

06-18-23 FOR THE JOURNEY THIS WEEK

“...often [to take up the cross] means lovingly accepting those our society’s prejudices and stigmas reject no matter the social consequences...We invest our whole selves in God’s loving purposes, knowing that in the long run God’s grace will prevail and that in the short run, taking up our cross is the key to abundant life.”

- J. Philip Wogaman



Luke 14:25-33

Questions for Reflection —

- What does it mean for you put following Jesus first in all aspects of your life? What does it look like for you to put love for God above everything, including human relationships and material possessions? What are the competing priorities? In view of the competing priorities what does it mean to die to self? In what ways might various priorities in your life need to be rearranged in order for you to follow Jesus more completely? What do you need in order to be able to do so?

- What challenges you most about the life of Christian discipleship? In what ways have you found following Christ to be demanding? What sacrifices have you had to make for the sake of your faith? What does costly discipleship look like for you? How can we as a congregation better support one another in facing the costs and demands of faithful discipleship?

- What crosses of injustice, oppression, prejudice, and discrimination are being borne those who are marginalized in our society? What would it look like for us as a congregation to lovingly come alongside those people to help bear or even remove the weight of those crosses? What would it look like for us to invest our whole selves in God’s loving purposes for humankind and all of creation? How can we contribute to the construction of God’s kin-dom in the here and now? What costs (literal and figurative) might we incur and what sacrifices might we have to make in order to do so?

Daily Household Prayer *

Lord of the cross, you call us to follow you. We mouth a yes and nod an okay, but do we know what you’ve asked us to do? We’re to love you more than others? Some say that cross is too heavy. Still, you compel us to follow, knowing that this cross is too heavy for us to carry alone. You say, count the cost and consider what discipleship is. Sometimes we squirm and say the cost is too great and the sacrifices too numerous. Still, you compel us to follow. The cross you ask us to carry is not nearly as heavy as the cross you carried for us. Nevertheless, we complain – and you listen. We search for an easier alternative – and you watch us. God, help us to admit when we get frustrated by the enormity of discipleship. Extend grace and mercy toward us. Wrap us inside of your unconditional love. And patiently compel us to follow you again. Amen.

*Kwasi Kena, *The Africana Worship Book for Year C*, Valerie Bridgeman-Davis and Safiyah Fosua, eds., (Discipleship Resources, 2008), 133.