

Following Jesus Will Cost You Everything

By System Import | Sermon | March 13, 2026

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There is a counterfeit gospel being preached in the modern world today, and it is quietly destroying millions of souls. We have been sold a version of Christianity that looks more like a self-improvement program than a bloody cross. We are told that Jesus is a gentleman life coach who just wants to add a little peace to our chaotic schedules, bless our bank accounts, and help us achieve our personal dreams. Because of this diluted message, we approach God with a consumer mindset. We want the crown without the cross. We want the Savior without the Lordship. But when the storms of life hit, this fragile, plastic religion crumbles, leaving us in a state of profound, suffocating loneliness. We retreat into the silent struggles within our own minds, building fortresses of emotional distance to protect our egos, wondering why this "faith" we signed up for feels so incredibly empty. The truth is, a religion that costs you nothing is worth exactly nothing.

Two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ did not walk the dusty roads of Galilee handing out invitations to a comfortable life. He did not ask for a weekend commitment or a ten percent tip. He looked at the crowds who were following Him for the miracles, the free bread, and the emotional high, and He turned to them with a mandate that completely shatters the human ego: "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." He told them to count the cost. He told them to pick up an instrument of execution. Following Jesus is not an addition to your life; it is the absolute annihilation of your old life. And before we dive in, if this message is already stirring something in you, hit the subscribe button and stay connected to God's Word daily, because we believe that truth sets us free. Today, we are going to look at the terrifying, beautiful reality of the cross. We are going to explore seven specific things that following Jesus will cost you, and why laying it all down is the only way to truly live.

Number 1: The Death of Your Autonomy (Stepping Off the Throne)

The very first thing following Jesus will cost you is your right to run your own life. From the moment we are born, the ultimate goal of the human flesh is autonomy. We want to be the directors of our own destiny, the captains of our own souls, and the kings of our own little empires. We spend our lives clawing for control, believing that if we can just manage our circumstances perfectly, we will finally be safe.

But Jesus demands absolute surrender. When you call Him "Lord," you are not just giving Him a title of respect; you are giving Him the deed to your existence. It means you no longer have the right to choose your own path based solely on what feels good, what makes you the most money, or what is easiest. You must yield your career, your relationships, your body, and your future to His sovereign will. This cost is agonizing to the ego because it requires the death of control. But the

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beautiful paradox is that true freedom is only found when you step off the throne and let the true King reign.

Number 2: The Severing of Toxic Ties (The Cost of Relationships)

Jesus said a deeply unsettling thing in Matthew 10: "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword." He went on to explain that His truth would divide households. When you truly surrender your life to Christ, your desires, your morals, and your worldview fundamentally shift. This means you will inevitably clash with the world around you.

Following Jesus will cost you relationships. There will be friends who no longer want to be around you because your light exposes their darkness. There will be family members who misunderstand your convictions and call you radical or judgmental. You may have to establish painful emotional distance from toxic dynamics that are trying to pull you back into your old sin. The silent struggle of walking away from people you love because they are leading you away from God is one of the heaviest crosses to bear. But Jesus promised that anyone who leaves father, mother, or friends for His sake will receive a hundredfold in the Kingdom.

Number 3: The Crucifixion of Your Reputation (Losing the Applause)

We live in a culture that worships public approval. We curate our social media profiles, monitor our image, and carefully construct our personas to ensure that people like us. We build our self-worth on the shifting sands of human applause. But following a Savior who was mocked, spat upon, and crucified as a criminal means you must be willing to lose your reputation.

If you live out the authentic, unfiltered Gospel, the world will eventually turn on you. They will call you intolerant, foolish, and archaic. Jesus warned us, "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you." You must let go of your desperate need to be understood and validated by a culture that is actively rebelling against God. When you stop worshiping your own image, you are finally free from the exhausting prison of people-pleasing.

Number 4: The Surrender of Your Earthly Security (The Illusion of the Fortress)

Look at the story of the Rich Young Ruler. He wanted eternal life, but he wanted to keep his earthly kingdom too. Jesus pinpointed his exact idol and told him to sell everything, give it to the poor, and follow Him. The man walked away grieving because he possessed great wealth—or rather, his wealth possessed him.

Following Jesus will cost you your reliance on earthly security. Whether it is your bank account,

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your career trajectory, or your retirement plan, you must hold it all with an open hand. You have to be willing to walk away from a lucrative opportunity if it compromises your integrity. You have to be willing to give generously even when it hurts. God may not ask you to sell everything, but He demands the willingness to do so. If your money is your fortress, it will eventually become your tomb.

Number 5: The End of Your Private Sins (Stepping Into the Light)

Every human being has a hidden room in the architecture of their soul. It is the place where we keep our secret sins, our private addictions, and our hidden resentments. We manage our public behavior flawlessly while maintaining these silent struggles in the dark. We want Jesus to clean the living room of our lives while we keep the door to the basement firmly locked.

But the Light of the World does not co-habitate with darkness. Following Jesus will cost you your favorite sins. It will cost you the lust you entertain in secret. It will cost you the bitter grudge you use to protect yourself. It requires the excruciating vulnerability of dragging your darkness into the light through confession and repentance. If this message inspires you, don't forget to subscribe for more Bible insights every week. The cost of purity is high, but the reward is a clean conscience and unbroken communion with the Father.

Number 6: The Loss of Your Comfort Zone (The Call to Deep Waters)

Human nature craves safety. We want a predictable life with minimal friction, a nice house, and a retirement plan. But God is not interested in your comfort; He is interested in your character. When you follow Jesus, He will consistently call you out of the boat and into the crashing waves of the unknown.

He will ask you to do things that terrify you. He will ask you to forgive the unforgivable. He will ask you to speak truth in rooms where it is unpopular. He will call you into ministries, relationships, and seasons of life where you feel completely unqualified and out of control. Following Jesus means embracing the discomfort of constant spiritual stretching. It means leaving the shallow end of polite religion and diving into the terrifying, exhilarating depths of radical faith.

Number 7: The Beautiful Paradox (Gaining Everything)

When you look at this list—losing your autonomy, your relationships, your reputation, your security, your secrets, and your comfort—it sounds like absolute foolishness to the world. Why would anyone willingly pay such a devastating price? Why would anyone willingly walk to their own execution?

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Because of the beautiful paradox of the Kingdom: Whatever you lose for the sake of Christ, you gain back in eternal glory. Jim Elliot, the missionary who gave his life to reach the unreached, wrote, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." When you let go of your fragile, temporary life, you inherit eternal, unshakeable life. You trade the exhausting burden of being your own god for the infinite joy of being a child of the True God.

Conclusion

We have looked at the terrifying reality of the cross. We have seen that following Jesus will cost you your throne, your toxic ties, your reputation, your earthly security, your secret sins, and your comfort zone. It is a total, all-consuming surrender.

Stop trying to negotiate with God. Stop trying to fit Jesus into the margins of your already packed life. The silent struggles, the emotional distance, and the deep loneliness you feel are often the direct result of holding onto a life you were meant to lose. Today is the day to drop it all.

Count the cost, look at the cross, and take the step. When you finally lay everything down, you will discover that the hands you thought were empty are actually filled with the very presence of Almighty God.

Before you go, make sure to follow and subscribe, like this video, and share it with someone who needs encouragement today. And join us next time as we uncover another powerful truth from God's Word.