

## THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

Grant, merciful Lord, to Your faithful people wisdom and insight, that they may live according to Your will and serve You with sacrificial love. Pardon Your children, that they may be cleansed from their sin and serve You with a quiet mind. We pray through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

## THE GOSPEL LESSON Luke 14:25-33

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*(Jesus calls us to consider the cost of being His disciple.)*

25 Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: **26 "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters-- yes, even his own life-- he cannot be my disciple. 27 And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.**

28 "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? 29 For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, 30 saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'

31 "Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? 32 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.

33 In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.

INTRO - This last week there was a scandal in the sports world. A team which has been very good for a long time, the New England Patriots, was caught cheating. You see, according to the way the world works winning is important, often more important than how the game is played. In fact, a famous football coach once said, 'Winning isn't the most important thing, it's the only thing.' So the Patriots won while cheating. But they won, right? That is the way the world has always opposed God in it's thinking.

I. The ways of this world are opposed to the ways of God.

A. The reason for this is that the way the world thinks is not God's way, but Satan's way.

1. The world wants us to be selfish, full of lust, full of greed, full of pride.
2. God's ways, the way God created the world before we fell into sin, are ways of faith, love, peace, kindness, gentleness.

B. This is a hard fact, to admit that the ways of our world work against God in our lives, in this world.

1. We would like to think the world is good, we can just live and let live.

2. We would like to think that left to their own device, everyone will do good.
3. When we seek the treasures and the successes of this world, we are seeking something temporary and corrupted.
4. When people seek the treasures and successes of this world they miss God.

C. But, sometimes what people seek to do is keep the world, and fit God into their lives.

1. That's like the man who went to the doctor and The doctor told the man, 'you've got to lose weight.' So, he started watching what he ate, for one meal a day, at least. For lunch he would eat mainly vegetables, cut back on fat and sugar. But, the rest of the day, for meals and in between meals, he ate what he felt like. Some how he couldn't lose weight. You see, he tried to fit a healthy meal into an otherwise unhealthy life style. It didn't work.
2. We can't fit God into a worldly life. The world is opposed to God's ways of giving, and peace, and love.

II. Therefore, Jesus says, **26 "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters-- yes, even his own life-- he cannot be my disciple. 27 And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.**

A. Let me say first that This is one of Jesus' most misunderstood sayings. These are hard words.

1. God wants us to love our family.
2. We are told to honor and love parents and children.
3. But, when anything comes first, before God, it can become an idol.

B. Jesus is calling us to the difficult task of putting Him first.

1. We are to **love God with all our heart Soul and mind. THEN, we love our neighbor as ourselves.**
2. But who we really are, first, is children of our heavenly Father, not children of the world.

C. It is important that we know when Jesus said this.

1. Jesus the creator of the world, died for the world.
2. He gave His life for us, so we may be forgiven, so we can be freed of our slavery to the lost ways of this world.
3. **1 John 4:10 says, 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.**
4. God loves us and saves us in Jesus. That is the basis of his call to reject the world.

III. A number of years ago I visited a member in the hospital who had undergone cancer surgery. The doctor had good news. He had removed all the cancer, and there was no need for further treatment. Getting rid of the illness changed that person's whole outlook on life.

A. When we live for Jesus, He changes us.

1. His forgiveness overcomes our past.
2. His love fills our heart.
3. We are not perfect in this world, but by God's spirit we keep working to love

God and to love our neighbors.

B. When we live for Jesus, our life changes in another way, and this is the joy of this hard saying of Jesus.

1. But, when we love Jesus first, we do a better job of loving family.
2. The same is true with the rest of our lives. We don't run away from the world, we bring Jesus to it.
  - A. We don't run from relationships and love, but we seek to serve God with all our lives, and we do a better job of loving.
  - B. We don't run from financial management, but we seek to serve God with all our resources, and that helps us be better financial managers.
  - C. We don't run from the work of this world, but we seek to serve God, and we do a better job of work.

C. The world is opposed to Jesus, so we can't just fit him into our lives in this world.

1. So, we reject the world by living for the one who lived and died for us, the one who changes our life in the midst of a dying world.
2. But, when we live for Jesus, we can make every part of our world better, with Jesus.

CONCLUSION - Last year the Patriots did not win the Super Bowl, the Colts did. Their coach is a man of faith, and gentleness. It surprised many that he could win. When God's people take up the cross of living for the one who died for them, they do a better job at everything.