



Thinking About The Cost

By

Mark McGee

The “cost” of Christianity is vital to a Christian’s spiritual health. Here’s why I say that.

Do you know any Jews who have become Christians? How about Muslims? Atheists? Mormons? Jehovah's Witnesses? Hindus? If you do, you've most likely noticed they seem to be deeply in love with God and have a healthy spiritual relationship through Bible study, prayer, discipleship, service and evangelism. One thing many of them have in common is that becoming a "Christian" cost them a lot. Many are ostracized by family. Many lose friends, jobs, positions in society, etc. Many suffer severe persecution – losing homes, possessions, even their lives.

Do you know any "Christians" who say they are Christians? What I mean by that is people who were raised in a Christian family, attended church as children, may still attend an annual holiday service, believe they are Christians because they were born in the United States? If you do, you have likely noticed they don't seem to be deeply in love with Christ and don't have a healthy spiritual relationship through Bible study, prayer, discipleship, service and evangelism. Being a Christian most likely did not cost them family, friends, jobs, homes, possessions, positions in society, etc. Most do not suffer any kind of persecution.

Eternal life is God's "gift" to His children, but that doesn't mean it doesn't come without a "cost."

Giving the gift of eternal life “cost” God’s Son His life.

“Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, ‘Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished. For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon. They will scourge Him and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.’” Luke 18:31-33

Becoming a Christian doesn’t cost people anything –

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” Ephesians 2:8-9

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 6:23

But living the Christian life should “cost” a Christian everything –

“Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, ‘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. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it— lest, after he has laid the foundation, and

is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish’? 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? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.” Luke 14:25-33

Christianity that doesn’t “cost” you anything, or very little, seems unimportant. In fact, it doesn’t seem like real Christianity at all.

“Then He said to them all, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.” Luke 9:23-24

“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.” John 15:18-20

“For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me.” Philippians 1:29-30

“But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.” 2 Timothy 3:10-12

It shouldn't surprise us that Christians in the U.S. are struggling with so many spiritual and societal issues today. Many have a misunderstanding of their “calling” in Christ. Christians are called to “suffer” for the Gospel of Christ –

“Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.” 2 Timothy 1:8-12

When does the suffering stop? When does the pain end? When does the sorrow subside?

“And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.’ Then He who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’ And He said to me, ‘Write, for these words are true and faithful.’” Revelation 21:3-5

That’s right – the suffering, pain and sorrow end in Heaven.

So, what’s the answer for Christians on earth? We need to “up” the cost of our faith. Jesus made that clear during His earthly ministry. The apostles made that clear during their ministries. Christians who lived in the early Church made that clear. Christians around the world today who are persecuted and suffering are making that clear. Christianity that “costs” a lot means a lot to those Christians who suffer for Christ. Christianity that costs nothing often means nothing.

So, how do we “up” the cost of our faith? Two ways come to mind:

- 1 Obey everything Jesus has commanded you and that will “up” the cost and joy of your faith.
- 2 Wait for the persecution that’s coming soon for Christians in the United States. That will “up” the cost of your faith. Whether it also increases your joy will depend on how ready you are to suffer for Christ and be persecuted for His Name.

I highly recommend #1.

“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’” Matthew 28:18-20

“Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.”

Copyright © 1990-2018 GraceLife Ministries