. As He made His way, large groups of people were flocking to see what He was going to do next, and hear what He was going to say next.

What we have here in this text with these crowds thronging to Jesus is what many, many pastors dream of. The more people the better. There are some pastors who will even create an

environment that will draw more and more and more people in, because they assume that a larger gathering of people is more of a sign of the success and the blessing of God.

However, Jesus is kind of different here. For Jesus, it would seem that the large crowds were a cause for concern because the greater the number of people present to check out the hype, the more potential that a great number of them were not hearing or were misunderstanding what He was saying.

So unlike many teachers and preachers today, Jesus was never willing to obscure the truth in order to keep the crowd and make things a little bit more comfortable. Instead, Jesus told the truth and He did not minimize it and put it into fine print on the back of the brochure.

This was a large group of people that were following Him, and He just laid out these terms for discipleship, for following Him. All at once, He turned around and He spoke to the great crowd of people that were following Him. He spoke out of nowhere. He sent forth His Word and His truth to them and He spoke to them about who can and cannot be His disciples.

Did you notice that three times in that paragraph, Jesus used the phrase, *cannot be my disciple*? It is there three times, in Verse 26, Verse 27, and in Verse 33. Each time it communicates a condition for following the Lord Jesus Christ. He was saying, *If you don't do this, you can't be my disciple. If you don't do this, you can't be my disciple, and if you don't do this, you can't be my disciple.* This is how it is laid out for us.

Understand, discipleship is one of the basic pictures in the Bible of what it is to be a Christian. A Christian is a disciple. A disciple is a Christian. We find very early in the Gospel of Luke, even in Jesus' infancy, that it was prophesized that He is coming to save His people from their sin. It needs to be understood that when a person comes to Jesus in such faith for forgiveness and cleansing, they enter into a new life with Christ.

They enter into His Messianic movement and they follow Him. That is what discipleship is all about. He is the Teacher; we are the learners. He is the Master; we are the pupils. He is the Leader; we are the followers. We follow Him and we walk in His ways.

It is not like we can do some quota of good works to somehow earn our way into Heaven. The Scripture is emphatic that this is not the case. However, there needs to be the understanding that coming to Christ leads to newness of life and things will change. You need to know that entering in.

If you are here and you are not a Christina and are just checking things out, you are going to hear from the mouth of the Messiah Himself what is involved in following the Lord Jesus Christ— what the Christian life looks like for those who come and say they need Jesus to be their Savior and Lord.

For those of us who are in Christ, it is going to be a time for us to make sure we are not drifting or veering off, that we are remaining attuned to the heart of the Messiah through what He says in the text.

We see that Jesus laid out three conditions, three terms, that when you are a disciple, you understand what we are entering into. Then Jesus gave three supporting illustrations. The illustration of the building project, the illustration of the battle plan, and the illustration of the flavorless salt. These illustrations are here to help us to count the cost.

The majority of our time is going to be focused in on those three statements that Jesus laid out—the cost of discipleship, the terms that He wants you to weigh up as one who would be a part of His Kingdom.

Let's look at what is here. Term Number One:

1. **You must hate everyone in your life (14:26)**

Is this written there? Jesus, He did not waste time. He got straight to the point. Look at Verses 25 and 26 again:

²⁵Now great crowds accompanied 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.

Now, what is that all about?! That is what I have been wrestling with all week. What is that all about, because when I see that word *hate*, I think of bitter, smoldering resentment. Do you want to know the picture that comes into my mind when I think about this language of hatred?

When I think of hatred, I think of Old Man Potter (pastor shows overhead of Potter) in my favorite movie, *It's a Wonderful Life*, and how this man just detested the Bailey family. I think he hated George Bailey more than he hated George's dad. Potter just had this seething resentment

I was thinking about the Galactic Emperor and Cruella de Vil—all these people whose hearts were filled with hate. Jesus was saying, *If you are going to follow me, you are going to have to hate mom and dad, children, and wife.* What is that supposed to mean.

In order to follow Jesus, does that mean there is going to have to be this attitude that rises up within us that whenever we see people in our lives, suddenly there is animosity and we can't stand that person. Can't stand the sight of their obnoxious face, and wish they would go somewhere else! That is what we think about when we think about hatred, isn't it?

