

Costs Of Discipleship

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Date: 04 September 2022

Preacher: Pastor Cathy Hall Stengel

[0 : 0 0] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Good morning.

Good morning. Good morning. Good morning. Good morning. It is good to see you on this beautiful day. Why is it a beautiful day? Because we're alive. Thank you, God, that we are alive and we are here to worship God and to be with one another and so let me first be reminded and remind all of us that we are here to worship.

[3 : 0 9] So the love and the presence of Christ be with you. Thanks be to God. Now what does it mean when the pastor has clipboards?

It's fish fry. And so the dates are September 30th, October 7th, and October 14th.

And so I'm going to give these a pass around and people can see what they want to sign up for. And encourage you to be about that. It's always a fun time.

And sometimes people might be like, wait, did she say fun? It's work. Sometimes it's fun work when people are kind of being a little rowdy while they're doing the work.

Or seen some rabble rousers in the pie room. So there are many announcements in the bulletin this morning.

[4 : 1 1] And I want to make note of the flowers that are up here. Those are from Richard Long's memorial service that was yesterday morning. So we remember Karen Long as she figures out this next chapter of life.

We also wanted to let you know if you hadn't seen that Willie Lopez, his sister had died recently and his mother died just the other day.

And the calling hours will be on Tuesday at Lang Funeral Home in Ockport. And the service will be on Thursday at the funeral home. So I invite you to be in prayer for Willie and his family.

Any other announcements that feel pressing this morning? Some of you might have noticed on social media that Mary Bobsine retired as our treasurer, but she didn't retire from the church.

Just saying. So we did a little celebration for her because that's what she asked for. But maybe sometime when it's time, some Jan Inwards cake.

[5 : 2 7] She missed that. She said, oh. See, I've just done more than she wanted. So, and we are grateful to have hired a new treasurer, Julie Cook.

Her name is Julie Cook. And we're celebrating her becoming a part of our office and church life together. And hope you'll get a chance to meet her along the way.

But we're really excited. All right. Well, enough of me talking. I say let's sing. What do you think? Let's sing? Let's sing. I'm in the red, Adrienne.

Am I going to make it? OK. Good morning, everyone. We'll do a battery change afterward. When we open our hearts, we have a beautiful Savior that will come into our lives and use our lives for his glory.

So I'm going to invite you to stand this morning as we start with beautiful Savior and take my life and let it be. All my days I will sing this song of gladness.

[7 : 18] Give my praise to the fountain of delight. For in my heartlessness you heard my cry.

And waves of mercy poured out of my life. I will trust in the cross of my Redeemer.

I will sing of the blood that never fails. Our sins forgiven in our conscience.

Our sins forgiven in our hearts. Our sins forgiven in our hearts. Beautiful Savior.

Wonderful counselor. Rose in majesty. Lord of history. You're the way, the truth, the right.

[8 : 33] God of the morning. The risen holy death. You're the risen one.

Heaven's champion. And you reign. You reign over all. I long to be where the praise is never ending.

You reign over all. You reign over all.

one lord of how You're the risen one, heaven's champion And you reign, you reign over all
Take my life and let it be

Consecrated, Lord To thee Take my moments and my days Let them flow in ceaseless
grace Let them flow in ceaseless grace Take my hands and let them move At the impulse
of thy love Take my heed and let them be Swift and beautiful for thee Swift and beautiful
for thee Take my voice and let me sing

[11 : 51] Always only for my King Take my lips and let them be Filled with messages from thee
Filled with messages from thee Take my will and make it thine It shall be no longer mine
Take my heart, it is thine own It shall be thy royal throne It shall be thy royal throne You
may be seated I want to say good morning to those who are watching online

And again, good morning to all of you Yesterday at the five o'clock service Bud, the
accompanist for the operatory Played the song, hymn, Here I Am Which, you know, I will
forever know is number 593 in our hymnals Because we sang it, sang it, sang it And I
realized how I hadn't sung it for a long time And so maybe we will sometime soon But I
was captured by what the song calls for Here I am, here you are May we all be here in the
presence of God And the movement of the Holy Spirit Because this Labor Day weekend
When we celebrate a day When the government got involved and said There needs to be
a day off I think God said it first There needs to be a Sabbath day

But us, being here Being with God I pray that our spirits will open To God's word To God's
music And to God's people Let us pray Oh Lord, here we are You have brought us
Willingly or dragging our feet You have brought us From the chaos of our minds From the
warmth and comfort of our homes From things that we might be doing otherwise You have
brought us here Some have come with running and willing feet Saying, I need you, oh
Lord May we be filled May we be spoken to May we be challenged And Lord, may we be
loved In Jesus' name, amen For the past couple weeks

We've heard from people in the congregation About why we need to give to the church
Not only our money But our time And our talents And our blessings So I invite you today
To consider Your blessings Your talents Your gifts And your offerings And how we as a
church Make a difference in the world Not only in this congregation But in the city of
Buffalo And North Tonawanda And what your gifts do Please be in prayerful consideration
God bless Min■■■ Raghu May we be■■■■■

Thank you.

