

DISCIPLESHIP PARABLES...

Our 3rd class of parables, DISCIPLESHIP PARABLES, were often prompted by the Disciples' mistakes, or Jesus trying to challenge over-zealous crowds. In these, Jesus raises the bar of what it means to follow him.

COUNTING THE COSTS...making his way to Jerusalem, Jesus notices crowds growing larger, most of whom had mistaken views of what his mission was. It leads him to tell the TWIN PARABLES: the TOWER and the RASH KING. With his mission gaining momentum like FREIGHT TRAIN, he flips on the EMERGENCY BRAKE. He starts talking tough, using language so graphic that it was sure to thin the ranks.

Whoever comes to me and does not hate his family can't be my Disciple. Whoever is not prepared to carry his/her Cross and follow me can't be my Disciple

Who tells people to carry crosses or disown families? He warns the excited crowd to COUNT THE COSTS ASSOCIATED in serving him. What costs did he expect from them? What costs does he want us to count? The last thing he needed was FAIR-WEATHER FRIENDS who followed him only when it was convenient, who made IMPULSIVE DECISIONS to join his team, but were unreliable in the long run. As Jesus thinned the ranks, he scared off overly eager recruits.

PARABLE OF TIMID SERVANTS...by now we know: a parable about servants is a story about us. The Master isn't just any master/boss but God. He entrusts 3 servants with talents to invest. Talents were an amount of money. This being a parable, we also know that talents represent other things. They are whatever is entrusted to us in this world:

Our gifts/wisdom/energy, our money/love/selves, what we have who we are! We are to invest who we are, what we have for him

Three servants hear the same instructions but only two hear it as an invitation. They accept the challenge and take risks. The timid servant buries his talent, in order to keep it safe, thinking that his Master is as PRUDENT as he is. When the Owner returns, there is an accounting:

What have they done with what he gave them?

This is a story about life, not financial returns. Recall who the Master is: the God who suffered on the Cross and gave the priceless treasure of his son's life. The God Jesus revealed was anything but PRUDENT. The stakes are too high for Disciples to play it safe. Our ACTING/FAILING TO ACT has consequences. What will we do? There are choices to make and there are resources/talents to invest.