

# **Growth Group Questions**

13<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost, September 7, 2025

## **Introduction**

Some of you may be familiar with the concept of a cost/benefit ratio for planning in businesses and home finances. Have you ever thought of applying that to our Christian faith? What are the costs and what are the benefits to being a Christian? Is it worth it?

## **Into the Word** – Deuteronomy 30:15-20

1. Verse 16 of God's command can sound pretty work-righteous, as if we could lose our forgiveness by failing to obey God! But those works are not the cause of salvation – they're the proof! Read James 2:14-18, 26 and discuss how faith and works are related.
2. How does verse 17 confirm what you just found in James 2? Being disobedient to God's will is a sign that what may have happened?
3. Deuteronomy is essentially a record of Moses' final sermon to the people of Israel. What was his great hope for the people? (V. 12-20) Think of how they treated him (and God). What does that say about the hearts of those who serve God and his people faithfully?
4. Connect this text to our worship theme: "Count the Cost"

## **Into the Word** – Philemon 1,7-21

5. Paul's letter to Philemon is so short it doesn't even get split into multiple chapters. Time is limited in our worship service but you've got time to read it all. Go do it and enjoy the whole thing!
6. Now that you know the whole story, why is this account perfect as an example of the cost of following Christ? What was the cost for the slave Onesimus? What about the cost for the owner Philemon?

7. Discussing the Bible's view of slavery is a bible study and a half all on its own. It can be difficult to separate the evils of America's version of slavery from some of the economic-based slavery of the Roman era. (*Some slavery was indentured servitude – a voluntary slavery for a time to pay a debt. Kind of like a work contract today. Told you it gets complicated.*) That said, what encouragement does Paul give to Philemon in verse 15-16?
8. Verse 8 and 9 are key to understanding proper Christian motivation. What is the difference by saying "you ought to" versus "love will lead you to"? Why is the second proper motivation for the Christian? (See Romans 12:1 if you need help.)

## **Into the Word** – Luke 14:25-25

1. Let's clear up the easy thing first: Does Jesus want you to hate your parents and spouse and children and siblings? What does he mean?
2. The two illustrations both talk about looking ahead at the cost of something before jumping into it. What is the cost of Christian faith? Are you willing to pay it?
3. Once again Romans 8 (this time verse 18) reassures us of an important truth. Why is Christian faith worth the cost?
4. What in your life is keeping you from being the best version of your Christian self that you can be? Say a silent prayer for faith.
5. Jesus once again is not only our example to follow but our Savior from sin itself. When we fail to make the sacrifices we should, what comfort do we have because of Jesus' sacrifice?

**Closing Prayer** – Jesus, you knew the cost of our salvation and still chose to carry it for us. Knowing my sins are forgiven and my heaven is secure, help me to turn away from the world and serve you always. Amen.