

## Count the Cost To Be Like Yeshua Means – To Serve Others

In my last three posts in this mini-series, we explored three healing miracles that Yeshua performed on “second-class citizens.” In this post, we are turn to explore some of Yeshua’s teachings on discipleship.

I have said many times in my walk that we need to ‘count the cost’ of being a talmid (disciple) of Yeshua. I highly recommend Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s book “The Cost of Discipleship” and Jon Walker’s recently published book “Costly Grace” which is a commentary on Bonhoeffer’s seminal work.

Yeshua has finished His great teaching we know as the Sermon on the Mount and demonstrated His healing power with the leper, the Roman Officer’s assistant and Kefa’s mother-in-law and many more that were demon possessed or ill.

***"When Yeshua saw the crowd around him, he gave orders to cross to the other side of the lake. A Torah-teacher approached and said to him, 'Rabbi, I will follow you wherever you go.' Yeshua said to him, 'The foxes have holes, and the birds flying about have nests, but the Son of Man has no home of his own.' Another of the talmidim said to him, 'Sir, first let me go and bury my father.' But Yeshua replied, 'Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.'"*** ~Matthew 8:18-21

***"When Yeshua saw the crowd around him, he gave orders to cross to the other side of the lake."***  
Recall from my earlier post in this teaching that Yeshua healed many people in K’far-Nachum, and his ministry attracted a lot of attention. Crowds continued to gather around him, but Yeshua had ministry to do in other places as well. So ***he gave orders to cross to the other side of the lake.*** K’far-Nachum sat on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee. So Yeshua and the talmidim got into a boat and began to cross to the eastern shore.

***"A Torah-teacher (scribe) approached and said to him, "Rabbi, I will follow you wherever you go."***  
That a scribe would approach Yeshua was very unusual because the scribes were often Yeshua’s opponents (7:29). The scribes were legal specialists and interpreters of the law. However, as part of his evangelistic purpose, Matthew showed that at least one scribe recognized Yeshua’s authority and wanted to be a talmid. This scribe addressed Yeshua as ***"rabbi"*** (or ***"teacher"***) and explained that he wanted to ***follow*** Yeshua wherever he went. The words ***"I will follow you"*** were not just the words of a talmid to a rabbi. A rabbi’s talmid literally ***"followed"*** him by observing the rabbi in his daily tasks, as well as sitting under and living by his teachings.

The scribe is clearly saying that he wants to become a part of Yeshua’s talmidim – His close associates. ***"And Yeshua said to him, 'The foxes have holes, and the birds flying about have nests, but the Son of Man has no home of his own.'"*** Yeshua’s words to the scribe were more like a challenge than a rebuke or invitation. Yeshua focused on the requirements of true discipleship.

Yeshua did not dash about the countryside attempting to get as many followers as possible. He wanted true believers who understood the cost of following him. People were certainly enthusiastic about Yeshua’s miracle-working ability. Yet, Yeshua did not want them following him without commitment.

To be Yeshua’s talmid, a person must willingly put aside worldly security. To follow Yeshua ***wherever*** he would go (as this scribe said) would mean a willingness to give up home and security. In the context of Yeshua’s present ministry, to follow Him meant to be constantly on the move, bringing His message to people in many places. Matthew focused on Yeshua’s words about radical discipleship. Unfortunately, we do not know whether this scribe actually chose to follow Him.

Here, also, for the first time, Matthew recorded Yeshua calling himself ***Son of Man***. This was an Old Testament name for the Messiah and was Yeshua’s favorite designation for himself. It comes from Daniel 7:13 and is definitely a Messianic title and a claim to kingship. The expression occurs eighty-one times in the Gospels, always said by Yeshua (twice, others said it, but they were quoting Yeshua). Calling himself ***the*** Son of Man, Yeshua was pointing to himself as the Messiah (see Daniel 7:13), without using that term, which had become loaded with militaristic expectations in the minds of many Jews. Remember, they wanted a warrior messiah – not a suffering servant.

## Count the Cost

Following Yeshua is not always easy or comfortable. Often it involves great cost and sacrifice, with no earthly rewards or security. Yeshua did not have a place to call home. You may find that following Yeshua costs you popularity, friendships, leisure time, or treasured habits.

While the cost of following Yeshua is high, the value of being Yeshua's talmid is even higher. If you desire to follow Yeshua, you must be willing to face hardship. Have you really counted the cost? Would you be willing to give up your home to follow Yeshua? Like Father Avraham, are you willing to forgo all and leave your native home to go to a place that you had never heard of or actually going without knowing where you are going?

Continuing in this passage: *"Another of the talmidim said to him, 'Sir, first let me go and bury my father.' But Yeshua replied, 'Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead'"* ~ Matthew 8:21-22. This man also expressed commitment (as he was called *another* talmid), but Yeshua was testing his level of commitment. This man apparently also wanted to follow Yeshua (whom he called *Lord*, another polite way of addressing a leader or senior), but he wanted to first return home to *bury* his father. In ancient cultures, this was a sacred responsibility.

Now, *it is possible* that this talmid was not asking permission to go to his father's funeral, but rather to put off following Yeshua until after his father had died. Perhaps he was the firstborn son and wanted to be sure to claim his inheritance. Perhaps he did not want to face his father's wrath if he left the family business to follow an itinerant preacher. Whether his concern was fulfilling a duty, financial security, family approval, or something else, he did not want to commit himself to Yeshua just yet.

Yeshua sensed this reluctance in his follower and challenged him to consider that his commitment had to be completely without reservation. If this man truly desired to follow Yeshua, he would not wait until he had fulfilled all his traditional responsibilities. Yeshua was not advising that children disregard family responsibilities. Rather, Yeshua was responding to this talmid's qualifying use of *"first."* Yeshua must always come *"first"* over all other human loyalties. Yeshua's directive was not heartless, but it called the man to examine his primary loyalty. Yeshua's response is part of the radical discipleship theme: *"Let the dead bury their own dead."*

Yeshua made sure those who wanted to follow him counted the cost and set aside any conditions they might have. Dead in Aramaic can also mean "the dying." So Yeshua may have been saying "Let the dying bury the dead." As God's Son, Yeshua did not hesitate to demand complete loyalty. Even family loyalty was not to take priority over the demands of obedience. His direct challenge forces us to ask ourselves about our priorities in following him. We must not put off the decision to follow Yeshua, even though other loyalties compete for our attention.

The talmid's conditional commitment appears reasonable to us. A closer look, however, helps us understand what Yeshua heard. The talmid insisted on a delay. Yeshua knew that where there's a "first" there also lies a "second" and a "third." Only an unconditional commitment meets the demands of Yeshua. Most of us are guilty of using delay tactics with God. His will fits somewhere below the top of our agenda. We should acknowledge our Creator as our Lord and Savior today, or never. Being a talmid means that God has veto power even over actions in our lives that are otherwise acceptable and good.

Would you be a talmid of Yeshua? Then count the cost, sense the urgency, make the effort to concentrate. Make Yeshua **NUMBER ONE** in your life.

In my next post, we will learn that it may be dangerous to follow Yeshua.