

# Luke 14 - Participants in the Kingdom; Healing a Man with Dropsy; The Distinction Between Salvation and Discipleship

IV. The Son of Man's journey to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51—19:28)

- (2) Christ's instructions to his disciples as a result of this rejection (Luke 12:1—19:28)
  - (K) Healing of the man with dropsy (14:1-6)
  - (L) Parable of the ambitious guest and a host (14:7-15)
  - (M) Parable of the supper and the excuses (14:16-24)
  - (N) Christ's discipleship teaching (14:25-35)

## Introduction

- Luke 13:22-35: those *excluded* from the Kingdom
- Luke 14:1-17: those *included* in the Kingdom

This section contains the record of several incidents that happened when Jesus was the dinner guest of a chief Pharisee. Jesus had just announced that He would leave Jerusalem desolate (13:35). This section justifies Jesus' condemnation by showing that the root of Israel's problems lay with their leaders, specifically the Pharisees. Jesus also gives the rationale for Jesus excluding many Jews from the kingdom and admitting Gentiles (13:28-30).

## Luke 14

(K) Healing of the man with dropsy (14:1-6)

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1 One Sabbath, Jesus went to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal. The guests were watching Jesus closely.

1 And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched him.

- Sabbath Day hospitality was an important part of Jewish life and it was not unusual to receive an invitation to a home for a meal after the weekly synagogue service. But this was an attempt to trap Him. But Jesus was never caught off guard.
- Jesus' severe denunciation of the Pharisees and scribes (Luke 11:39-52) only provoked them to retaliation, and they continually plotted against Him (11:53-54).

- 2 And there in front of Him was a man suffering from **edema**.
- 2 And there in front of Him was a man suffering from dropsy.
- 2 A man whose body was swollen with fluid suddenly appeared in front of him.
- 2 And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy.
- "...edema" - a condition of excess fluid in the tissues of the body, caused perhaps by a type of cancer or possibly liver, kidney, or heart problems
  - The rabbis viewed this condition as the result of immorality
  - The man was probably invited to the Pharisee's house as bait in a set up. If Jesus ignored the afflicted man, He was without compassion. If He healed him, He was openly violating the Sabbath and they could accuse Him.
  - He had already "violated" their Sabbath traditions on (at least) six prior occasions:

### Prior Sabbath Violations

- (1) Demoniac, in Capernaum (Mark 1:21-27)
- (2) Peter's mother-in-law, in Capernaum (Mark 1:29-31)
- (3) Impotent man, in Jerusalem (John 5:1-9)
- (4) Man with withered hand (Mark 3:1-6)
- (5) Woman bowed together (Luke 13:10-17)
- (6) Man born blind (John 9:1-14)

...as well as the man with dropsy here.

In all of these instances, Jesus showed that He placed human need above mere external ceremonial observance of the Sabbath. He never did or said anything to suggest that He intended to take away from man the privileges afforded by such a day of rest.

3 And Jesus responded and said to the lawyers and Pharisees, "**Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?**"

3 And Jesus answered and spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "**Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?**"

3 So Jesus asked the Pharisees and experts in the Law, "**Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?**"

3 And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, **Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?**

- Jesus took the initiative and asked the Pharisees for their interpretation of what the Mosaic Law allowed

4 But they kept silent. And He took hold of him and healed him, and sent him away.

4 But they kept silent. And He took hold of him and healed him, and sent him away.

4 But they kept silent. So he took hold of the man, healed him, and sent him away.

4 And they held their peace. And he took *him*, and healed him, and let him go;

- Since they raised no objection, Jesus healed the man

— Jesus could've waited a day, but He did so on the Sabbath to start the teaching that followed

— He likely released the man to remove him from the arena of controversy that would follow

- In any case, they couldn't heal anybody on any day and everybody knew it

5 And He said to them, **"Which one of you will have a son or an ox fall into a well, and will not immediately pull him out on a Sabbath day?"**

5 And He said to them, **"Which one of you will have a son or an ox fall into a well, and will not immediately pull him out on a Sabbath day?"**

5 Then he asked them, **"If your son or ox falls into a well on the Sabbath day, you would pull him out immediately, wouldn't you?"**

5 And answered them, saying, **Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?**

- Jesus proceed to argue from logic. The OT and rabbinic tradition permitted saving a son or an animal in such a situation (Cf. Ex 23:4-5).

