

The 13th Sunday after Pentecost  
“Going to spiritual battle with the right resource – the Gospel!”  
(Luke 14:31-33)  
September 7, 2025  
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Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  
Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost is from  
Luke 14:31-33

**“31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. 33 So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.”**

So far the text:

How much does it cost? Isn't that a question that you and I ask ourselves often? You may be shopping in HEB or Walmart and want to add something to your shopping cart that catches your eye. Do you have enough in your allotted budget or not? Whether it's something small or something larger like a room add on, or a car, or a trip...what's the cost? For if your costs get too great and you can't pay your debts, then the repo man might get involved or other not so pleasant things may happen.

We like to know what the cost is up front so that we can plan to meet the expenses if possible. Jesus gives two quick parables in our Gospel reading from Luke 14 which captures this thought for us. If you are going to build a tower, you want to make sure that you have enough resources to finish it, instead of laying the foundation and then getting laughed at that the building project halts for lack of funds.

Or if a king goes to war, will he not count his troops first and make sure he can win before he sends them? Today you are the building project manager and the king for the greatest of building projects and the greatest war – your spiritual house and your spiritual war. Are you ready to take stock of your resources to assure that you are victorious?

What Jesus says next may seem utterly surprising and absolutely counter intuitive.

**So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.”**

Didn't Jesus just talk about counting all the materials needed to build a tower and all the soldiers and weaponry needed to win a war? Now Jesus says the opposite – forsake all?

What are you going to build the tower with or go to war with? The answer?  
Nothing...nothing that you bring to the table, that is.

As we began this chapter 14 of Luke last Sunday, we heard Jesus speaking to the Pharisees, didn't we? They thought the house that they were building was going pretty smoothly. They were admired by the people as holy and righteous. For they thought that they were keeping the Law perfectly, better than others.

And yet the house that they were building was a house of cards. For it was not built on righteousness and forgiveness of Jesus. They showed their hand in silence when they couldn't answer whether they would rescue a donkey or an ox who had fallen into a pit on the Sabbath. And they surely didn't care about the sick man in their midst that he should receive a healing from Jesus on the Sabbath.

Their hearts were devoid of love and mercy for others for they thought only of themselves and did not know the love and mercy of God. Jesus told them that they were to choose the lowest seat in a banquet. Humble themselves spiritually. Recognize that you are a sinner in need of Christ's forgiveness and He will exalt you.

Forsake your self-righteousness. And receive in faith the only righteousness that wins the war against Satan, death and the world – the Gospel of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.

The Gospel is your only resource for victory.

In earthly matters, we hear about how much it costs to win. How much is the defense budget for 2025? 850 billion. What does that include to keep our country safe and keep the peace?

Nuclear Modernization, Air & Missile Defense: "Golden Dome for America".  
Hypersonic Weapons: Cybersecurity: Naval Shipbuilding: Facilities & Infrastructure.

What was the prize for winning the US Tennis Open yesterday?

You may know that yesterday a young lady, Aryana Sabalenka, received the trophy for winning the US Open. For two weeks of winning matches and besting all her competition she was handed a check for 5 million dollars. 5 million dollars for being the best at hitting a ball over the net. The men's final is today and the winner will also receive a check for 5 million dollars.

What was the cost for her victory? Well, there is a team of coaches, performance coaches, sports psychologists to keep the athlete mentally and emotionally at the highest level so one doesn't double fault in a crucial moment. There are fitness trainers, travel expenses and so on. A lot of costs that go into winning.

But we're talking about a trophy that fades here, aren't we? How about the trophy that doesn't fade...that's eternal...how much does that cost? Will my keeping of the Ten Commandments be enough? No, Jesus says that you must hate one's life. For our lives are imperfect and Jesus requires perfection to enter heaven. Forsake your lives. Humble yourselves and take the last seat.

How about family? Doesn't family count for something? Descendents of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? No, our family, our mothers and fathers can't get us into heaven. Not by blood but only by the will of God is one saved. Forsake one's parents as your resource to get into heaven. That's what Jesus is saying when He says these words in our Gospel reading.

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

Discipleship with Jesus is impossible if we make gods of human beings.

In order to have victory in our spiritual war against the devil, our sinful flesh and the world, there is only one resource that is profitable. That is the Gospel of salvation in Jesus. For by His humbling of Himself on the cross, He won the victory! What was the cost? His precious blood. His life for our lives. He died that I might live.

Your salvation costs you nothing. For Jesus has paid the price fully. He gives you this freedom from the slavery of sin by grace.

In our epistle reading, we hear about the slave named Onesimus. He had fled his master Philemon, and may have committed embezzlement because Paul says that if he owes anything Paul will pay it.

Onesimus means profitable. Yet, by fleeing his master, he was no longer profitable to him. And yet, God made him profitable. How? By forgiving him his sins. He was given the ultimate freedom from the slavery of sin by hearing the Gospel message from Paul. And Paul now calls him a brother in Christ. It cost Onesimus nothing, but was freely given. And he became profitable to Paul as his helper.

Now Paul urges Philemon to accept him back as a brother in Christ. And also, then out of love, free him from his servitude. According to tradition, Onesimus became a pastor in Ephesus.

Jesus fought the battle of battles against all our enemies and has delivered us from all evil. He has made the terms of peace for us with God for we have been reconciled with God through the blood of Jesus. It cost Jesus everything. He gave up everything and it cost us nothing. This gift of peace is given to you freely in your baptism. Jesus continues to offer you His peace and victory through the sacrament of the altar. His body and blood are given and shed for your forgiveness.

What's left for you? Follow Jesus. Trust in Him all your life. Be His disciple and by the power of the Holy Spirit, He will continue to build His Kingdom of grace and love and mercy through you also, and make you profitable servant to Him! Amen.

**And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)**