I don't know about you, but that just does not sound to me like what I find described throughout the pages of Scripture of a Spirit-filled man or woman, the fruit of the Spirit being love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control. These are character qualities that are expressed in relation to other people, so what gives?

Do we just hate people's guts, or do we love them with a heavenly kind of love as followers of Christ? Takes contemplation. Reading commentaries about the Gospel of Luke, what I found is

that most of the people who comment on this passage, they say that this language of *hate* needs to be understood in a comparative force. In other words, our love for Jesus should be so great that such devotion and love for Him should be so, so profound that our love for our wives and our children and our parents, even the plans that we have for life will look like hate in comparison. Really?

I must be careful because a lot of Bible scholars that I really, really respect, that is how they would understand this. But really? So somebody looks in on a Christian home and sees the man of the house and he is so caught up in his devotional life and there is so much ecstasy in it that he is totally negligent of his wife and his children and people look in and say, *Man, he does not like his wife and children, does he? What's up with him telling his family to go away all the time.*

In Ephesians Chapter 5, the effect of the Spirit of Jesus in a man of God is that he is going to love his wife so much that he is going to serve her, and he is going to make her radiant through the effect that he has on her. So, I was scratching my head, wondering what this means.

I had my breakthrough when I was reading a book on Luke by a brother named James Edwards in the *Pillar Commentary Series*. What he pointed out gave me an ah-ha moment, and it all settled into place in my mind. Explaining how this language of hate was used among the Hebrew people, Edwards said:

“Hate was the word used of the one rejected between two important claims upon another person.”

In other words, hate was used in reference to the one decided against when a choice needed to be made between two different parties. It was a way of stating a decision. Like we see when it was up to God to determine and decide through which brother the Messianic line would flow, God said, *Jacob I have loved. Esau, I have hated.*

Jacob, I have chosen. Esau, I have not. It is the language of decisions several times in the Old Testament, not the language of deep seething anger and resentment in the way that we would often understand that language of hate.

Getting into the text of Luke Chapter 14 and understanding the historical context, the cultural context, a context that in some ways is repeated in different places in the world even today, we must understand that as Jesus was speaking to these crowds of people in Judea, following Christ—making a decision for Christ in that First Century Jewish world—would often come with catastrophic consequences for the family unit.

There would be some who would believe, most would not. There would be some who come to recognize Jesus is the Messiah. He is the hope of Israel. He is the hope of the nations. Others would say, *No, He is not. He is a blasphemer, and I forbid you to follow Him, to believe in Him.*

In such a time, Jesus was telling those people, *If you don't hate your father, your mother, your children, your wife, or whoever, if you don't decide for me against them, you can't be my*

disciple. Jesus was saying, You must choose Me above family ties when such a choice is required to be made.

That is how I understand this passage of Scripture. I think a good interpretive key of a parallel passage that helps us to understand what his language means of hating certain people is found in Luke 12 and Verses 51 through 53 where Jesus said:

⁵¹Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. ⁵²For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. ⁵³They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.

The affect of faith in Christ would often bring rifts in relationship. If you are going to come and walk with Jesus, you must own that and understand that that may be what you are called to as well.

This does not mean that you have to have this nasty, sneering attitude toward the people that you are close too. Quite the contrary, you should have respect, kindness, a spirit of humility, even as you persist in your rock-solid Spirit-given faith that Jesus is the Risen Lord, who must be followed whatever the ripple effects are in your relational world. That is what Jesus was saying. That is what I understand this to mean.

So if you have a boyfriend or a girlfriend that would hinder you from following Jesus Christ, break up with them. That is what Jesus means. If you have a family member who says that they will disown you if you walk in that way, like many people do in the Islamic and Jewish world, and in the secularized American world, you walk in that way.

You continue with prayer and say, *Lord, fill me with the fruit of Christian character that I might be a witness to them.* But you choose Jesus! This is what is necessary. If you are not willing to do that, you can't be a disciple of Jesus. You can't be a Christian. That is Jesus laying out this term.

I read this and, boy oh boy, as I was studying and praying over this passage, faces from this church family started coming into my mind and I was praying for you, because I know that you are living under the frown of people in your lives who do not approve your faith in Christ.