— Jesus implied that the sick man belonged to Him, thus He was within His rights to help him on the Sabbath

6 And they could offer no reply to this.

6 And they could make no reply to this.

6 And they couldn't argue with him about this.

6 And they could not answer him again to these things.

- Jesus was setting the stage for the discussion to follow concerning those who were considered ceremonially unclean and therefore unable to enter the kingdom

(L) Parable of the ambitious guest and a host (14:7-15)

7 Now He *began* telling a parable to the invited guests when He noticed how they had been picking out the places of honor *at the table*, saying to them,

7 And He began speaking a parable to the invited guests when He noticed how they had been picking out the places of honor *at the table*, saying to them,

7 When Jesus noticed how the guests were choosing the places of honor, he told them a parable.

7 And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them,

- Important meals were usually held in a "U"-shaped table, with the host reclining at the center/bottom of the "U". The closer one sat to the host, the higher his status or place of honor.

8 "Whenever you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for someone more distinguished than you may have been invited by him,

8 "When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for someone more distinguished than you may have been invited by him,

8 "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, don't sit down at the place of honor in case someone more important than you was invited by the host.

8 When thou art bidden of any *man* to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him;

- The Marriage Supper of the Lamb is in view in Jesus' parable; then, Israel will unite with her Messiah.

— Jesus' point was that the Jews present should learn a spiritual lesson about the kingdom from this simple social situation He described.

9 and the one who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give *your* place to this person,' and then in disgrace you will proceed to occupy the last place.

9 and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give *your* place to this man,' and then in disgrace you proceed to occupy the last place.

9 Then the host who invited both of you would come to you and say, 'Give this person *your* place.' In disgrace, you would have to take the place of least honor.

9 And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.

- A person seeking a prominent place at a banquet table could be embarrassed if a "more honourable man" asked them to move aside

— The lesson is to not seek prominence, but rather humility

— This meant foregoing present prominence (which the Pharisees desired) and humbling ourselves by associating with Jesus as a disciple

10 But whenever you are invited, go and take the last place, so that when the one who has invited you comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will have honor in the sight of all who are dining at the table with you.

10 But when you are invited, go and recline at the last place, so that when the one who has invited you comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will have honor in the sight of all who are at the table with you.

10 But when you are invited, go and sit down at the place of least honor. Then, when your host comes, he will tell you, 'Friend, move up higher,' and you will be honored in the presence of everyone who eats with you.

10 But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.

- The implication is that those who humble themselves now will experience exaltation by God in the kingdom. A person's position in the kingdom depends on God, not on our own self-seeking.

11 For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

11 For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

11 Because everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the person who humbles himself will be exalted."

11 For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

- The first will be last and the last will be first (Luke 13:30). Looking around, Jesus noticed how the guests picked the places of honor. The closer a person was to the host, the greater was that guest's position of honor.

— As people entered the room in the Pharisee's house where the table was spread, they must have scrambled for seats at the head of the table

— The parable Jesus then told was designed to get them to think about spiritual realities in relation to the kingdom message He had been preaching

12 Now He also went on to say to the one who had invited Him, "Whenever you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor wealthy neighbors, otherwise they may also invite you to a meal in return, and that will be your repayment.

12 And He also went on to say to the one who had invited Him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, otherwise they may also invite you in return and that will be your repayment.

12 Then he told the man who had invited him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, stop inviting only your friends, brothers, relatives, or rich neighbors. Otherwise, they may invite you in return and you would be repaid.

12 Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor *thy* rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee.

- The former parable was addressed to His fellow guests; this teaching was directed to His host

- Jewish people pictured their future kingdom as a great feast with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the prophets as honored guests (Luke 13:38; Is 25:6; Cf. Matt 22:1-10)

13 But whenever you give a banquet, invite people who are poor, who have disabilities, who are limping, and people who are blind;

13 But when you give a reception, invite *the* poor, *the* crippled, *the* lame, *the* blind,

13 Instead, when you give a banquet, make it your habit to invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind.

13 But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:

- Minister to them for the Lord's sake (Matt 6:1-18; James 1:26-27)

— Inviting the outcasts would not *make* a man righteous, but it would testify that he *is* righteous

— The principle Jesus recommended to His host for selecting guests is what God will use to invite people to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb

14 and you will be blessed, since they do not have *the means* to repay you; for **you will be repaid** at the resurrection of the righteous."

14 and you will be blessed, since they do not have *the means* to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

14 Then you will be blessed because they can't repay you. And you will be repaid when the righteous are resurrected."

14 And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

- Inviting those who could not repay the favor resulted in the greater glory of earthly hosts, as well as for the divine Host.

- "...you will be repaid" - the Pharisee who invited Jesus for dinner was evidently a believer; if he had not been, Jesus could not give him a guarantee of reward.

— If a believer uses his hospitality to entertain people who have no way of repaying him, God Himself becomes the Paymaster. The Judgment Seat of Christ becomes the payday.

15 Now when one of those who were reclining *at the table* with Him heard this, he said to Him, "Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!"

**15** When one of those who were reclining at the table with Him heard this, he said to Him, "Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!"

**15** Now one of those eating with him heard this and told him, "How blessed is the person who will eat in the kingdom of God!"