[16 : 47] We live for you. Please feel free to sing with us. You know this one. Jesus, the name
above every other name.

Jesus, the only one who could ever save. Worthy of every breath we could ever be.

We live for you. We live for you. Holy, there is no one like you.

There is none beside you. Open up my eyes in wonder. Show me who you are and fill me with your heart and lead me.

Bring your love to those around me. Worthy of every song we could ever sing.

[18 : 05] Worthy of all the praise we could ever bring. Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe
We live for you Jesus, the name above every other name Jesus, the only one who could
ever save Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe We live for you We live for you
Holy, there is no one like you There is none beside you Open up my eyes in wonder

Show me who you are And fill me with your heart And lead me in your love to those
around me I will build my life upon your love It is of the foundation I will put my trust in you
alone And I will not be shaken I will build my life upon your love

It is of the foundation I will put my trust in you alone And I will not be shaken Holy, there is
no one like you There is none beside you Open up my eyes in wonder Show me who you
are And fill me with your heart And lead me in your love to those around me I will not be
shaken And lead me in your love to those around me

And lead me in your love to those around me I will not be shaken I will not be shaken I will
not be shaken Thank you God, our Redeemer, our Sustainer, we thank you for the gifts
that you give us each and every day.

We thank you that you allow us to be your hands and feet in the world. Take our gifts and
help us use them to further your kingdom. In your name we pray. Amen.

[22 : 29] May we be seated. So we come to a time of prayers and concerns, joys.

Does anybody have any joys? Concerns they would like to bring up this week? We
certainly want to remember the students that started college last week and our younger
students who will be starting school this week and their teachers, the administrators, the
staffs.

Bob made sure last night that we included the bus drivers. So all of them, may we grant
them patience this year. Please pray with me. Dear God, we thank you for the ability to be
here together, for the time to worship as a family in your name.

We ask that you watch over our children, those who returned to school last week and
those who are returning this week. Grant their parents and their teachers and the staff
patience.

Help them show love to our children. God, we ask that you may be here today. God, we
ask that you may not be here. God, we also want to lift up those who have lost loved ones
this week and who are still saddened.

[24 : 02] Help them to know that you are with them, that you'll carry them when things get too
tough, that you're always here walking besides us.

God, we lift up our community, our nation, our world. Help our leaders know what to do.
Help us to know what to do.

May we go to you with each decision that needs to be made in our life. In your name we
pray. Amen. Good morning.

Hope everyone's enjoying their Labor Day weekend. It was a nice, beautiful day
yesterday, a little cloudy today. Let's hope it clears up later and sunny tomorrow. Today's
reading is Luke 14, 25 through 33.

Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them, he said, If anyone comes to
me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes,
even their own life, such a person cannot be my disciple.

[25 : 24] And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?

For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, saying, This person began to build and wasn't able to finish. Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king.

Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able, with 10,000 men, to oppose the one coming against him with 20,000? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace.

In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples. This is the word of God. Thanks be to God. Let's pray.

Lord, may we feel our hearts open and our minds understand.

[26 : 59] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. When we were raising our children, there were words they weren't allowed to say.

And so if you think about the scripture reading that we heard, what word might our children not have been allowed to say?

Hate. So why? Why does it have to be this way? Why does this passage have to be here? And why does Jesus tell us to hate?

And even more, why does Jesus tell us that we should hate the very people we love the most? Spouses and children.

And there is no question in my mind that I have wrestled to make this nicer. And one of those ways was to look at the message, which is an interpretation.

[28 : 08] It's not a translation. Where we read, Eugene Peterson writes about this, one day when large groups of people were walking along with him. Jesus turned and told them, anyone who comes to me but refuses to let go of father, mother, spouse, children, brothers, sisters, yes, even one's own self can't be my disciple.