You have been prayed for that the Lord would continue to give you strength, even to bear the fruit of the Spirit in that context, to stand firm in the truth of Jesus Christ, to shine with His grace and with His glory, even while your heart is broken at the rifts that are created.

You came to my mind, but what is even more important than that, is that Jesus sees it. Jesus knows it. Jesus is aware of it. Jesus loves you and He will hold you up and He will see you through.

That is the cost of discipleship. We continue, and Jesus did not necessarily turn the volume down. What is next?

2. You must take up your cross and follow Christ (14:27)

We see that as we go to the next verse, Verse 27. Jesus continued and He said:

²⁷Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

This is now the second use of the word *cross* in the Gospel of Luke. What is so interesting to me is that neither the first use of this word nor the second use of this word is in reference to the Sacred Cross of redemption upon which the Lord of Glory died for our sin. Instead, Jesus was talking about the daily cross the follower of Jesus Christ must bear up as those who walk in His way.

In Luke 9:23, Jesus said:

²³And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

Then Luke 14:27 again,

²⁷Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

There in Chapter 9, we have a little bit more of the nature of what it is to bear up your cross and to follow Christ. Then in Chapter 14, Jesus really, really drove home the necessity of it, as I see it laid out for us there.

What we need to understand as we see this call repeatedly in the New Testament for the follower of Jesus to take up their cross and follow Him, we need to understand that this is a central symbolic metaphor for Christian living.

Even though a number of His disciples died by way of crucifixion, I do not understand Jesus to be saying that in order to be His followers, we literally must construct a sturdy seven or eight foot wooden structure that we will carry to the town square, to some public place, which we will be hoisted up upon, where we will publicly die by way of crucifixion, so we can enter into the Kingdom of God.

That is not what I understand this verse to be saying. This is a metaphor that Jesus used. The reason I know it is a metaphor is because it says in Chapter 9, that this is something that the Christian must do daily. My question for the one who says Luke 9:23 is literal: How in the world do you do it daily if it is literal?

You build a cross and get crucified on it. If you do that, you are dead, so how are you going to do that tomorrow and the next day and the next day if you are dead? Jesus used a metaphor,

though there are those who are called to martyrdom as followers of Jesus Christ. Let's understand that.

If we are going to follow, if we are going to be in His Messianic movement, if we are going to be among His people, we need to be those who understand that having entered by grace, the kind of character that He is calling us to live for, is described here in the imagery that is presented to us.

When it talks about taking up our cross and following Christ, I think there are three aspects of it, probably more. I think when we went through Luke Chapter 9, I laid out several more aspects. However, in that verse we can see three aspects of what it is to take up our cross and follow Jesus.

First, understand it is a life of self-denial. Second, it is a life of daily devotion. Yes, it is a life of sacrificial pain. There is suffering involved in the Christian life. It is a life of self-denial. Look at Luke 9:23 again:

In Luke 9:23, Jesus said:

23... "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself...

Those are important words for us to read and see and take into the ears and heart, especially in the day and age that we are living in, where there is so much self. We live in a world where people are always talking and writing and blogging about self-help, self-fulfillment, self-preservation, self-actualization, self-discovery.

We are so self-interested, and here the voice of the Messiah is calling forth from Scripture across the ages saying to us, get over yourself and be a servant and be a humble-hearted person that is living for the benefit of the people that are around you, and living for the glory of God, who paid such a price for our redemption.

We are a humble-hearted people. You deny yourself. I get this several nights a week sitting on the couch. I like that perfect spot on the couch where there is a perfect view of the TV. Give it up! But it is so hard for me to do. I am a sinner in need of sanctification, you see. That is just a small example.

How about the way you use a day off, using it to benefit somebody who is in need? These are different qualities that are distinctive of Christian character. That is what Jesus calls us to. There is self-denial. There is daily devotion, let him take up his cross daily and follow Me.

We live twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, four weeks a month or maybe five depending on the month, twelve months a year, all our lives. This is what Jesus calls us to every moment. It is a life of sacrificial pain.

