

RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP (LESSON 9)

J. Oswald Sanders comments on why there is such a high cost and radical commitment required for discipleship: "In His message to the crowds concerning the conditions on which they could be His disciples, Jesus employed two illustrations: '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?... 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 (Luke 14:28, 31). Jesus employed these illustrations to demonstrate His disapproval of impulsive and ill-considered discipleship. Like the builder, He too is engaged in a building program – 'On this rock I will build my church' (Matthew 16:18). Like the king, He too is engaged in a desperate battle against the Devil and the powers of darkness. In this building and battling, Jesus desires to have associated with Him disciples who are men and women of quality – those who will not turn back when the fighting grows fierce. Are we disciples of this caliber? The message Jesus proclaimed was a call to discipleship – not to faith alone but to faith and obedience." Disciples must be motivated by more than adventure. Jesus is more than a hero, and His mission is more than a worthy cause. Disciples who decide on impulse and live by feelings don't last. Jesus never sets anyone up for failure. He who becomes Jesus' disciple must know what he is in for. It is not for glory or ego but for the expansion of Christ's kingdom in the world. All of Christ's disciples died carrying out the mission; all but John were martyred. Jesus told Peter ahead of time that it would cost him his life, and then He invited him to follow (John 21:19-22). Paul knew he would suffer persecution before he started (Acts 9:16). Neither Peter nor Paul were surprised when they followed Jesus in death during Nero's reign.