

Luke 14: 25 – 33

**'What would you give up?'**

**Introduction ...**

I'd like you to imagine that you have a friend who is desperate to go to Australia to see his sister. The sister has been diagnosed with a disease that means she can't travel ... and she is likely to die in about 18 months' time. Your friend – let's call him Daniel – cannot afford the air-fare.

You really want to help ... and have the idea that maybe you and your friends could save money and then give it to Daniel to pay his air-fare.

**What would you be prepared to give up and put the money towards this gift instead?**

*(chat amongst yourselves and see what you might do...)*

Several ideas came: give up a meal, sleeping in a tent instead of your bed (*like Max Woosey and raise £700,000!*)

Someone else suggested not going on holiday, and being sponsored ... e.g having all your hair cut off!

When would you tell Daniel about what you were doing?

Someone said '*when you had the money*' as you needed to be sure before telling him ...

**Gospel ...**

This is partly what Jesus is saying in today's Gospel reading about following him – he's saying:

'Don't promise to follow me and think it will be easy' ...

He doesn't want to fool us.

It will be worthwhile it will have wonderful times

but it won't always be easy.

Be sure you realise this

otherwise it will be like that man who sets off to build a tower and can't finish it; or the King who sets off with an army – but who has to back down.

Or ... like telling Daniel he can go to Australia and then discovering that you haven't raised enough money.

Jesus – in the Gospels – doesn't ask everyone to give up all their possessions to follow him ... but from this morning's passage it's clear that being willing to do so, having the freedom not to be too attached to them, is really important.

If you would be willing to give up .... for a friend such as Daniel?

What are you, what am I willing to give up to follow Jesus ...

here's a prayer (*see over the page*)

**PTO**

*Lord Jesus, we can find it hard to give up anything  
never mind everything.*

*Though we extol the virtues of self-sacrifice  
the creed of self-interest creeps in  
and we start to give the left-overs  
rather than to re-order our lives and priorities.*

*Move within us, we ask  
and give us a new heart and a new spirit  
a mind at peace  
and a life liberated in your service  
for your name's sake,*

*Amen.*

**(Prayer adapted from Nick Fawcett 'No ordinary stories' p. 44 – 45 ... Kevin Mayhew 2000)**

Also the Meditation that was read at the 8am Communion Service today is very appropriate and follows on the next page ...

## The Tower and the Cost of War

### *Meditation (of a Roman Soldier among the crowd who followed Jesus)*

"I had to pinch myself for a moment.

Was I hearing the man rightly?

The promised Messiah, some were calling him,

God's chosen one,

so I'd come to see for myself,

and one thing was for sure,

he was unlike any of those who'd claimed that title before.

Follow me, was the usual line;

and life will be better than you've ever known it,

your hopes realised,

your dreams fulfilled,

everything as you've always wanted it to be.

No suggestion of problems along the way,

no minus side to balance the plus –

it was always the proverbial bed of roses,

a land flowing with milk and honey

and not a bitter herb in sight.

And the astonishing thing was that people swallowed it,

time and again responding in their droves,

only to find those much-vaunted dreams laid waste,

those wild promises exposed

for the sham they ultimately were.

You couldn't say that of Jesus, though,

not for a moment.

There was no hard sell,

no dressing things up or pulling the wool over our eyes.

He laid it on the line,  
straight down the middle,  
the cost of commitment crystal clear.

If anything you'd have thought he was trying to put people off  
rather than canvass recruits.

Oh, there'd be blessings too, he was clear on that,  
treasures in heaven for those with the courage to follow,  
but even these involved sacrifice,  
real, painful sacrifice which many would find hard to bear,  
and which would call for every ounce of allegiance,  
testing faith to the limit.

He offered much,  
the gateway to life,  
the path to eternal fulfilment,  
but he left us under no illusions,

The road is rough  
and the journey is hard,  
involving, finally, the way of the cross.

Have we the courage to walk it?"

[Nick Fawcett](#)

['No Ordinary Stories'](#)

[Kevin Mayhew 2000](#)