There will be times when your commitment to Jesus clashes with the values and the commitments of the people around you, and it will at times cause great anxiety in your heart that

you just need to take to the Lord and say, Lord, *I need for You to just help me to walk in Your peace and in Your way.*

In some places, we have brothers and sisters in the Lord who are shedding their blood because they are standing firm in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to be praying and mindful of such brothers and sisters. There are people that suffer as Christians. That happens. Jesus is not putting that information on the fine print way on the back.

Here in the land that we are living in, the Lord may call His church to suffer more than we have in these past decades and centuries. We need to pray that the Lord will give us substance to do that because our flesh will just shrink back. We need to pray that the Lord will fill us with the ability to suffer for Him.

There is one more term that Jesus laid out here for us. The first two: You must hate everyone in your life as we have understood this concept of hatred back in Hebrew time. You must take up your cross and third:

3. You must renounce all you have (14:33)

That is here in this text as well. Do you see it in Verse 33, where Jesus said:

³³So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

Jesus laid it out right here. Instead of looking at all the possessions and the positions and things that we have in life and holding onto them with a vice-grip as though they were ours to keep no matter what, we say, *Lord, everything is in Your hands. I open up my hands and I put in all in Your hands. Do what You will with who I am, all that I am, and with all that I have. Do what you will.*

Notice the word, *therefore*. It says in Verse 33:

³³So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

This the only one of these three terms that uses that word *therefore* to start the sentence. That word *therefore* connects it to the immediately preceding illustration. And the illustration that Jesus used in the verses preceding this was an illustration of what I would call *The Reasonable King Going to War*.

The picture presented is that there was a battle coming and the one king realized that he had 10,000 warriors. The other king had 20,000 warriors and this man, he was going in what seemed a reasonable direction, saying, *I am undermanned, and I am overpowered. Therefore, I will approach this other king asking for the terms of peace.*

Typically what would happen is that one authority would come under the rule of the other authority. This is what was happening here. As I read this, I was thinking about the fact that apart from Christ the human race is at enmity with God.

In our sin, we don't worship Him. We don't have gratitude toward Him the way that we should. We don't walk according to His Law the way that we should. We deem ourselves authorities when He is the true Authority, the One who created and sustains this universe that we live in.

But the picture here is one of sobriety. The one who is overpowered and sees judgment about to fall, says, *Okay, I am overpowered. How do I come to a place of peace?* And the Biblical story is that we are the bad king, not the good king, but the bad king.

We are the ones that have been defying the good King. But we can send forth to Him asking for the peace. What we find through the pages of Scripture is that we must confess two things. We must confess our sin, that we are in fact those who have desires that are astray and out of those desires, we break Divine Law. We sin.

We must confess our sin. According to I John Chapter 1 and then according to Romans Chapter 10, we must confess that He is Lord and that we are not. This statement here from Jesus in this language and in the illustration of *The Reasonable King*, is us understanding that in coming to faith in Christ and being a follower of Him, we come under the Lordship of the Living God.

He is charge. We are not. We come to recognize that all the things that we have in this world, they have come to us by His grace. He is the Giver of all and in gratitude, we say, *Lord, it is not mine to cling on to and to use as I will. All that I have, it is for You to use as You will. If anybody will not renounce all that he has, he can't be My disciple because you are stiffening your neck against the Lord authority over your life.*

He is the rightful authority. He is God. He created this world that you live in. He created the resources that you consume. You and I, we all sin against Him, but we can go to Him in peace when we come and understand that He is God and we are not. That is what I understand this to mean.

It does that mean that God is going to drain your bank account, that He is going to take away all your furnishings, and that He is going to empty your refrigerator. Remember, He is a good Father.

We must come to understand that He is the Master over it all, and we can't have stingy hands, saying, *This compartment of my life is not for You, Lord. I am going to do what I want to do.* Rather, we need to say, *No, Lord, it is all Yours. You are the Lord and I get to walk with Your in Your Kingdom, and that is the best place I can possible be.*

With this, the Lord gives these three terms of discipleship. Then there are the three supporting illustrations. There is the illustration of *The Tower and the Vineyard* where you are going to do a building project—Count the cost.

