

Lessons for Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 4, 2022

Psalm 1 ~ *The Lord calls his people to walk the way of wisdom in righteousness.*

Deuteronomy 30:15-20 ~ *God's covenant promise was for life, but outside His promise is death.*

Philemon 1-21 ~ *Paul gave Philemon the privilege to receive Onesimus back, not as a slave, but a brother.*

Luke 14:25-35 ~ *Jesus' call to discipleship places an exclusive claim on the believer, increasing the cost.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: Choose Wisely

Moses explained to the Israelites that there were two ways before them: the way of life and the way of death. We face many consequences with the choices we make every day. When St. Paul offered advice to Philemon about his runaway slave, Onesimus, it was wise for Philemon to listen. Jesus warned that anyone who wants to follow him would be wise to consider the cost of discipleship.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: O Lord my God, open my heart to the preaching of your Word, so that I may recognize my limitations and, in true repentance, trust confidently in Jesus Christ, my Savior, and grow in grace and holiness. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: When we consider the cost of discipleship, dollars and cents don't begin to stack up against the radical commitment of our Savior to the task of our redemption! When our lives are claimed by His love, our hearts are opened up to embrace others generously for His Kingdom.

OFFERING PRAYER: Lord, make us know the burden of the cross
To count the treasures of this world as loss;
And press upon our hearts Your holy claim,
Announcing to the world Your precious name. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: When we live outside God's will, with a take it or leave it attitude toward God's promise, we end up being left out! If there is a conflict between loyalties, even the disciple's own life must be forfeit! When we consider the cost carefully we must also reckon the benefits of the covenant. Jesus was so committed to claiming us for His Kingdom that He risked His life. There is no discipleship without commitment and no life without God's blessing.

Questions to Consider: Why are the best jobs hardest to get? . . . best apples at the top of the tree?

- How difficult should it be to choose between the way of life and the way of death?
- What changed Onesimus from Philemon's slave to his brother?
- What does it cost to follow Jesus?
- Why did Jesus' commitment to claim you as his brother cost him so dearly?

Bonus on next page: Poem: Our Lord

OUR LORD

We look for kings in palaces
Sitting on golden thrones
With kindly courtiers standing round
Speaking in royal tones.

But one there is who was a king
hanging on wooden beams
With mocking scoffers standing there
Yelling insulting screams.

He walked the path of scorn and death
Earning an honor guard
Of holy angels singing praise
Honoring Christ our Lord.

- Gilbert A. Franke, 1979 ?