

The participants of a Bible study class turned to the topic of good and bad bargains. The facilitator asked if the class could give her some examples from the Bible itself of bad bargains, and three participants came up with perfect illustrations.

1. The first had suggested that Esau the elder brother of Jacob had made a bad bargain when he sold his birthright, (the patrimony and the blessing of his father Isaac) for a bowl of porridge. Gen. 25:33
2. The second mentioned Judas, who made a bad bargain when he sold Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. Mt. 27.3
3. The third quoted Mt. 16:26, which says, "For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world, but suffers the loss of his own soul?" This is what changed St. Ignatius, a soldier to a saint. In today's gospel Jesus cautions about bad bargains. We need to be very careful in making choices.

To be a disciple Jesus speaks of a two-fold renunciation. It means putting God ahead of any human relationship. Even the most intimate, and even before our very own lives. Putting Jesus first has practical applications for us and very real consequences in our lives. It means to stand alone sometimes for our belief and conviction. To walk against the crowd all alone.

In our second reading today from his *Letter to Philemon*, Paul makes his choice and he refers to himself as 'an old man... still a prisoner of Jesus Christ' forced to wear chains. Far from making him embittered, Paul's years in prison matured him as a disciple and apostle of Christ, enabling him to imitate more closely the tender and compassionate love of his Master.

We learn in this text that a large crowd was traveling with Jesus. Now, in large crowds you will have many motives. Some, in this crowd, are following because they have seen Jesus feed a multitude of people and they are waiting to be fed. Some are following because they have heard of Jesus' ability to heal, and they are waiting for an opportunity to approach him and be healed. Still others are following for the excitement. It is safe to say that only a few are truly committed to his teaching. Aware of their multiplicity of motives Jesus turns to the crowd and tells them what is involved in a true commitment.

I. **We must establish our priorities.** Too often we allow things to stand in the way of that which we consider important. We have the best of intentions but the priorities we know to be vital to a good and happy life never get carried out in our day to day living.

Someone has calculated how a typical life span of 70 years is spent. Listen to these surprising numbers:

Sleep.....23 years.....32.9%

Work.....16 years.....22.8%

COST OF DISCIPLESHIP-2022

TV.....8 years.....11.4%	Illness.....4 years.....5.7%
Eating.....6 years.....8.6%	Dressing.....2 years.....2.8%
Travel.....6 years.....8.6%	Religion.....0.5 years.....0.7%
Leisure.....4.5 years.....6.5%	Total.....70 years.....100%

II **Secondly, we must count the cost.** Jesus tells us to "calculate the cost." If you are going to buy a house or a car, figure out first whether you can make the monthly payments. If you want to be a disciple of Jesus - know in advance what it will cost: **not something but everything**. In the end you must be prepared to turn over all that you possess. Jesus talks about making a commitment and following through. In this case it is the most basic commitment - to become a disciple. Jesus compares discipleship to fighting a battle or to building a tower. Before you enter battle, be sure you have sufficient troops to engage the enemy. Before you start building the tower, count your bricks. In other words, **be prepared to follow through**.

III **We must be willing to pay the price.** In no uncertain terms Jesus told the crowd, "Any of you who is not willing to give up everything cannot be my disciple." One day Maggie, who was in the high school, came home rather downcast and not in a good mood. 'Mum' she said 'you'll never guess what happened during Religious Education today. We had an auction, and we were all given \$1000 to spend. The teacher was auctioning things like popularity, good looks, sporting ability, fame, wealth, and so on. Down the bottom of the list was heaven.'

'I wanted heaven and so when my turn to bid came I said '\$500 for heaven'. 'Well, mum, you know Michelle, the girl who doesn't like me, she doesn't even believe in God, well, she knew I was after heaven and so when her turn came she said, '\$1000 for heaven.'

'And she got heaven, Mum, and I didn't!' 'Well, what does that show you?' asked her mum. She replied, 'I should have given everything and not tried to bargain.'

God Bless You.