

Luke 14: 27 – 33

'Possessions'

Introduction ...

I suspect that verse 33 of our New Testament passage would win a prize ...

A prize for the most guilt inducing verse in the Gospels:

**'So therefore none of you can become a disciple if you
do not give up all your possessions ...'**

Yet – as we probably all know from our experience ... we can feel guilt when it's not appropriate ... as well as when it might well be highly appropriate!

False guilt or true guilt?

Which might this verse induce in you? When you hear those words of Jesus: **'So therefore none of you can become a disciple if you do not give up all your possessions ...'** If you feel guilty ... is it false guilt or true guilt ... and how might you know? It's quite difficult to comment on this verse without being in danger of watering it down because it's difficult ... challenging ...

For everyone?

The way that it's expressed: **'No-one can be my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions'** is so absolute.

And yet ... when we read the whole gospel narrative ... a giving up of all possessions is not what Jesus requires of everyone who responds positively to him.

Think of the one who was healed and wanted to follow Jesus physically, but was told to go home ...

Think of the women who supported and provided for Jesus ...

Think of Mary, Martha and Lazarus – giving Jesus hospitality at Bethany ...

Put these alongside Peter, James, John and others who did give up everything to follow.

How to Understand ...

So how are we to respond to Jesus, to comprehend what he is asking us? Luke in the passage we heard, puts this saying after 2 parables that are unique to his Gospel:

The Tower and the War

And these come after the sayings about prioritising Jesus and carrying the cross.

So we certainly shouldn't minimise what Jesus is saying about the cost of discipleship

This Lent – there is an invitation here to come to Jesus in prayer:

PTO

To look into his eyes and to ask to be shown if there is anything that you (or I) are attached to ... and that attachment is getting in the way of our response to him ...

And if he shows you something

talk with him

listen to him

If it seems too difficult, pray along the lines of the Father with his epileptic son – brought for healing:

'I believe, help my unbelief'

In tonight's context: 'I want to let go of it help me to do so' ...

And perhaps this prayer of St Ignatius will help – its sentiment has become part of the New Year Covenant that we sometimes use:

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty

my understanding and my entire will

Take all that I have and call my own

You have given it all to me

To you, Lord, I return it

Everything is yours, do with it what you will

Give me only the love of you and your grace

that is enough for me. Amen.