There is the illustration of *The Reasonable King*—be submissive to the Lord and seek His terms of peace. Then Jesus concluded with the illustration of *The Flavorless Salt*. That is where we will finish

Let's just appreciate the first three words in Verse 34—Salt is good! Now can I get an amen to that? Salt is good. Salt cures and preserves meat and it flavors dinner wonderfully, and breakfast too! Salt is good. In fact, salt is so good that I cannot understand why more and more people are not named after salt! This world should be filled with Saltzmann! Salt is good, Jesus said.

Salt is good, but look what is said as we continue. Verse 34:

³⁴“Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? ³⁵It 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.”

How does salt cease to have the qualities of salt? There is a good question for you. How does sodium chloride stop tasting like sodium chloride?

Here is what a little geographic study of the land of Palestine will reveal. There were in Palestine deposits of impure salt. These deposits were comprised of a mixture of such elements that it was possible, indeed, it was actual that the sodium chloride would be leached out of the larger impure mass of material. Thus, it left this residue that was useful for nothing. It was not good for fertilizing. It was not good for the manure pile. It was only to be left and thrown away.

I think the point that Jesus was making here is that if there are so many different priorities in our lives, the number one priority is going to lose its flavor. If we try to have all these different things at the apex and on the throne of life, it is going to make it so that which should be there is diluted. The salt loses its saltiness.

Jesus wants salty Christians. Jesus wants us to be those who have a distinct flavor. He wants us to bring the flavor of Heaven onto earth, during this short life spans that we have in view of eternity to come.

If we have all these competing priorities that are number one, we are not going to be salty. We are going to lack flavor. Jesus needs to be number one. He is the Lord! He is the King of kings. He is the Risen Christ. He is the Great Shepherd of the flock. He is the One made everything. All the things in this world that blow your mind and make your heart happy, Jesus, He is the One who created it all.

It is amazing how we can become idolaters so easily, because we focus on the created things rather than the One who created and presides over it all. We need to be those who have Christ on the throne because this Creator also entered into this world robed in human flesh. God became a man and He paid the price for our sin. That's good news! And Jesus is the One who is to be the Lord of our lives.

So we have these terms, this cost of discipleship. That was the concluding text, but now here is my concluding thought. I was thinking about this, looking at these three terms and is it at times like this that my talk is bigger than my walk. I am up here preaching big principles and all the while my knees are trembling because who am I?

We must remember the children of Israel at the foot of Sinai. God the Father laid out the Ten Commandments, the terms of the Old Covenant with Israel. The people of Israel said that they would do as God had said, and follow all of His ways, and keep His Law.

How long did it take before they were creating graven images? And in retrospect, where it is always easier to see things, the people should have seen immediately that they were flawed, and all messed up. Their desires were all tweaked and array. They should have said, *Lord, we recognize that Your Law is good, but how can we keep it when we have desires that are sinful? We need mercy.*

I look at this, and understand that Jesus has to be the clear number one. My heart says yes to that, but there are times when I so often want to put other things first. Jesus said, *You must take up your cross and you must be willing to endure the hardship that comes serving Me.*

I am so often tempted and sometimes I succumb to the temptation to take the easy way out and to shrink back. I have done that. Have you done that? Am I the only one who has done that? Renounce all that I have? There are times when I am lusting after certain material objects that would look nice in the driveway!

So I read this, and I say, *Lord, my heart says yes to that, but there is still this lingering sin in me that would lead me astray. I first and foremost need Your grace. I'm a fallen sinner. I need You not only to wash my sin and rebellion away, but I need You to change my heart and my desires because if You don't, this is never going to be carried out in my life.*

We need to come before the Lord in humility, saying, *I am a person greatly in need of a Savior. Give me the will. Give me the desire. Spark a flame in me that is going to be energetic and robust and distinct. And, Lord, You do this in me. Wash my sin away. Recreate me so that I walk in newness of life that glorifies your great Name, and brings great blessing to the people around me.*

It is about God's work in us. You can't muster up the ability to do any of this. It is about God doing this work in you by His grace, by the work of Jesus who came and lived a perfect life in your stead and who died on the cross to take away your sin.

Then by the presence of His Spirit, He will start to transform you from the inside out. It is the work of God in our lives. So let's go before Him humbly saying, *Lord, we say yes, and You carry these things out in our lives.*

Let's close in a word of prayer.