Anyone who won't shoulder his own cross and follow behind me can't be my disciple. And at the end, the way this one, this interpretation reads, simply put, if you're not willing to take what is dearest to you, whether plans or people, and kiss it goodbye, you can't be my disciple.

There are so many ways that that makes no sense to me. Because the people that God gave me in my life are people that I want to hold on to.

I don't want to let go of them. I don't want to do that. So let's look at a little bit about, well, why would Jesus say this? If we look at Matthew 5, verse 30, Jesus talks about that if a part of our body causes us to sin, we should cut it off.

You know, whether you've got your hand in the cookie jar, wait, does that count, cookie jar? Or in the till, taking money that's not yours, then you're supposed to cut it off.

[29 : 48] But does Jesus mean that we should really cut our hand off? There have been people and generations throughout the ages that took that very literally.

And people's hands were cut off, and people's tongues were taken out, and all kinds of terrible, awful things. And the Bible was used as the defense for why that was an appropriate punishment.

But I'd like us to rewind. Sometimes we come to a crossroads in our lives.

Think about this man, Ron, who came to this place where he was diagnosed with ALS, and if you've ever been with or near anyone who has ALS or has had ALS, there's nothing that can be done other than maybe to prolong one's life.

What does a person do when they reach a point where a diagnosis or some kind of decision says that this is a crucible moment, a turning point, that this is the time that Jesus is bringing the people, this large group of people, he's trying to get their attention.

[31 : 14] He's trying to get them to understand that believing in him is not the same as subscribing to Reader's Digest or signing up for a season ticket at Chase or something like that.

He's trying to get them to understand this is a big deal. And I suspect the way, the tone of his voice when he shared these words was big and strong.

And, you know, when I, it's hard for me to even say hate. You know, when you say that big and loud, it feels harsh.

So what was he trying to do? He was trying to get people to understand that if you believe in Jesus, if it was Jesus, if you believe in me, this is your life.

This is the life of a disciple. Does that mean that it's a life filled with hate as this scripture might kind of suggest? No.

[32 : 24] No. That is not. Nor would Jesus ever suggest that we live a life that is full of hate. But what Jesus would say, believe.

Believe first. Believe first. Be a person of faith first. It changes pretty much everything.

It changes our relationships with our spouses and our children and our brothers and our sisters and even with ourselves. And you're like, really?

No, really. Because this world and our families and our friends and our workplaces are full of things that want to break us up and tear us down.

And a lot of times, it's the minutia. It's the things, the nagging, you know, the nagging noise that someone else in the office makes. The person who shows up in your classroom day after day after day just to remind you of something.

[33 : 37] The students. They might have some annoying habits. Maybe. Or their parents. But in our workplaces, there are people that can sort of grind us down with the things that in the big picture seem so unimportant.

But they become so important. They take over. So, this is one of those places where we think of it as a place, a turning point.

A woman who was diagnosed with cancer and she was only given a few months and one of her good friends reflected on what she did with those three months and the decision she made.

And I've seen this in other places. She decided stuff didn't matter. They were going to buy a retirement home. No.

No. We're not going to buy a retirement home. We're not going to add more to our list. She decided that she was going to be honest with the people she loved about what was going on with her and sometimes even the people that she didn't know as well.

[35 : 02] Because she felt for the first time in her life as though she had no choice but to say here I am. I'm a wounded person walking through this life with a limited lifespan.

Now hopefully none of us have had a diagnosis like that shared with us about us. but isn't that all of our lives that we walk in woundedness sometimes it's the ordinary insult of the day sometimes it's a critical loss sometimes it's grieving and we all are here for a limited time.

Some of us I hope if life goes as it should have way more years than some of the others of us. We still none of us have forever.

So how do we choose to live our life? That's the question. That's the question. How do we choose to live our lives?

Do we choose not necessarily in our language to hate brothers and sisters but to love God and that that be at the core of who we are?

[36 : 24] And then we don't hate our brothers and sisters we don't hate our children or our spouses or ourselves we love them because Jesus first loved us.

That's also love God love your neighbor love yourself. Love God love your neighbor love yourself. if we all lived our lives in that way can you imagine what rest there would be?

Can you imagine and I thought this was a wonderful thing to consider this Labor Day weekend where the day off was created to give people rest.

that if we could stop trying to make decisions for God stop trying to control who other people are and who they should be and who they shouldn't be and what they should do and what they shouldn't do stop letting the voices that burble around in the crowd define us or make us believe that everyone believes that.