**15** And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

- This person was assuming that he and the other people present would all be present in the kingdom. Jesus took the opportunity to use the feast motif to explain that many of the people there would *not* be present in a feast in God's kingdom.

— Jesus used the comment as an opportunity to clarify who would participate

— A similar (but obviously different) parable is recorded in Matt 22:1-14

(M) Parable of the supper and the excuses (14:16-24) (Cf. Matt 22:1-14)

**16** But He said to him, "A man was giving a big dinner, and he invited many;

**16** But He said to him, "A man was giving a big dinner, and he invited many;

**16** Jesus told him, "A man gave a large banquet and invited many people.

**16** Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many:

- "...man" - God the Father

**17** and at the dinner hour he sent his slave to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, because everything is ready now.'

**17** and at the dinner hour he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for everything is ready now.'

**17** When it was time for the banquet, he sent his servant to tell those who were invited, 'Come! Everything is now ready.'

**17** And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.

- The host sent his servants to each of the invited guests to tell them that the banquet was ready (Cf. Esther 5:8; 6:14).

- "...slave" - Jesus

- "...those who had been invited" - primarily Jews

**18** And yet they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, 'I purchased a field and I need to go out to look at it; please consider me excused.'

**18** But they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused.'

**18** Every single one of them began asking to be excused. The first told him, 'I bought a field, and I need to go out and inspect it. Please excuse me.'

18 And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.

- The new land owner was proud of his recent purchase, and desired to see it rather than attend the banquet

19 And another one said, 'I bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused.'

19 Another one said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused.'

19 Another said, 'I bought five pairs of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.'

19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.

- The cattle owner expressed greater interest in his oxen than attending the banquet

— The fact that both men (v18-19) preferred to inspect their new purchase shows their love of them, since they would have undoubtedly have inspected them before purchase

20 And another one said, 'I took a woman as my wife, and for that reason I cannot come.'

20 Another one said, 'I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come.'

20 Still another said, 'I recently got married, so I can't come.'

20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

- Having a new wife could have kept the man from the battlefield, but not from a banquet (Deut 24:5)

— They insulted the host with feeble excuses...

21 And the slave came *back* and reported this to his master. Then the head of the household became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here those who are **poor**, those with **disabilities**, those who are **blind**, and those who are **limping**.'

21 And the slave came *back* and reported this to his master. Then the head of the household became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind and lame.'

21 "So the servant went back and reported all this to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and told his servant, 'Go quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring back the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.'

21 So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

- The host legitimately became angry in view of His gracious invitation and sacrificial preparations; rejection was a personal insult.
- He decided to open the banquet to anyone who would come, not just the people who considered themselves the privileged few who were the most obvious choices (Cf. Rom 9:4-5)
- The rejecters were the religious leaders of Jesus' day; the others the host invited were those who the self-righteous Jews regarded as deficient, including publicans, sinners and Gentiles.
- "...poor...disabilities...blind...limping" - Jesus was referring to those members of the Jewish community who were considered inferior and *ceremonially unclean* as was the man with dropsy he had just healed (v2-4)

22 And *later* the slave said, 'Master, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.'

22 And the slave said, 'Master, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.'

22 The servant said, 'Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.'

22 And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

- Even though many of the needy responded, there was still plenty of room at the banquet table

23 And the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the roads and the hedges and **press upon** *them* to come in, so that my house will be filled.'

23 And the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel *them* to come in, so that my house may be filled.'

23 Then the master told the servant, 'Go out into the streets and the lanes and make the people come in, so that my house may be full.'

23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled.

- These people outside the city were probably Gentiles, those outside the covenant community

- "...press upon" - *anagkazo*, did not involve forcing against their wills, but urging them to come

24 For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my dinner!"

24 For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste of my dinner!"

24 Because I tell all of you, none of those men who were invited will taste anything at my banquet!"

24 For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

- This parable at a banquet about another banquet reinforced His previous teaching that He would abandon Jerusalem (Luke 13:34-35)

— The people who originally had been offered a share of the kingdom had rejected it. So now the message was going out to others including Gentiles.

— Nothing is so important as accepting His offer of the kingdom, for one's entire destiny rests on his response to that offer

(N) Christ's discipleship teaching (14:25-35)

This next section highlights the distinction between salvation and discipleship: Salvation is available to all who will come by faith. It is based on what He has done. Discipleship is for believers willing to pay the price.

25 Now large crowds were going along with Him, and He turned and said to them,

25 Now large crowds were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them,

25 Now large crowds were traveling with Jesus. He turned and told them,

25 And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,

- The setting has now changed: large crowds were traveling with Jesus. Jesus intended to impress on the people their need to examine their resolve to follow Him. He deliberately thinned out the ranks.