You know for those of us who live sort of in the public eye there's nothing like a comment about oh did you see the did you see the pastor got her hair cut? Well yeah but what does that mean?

[38 : 00] Does that mean everybody doesn't like it? Does that mean everybody likes it? I could be I'm not but I could spend a lot of time thinking about that there are things that we hear that bubble around not we as pastors but we as each other and we wonder when children are little I think I learned this past couple of weeks at what age children begin to question their own value value based on what their peers say about them by kindergarten by kindergarten they're being affected by what other kids say about them maybe they're taller than all the kids maybe they're shorter maybe they're chubby cheeked maybe they don't run as fast they begin to hear those sometimes I think those are the kinds of words that Jesus is saying hate your brother your sister your family member and sometimes hate even yourself for the words that we use that divide and criticize condemn for the words that we hear that make us feel less than because this same

God who says these things about the things that make us sin the things that we should get rid of or that we can't be a disciple unless we say that we're ready we're willing to give it all up some of us giving it all up means something different than for other people but it is the same but it isn't meant to be a harsh beating down hate filled kind of a thing it's meant to be a decision that if I have a limited time to live I heard that the new average lifespan is like 76 it's frighteningly close to me anyway then what am I going to do if I'm 35 and I know that

I've lived through the first third I'm going to not go with the whole 76 thing I vote no I vote older because I got things to do people to love world to love I think about at any given point in our lives how do we bring ourselves to a place where we say alright this is where I am how am I going to live my life what's my future and we might what's going to do as Jesus describes in this particular scripture passage we might say I need to get back there so how many steps and how able am I to get those steps and what's it going to cost me and what direction and do I need engineers and consultants what God is calling us to do is say are you going or are you not going are you going to or are you not going to are you going to say

I believe or are you going to say well well well as long as you don't ask me to give up anything as long as you don't ask me to love people that I'm uncomfortable with or that's you know some of that stuff is the easy part the hard part is living our lives out loud as people of Jesus Christ and sometimes the world isn't kind because that's what we proclaim but do we proclaim it with our lips that is a good thing to admit to people that we are people of faith do we live the life of Jesus with the teachings of Jesus and let our lives be that example that you know if you're accused of being a Christian is there enough evidence to prove it is one of the challenges

I believe also along with this passage that says you can love your neighbor and your friends and your family but you have to first love God that's the same same God who says in Romans nothing shall separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus not evil not all the principalities but it comes with in faith nothing shall separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus in your faith I believe nothing will separate us from the love of God whether we believe or not it's just a matter of whether we actually say we believe I pray that we will not be people of hate but that we will be convinced that what Jesus was trying to get this large group of people to say is first and foremost

[43 : 50] I believe and then let me live the life that shows that I am following Jesus and love the person with leprosy and the person with no money and be amazed by the healings and the hope be excited by the people who say yes I believe be excited by those who bring their children or bring themselves for baptism be excited about the joy that is evident in the lives of those around us even if it's nonsense Mike Clifford Connie Clifford in the dish room at the fish fry as long as they got music going on back there they are dancing they believe may it be so with us let's pray Lord let us wake each day and go to bed each night saying that we choose you and we choose the life you teach us we choose love and to wake up each day and to go to bed each night looking in the mirror and saying you are a child of God beloved in all of your things that you don't like about yourself loved by God who made you in Jesus name we do pray and hope and want to believe amen the bread is ready the cup is filled the table is set let all who are hungry for the love of the Lord come and be fed let all who are thirsty for a new life come and share the cup let all who want to follow

Jesus come and join his feast the Lord be with you lift up your hearts let us give thanks to the Lord our God it is right and good and joyful thing always and everywhere to give thanks to you father almighty creator of heaven and earth you formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life when we turned away and our love failed your love remains steadfast you delivered us from captivity made covenant to be our sovereign God and spoke to us through your prophets and so with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn holy holy holy lord god of power and might heaven and earth are full of your glory hosanna in the highest blessed is he who comes in the name of the lord hosanna in the highest blessed are you and blessed is your son jesus christ your spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind to set at liberty those who are oppressed and to announce that the time had come when you would save your people he healed the sick fed the hungry and ate with sinners by the baptism of his suffering death and resurrection you gave birth to your church delivered us from slavery to sin and death and made with us a new covenant by water and the spirit when the lord jesus ascended he promised to be with us always in the power of your word and your holy spirit on the night in which he gave himself up for us he took the bread gave thanks to you broke the bread gave it to his disciples and said take and eat this is my body which is given for you do this in remembrance of me and when the supper was over he took the cup he gave thanks to you and said drink from this all of you this is my blood of the new covenant poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me and so in your in remembrance of these your mighty acts in jesus christ we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice in union with christ's offering for us we proclaim the mystery of faith christ is died christ is risen christ will come again pour out your holy spirit on us gathered here and on these gifts of bread and cup make them be for us the body and blood of christ that we may be for the world the body of christ redeemed by his blood by your spirit make us one with christ one with each other and one in ministry to all the world until christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly banquet through your son jesus christ with the holy spirit in your holy church all honor and glory is yours almighty father now and forever amen and now with the confidence of the children of god let us pray our father who art in heaven hallowed be your name thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven give us this day our daily bread forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for thine is kingdom and power and the glory forever amen amen if

filet to is me going Please join us up front.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[52 : 09] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. All to Jesus I surrender All to Him I freely give I will ever love and trust Him In His presence daily live I surrender all I surrender all All to Thee my blessed Savior I surrender all All to Jesus I surrender

[54 : 23] Humbly at His feet I bow Worldly pleasures all forsaken Take me Jesus take me now I surrender all I surrender all All to Thee my blessed Savior I surrender all All to Jesus I surrender Make me Savior Make me Savior Holy Thine Let me feel the Holy Spirit

Truly know that Thou art mine I surrender all I surrender all I surrender all All to Thee my blessed Savior I surrender all All to Jesus I surrender Lord I give myself to Thee Fill me with Thy love Let Thy blessing Let Thy blessing I surrender all

I surrender all I surrender all I surrender all All to Thee my blessed Savior All to Thee my blessed Savior I surrender all All to Thee my blessed Savior I surrender all All to Thee my blessed Savior Those places in our life That we're asked to surrender Are different for all of us And I remember growing up Believing in my head All the things that I learned You know my parents took me to church And through my health challenges I wandered into some different ideas Looking for healing

And they really challenged Everything that I had grown up with And I wrestled with those thoughts For a long time in my head In my mind And I remember I said to Turn around to Sarah And I said get your tissues ready With Matt West's song It was at a Matt West concert And the praise team At that time This is years ago Had been invited for Some classes And some training And Matt West was the concert singer At the end For people to come back and enjoy And I remember in that concert It was the first time That I really gave my whole heart And said I believe So the wrestling was over I fully believed And it was the first time And this will seem silly to you Because I know I'm a very expressive talker But I know I'm not always A very expressive singer And it was at that moment That I felt the spirit within me

Saying it's okay You can raise your hand You do believe So when spirit moves me I try not to resist that any longer And it doesn't do it for me all the time And maybe it doesn't do it for you all the time But I would pray That whatever that moment is Where you feel that slight resistance And the spirit's asking you to move That you'd be able to do it So we're going to end with Sorry I'm a leaker We're going to close with I give you my heart So I invite you to stand This is my desire To honor you

[59 : 36] Lord, with all my heart I worship you All I have to live in me I give you praise All that I enjoy Is in you Lord, I give you my heart I give you my soul I live for you Lord, every breath that I take Every moment I'm awake Lord, have your way in me This is my desire To honor you

Lord, I love you Lord, I should do All I have within me I give you praise All that I adore Is in you Lord, I give you my heart I give you my soul I live for you all Every breath that I take Every moment I'm awake Lord, I give you my heart I give you my soul I live for you all I live for you all Lord, every breath that I take Every moment I'm awake He changed from it

I live for you all I give you my heart I give you my soul I live for you Lord, every breath that I take Every moment I'm awake Lord, I give you my heart I give you my heart I give you my soul I live for you all I live for you all Lord, every breath that I take Every moment I'm awake Lord, I give you my heart I give you my soul Lord, have your way in me Lord, have your way in me Amen

As you go from this place Go with that same God Who wants to have his way in you To have his way in love and hope and purpose You are blessed We are all blessed We simply need to believe it So until you do Or if you already do Go in that peace And live in faith In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit Amen I give you my soul Hope you're forth Through people 103 More■ 100

Everywhere It's You are blessed Check out We have Take care Have your heart Shout out God Look That's I know, I know, I know.

[64 : 32] I know, I know.

I know, I know.

I know, I know.

I know, I know.