— It is one thing to "fill the house." It is another to find those who are really willing to pay the price of discipleship (Cf. Gideon: 32,000 to 300!).

— He was on His way to die on the cross. Ultimately everyone did desert Him when He was alone in the garden and then arrested and put on trial.

26 "If anyone comes to Me and does not **hate** his own father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.

26 "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.

26 "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, and sisters, as well as his own life, he can't be my disciple.

26 If any *man* come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

- Jesus gives two qualifications for being His disciple:

(1) One must be willing to give up their primary allegiance to family and self

(2) A disciple must bear the burden of public identification with Jesus, even to death if necessary

- "...hate" - does not suggest positive antagonism but rather to "love less" (Cf. Gen 29:30-31; Mal 1:2-3; Matt 10:37)

- “Hate” is clearly used as a relative term: compared to our commitment to Christ, all of our other affections should comparatively viewed as “hate”
- There were many who were following Jesus who were not really following Him in the sense of learning from Him. They simply wanted to benefit from His ministry.

27 Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

27 Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

27 Whoever doesn't carry his cross and follow me can't be my disciple.

27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

- Strange to allude to the cross already! What does it mean “to carry the cross”?

— It means daily *identification* with Christ in shame, suffering, and surrender to God's will. It means death to self, to our own plans and ambitions, and a willingness to serve Him as He directs (John 12:23-28).

Salvation is open to all who will come by faith, while discipleship is for believers willing to pay a price. Salvation means coming to the cross and trusting Jesus Christ, while discipleship means carrying the cross and following Jesus.

### **The Parable of the Tower Builder**

28 For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost, *to see if he has enough to complete it?*

28 For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it?

28 “Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. He will first sit down and estimate the cost to see whether he has enough money to finish it, won't he?

28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have *sufficient* to finish it?

- The point of this parable, which Jesus told right after His teaching on the cost of discipleship, instructed those in the crowd who were considering becoming disciples of His should “count the cost” before they made their decision

29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who are watching *it will begin to ridicule him,*

29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him,

29 Otherwise, if he lays a foundation and can't finish the building, everyone who watches will begin to ridicule him

29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish *it*, all that behold *it* begin to mock him,

30 saying, 'This person began to build, and was not able to finish!'

30 saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'

30 and say, 'This person started a building but couldn't finish it.'

30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

The simple fact is that the NT never takes for granted that believers will see discipleship through to the end. And it never makes this kind of perseverance either a condition or a proof of final salvation.

Finishing well is the essential thing. Like Paul, we would like to declare: But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24).

### **The Parable of the King Going to Battle**

31 Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong *enough* with ten thousand *men* to face the one coming against him with twenty thousand?

31 Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand *men* to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand?

31 "Or suppose a king is going to war against another king. He will first sit down and consider whether with 10,000 men he can fight the one coming against him with 20,000 men, won't he?

31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?

- This parable makes the same point as the previous one, however the cost of failure in this one is not just embarrassment, but personal destruction

32 Otherwise, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and requests terms of peace.

32 Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.

32 If he can't, he will send a delegation to ask for terms of peace while the other king is still far away.

32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.

- The king should be willing to sacrifice a desired victory if he senses he is unable to win
- Jesus was not encouraging people to stop following Him because they feared they could not withstand temptations. He wanted them to follow Him, but intelligently, not naively.

33 So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.

33 So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.

33 In the same way, none of you can be my disciple unless he gives up all his possessions."

33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

- This principle of sacrifice is also important in the realm of discipleship: *one must be willing to give up everything for Jesus*

- G. Campbell Morgan sees the tower builder and the king as Jesus: He is the One who must "count the cost" and determine whether we are the kind of material He can use to build the church and battle the enemy. He cannot get the job done with half-hearted followers who will not pay the price.

## Salt

34 "Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned?

34 "Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned?

34 "Now, salt is good. But if the salt should lose its taste, how can its flavor be restored?

34 Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?

- In conclusion, Jesus compared a disciple to salt

- Jesus had already told His disciples that they were "the salt of the earth" (Matt 5:13):

- Salt was a preservative
- Salt was a purifying agent
- Salt adds flavor
- Salt makes people thirsty

35 It is useless either for the soil or the manure pile, so it is thrown out. The one who has ears to hear, let him hear."

35 It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

35 It's suitable neither for the soil nor for the manure pile. People throw it away. Let the person who has ears to hear, listen!"

35 It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; *but* men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

- Climax of Jesus' Teaching here: Salt is good only as long as it contains the characteristics of saltiness. If it loses its saltiness, it has no value at all and is thrown out into the streets and walked on.

— The same is true of disciples. They must contain the characteristics of discipleship—planning and willing sacrifice—or they are of no value at all.

— Discipleship is serious business: unqualified devotion and commitment