

Imposter Scam

Please Do Not Fall for the “Imposter Scam”!

I recently was the recipient of an email that reminded me that I should warn those I care about to be aware of and not respond to the various scams that are being attempted.

The email I received appeared to come from our EFCA (denominational) President requesting a confidential personal favor. He let me know he was about to go into a meeting so I should not try calling him but respond by email.

I immediately suspected a scam - but responded to the email asking what I could do for him. The reply I received asked me to purchase \$2,000 worth of Target gift cards, scratch off the backs to reveal the PIN numbers, take pictures of the backs of the cards, and email those pictures to him so he could use the cards to help COVID patients. He let me know that I would “get reimburse” - the bad English in the email being a confirmation of the scam.

Once I received those instructions I knew it was a scam and telephoned our EFCA President to let him know that someone had created a fake email account (even using his picture) and was using that email account to try scamming people.

This attempt to scam me is just one of many variations that crooks are attempting. They often are relatively easy to spot because they contain bad grammar or spelling mistakes - but not always. And, even if the right phone number shows up on your caller ID, that is not proof that someone is not a scammer - because some scammers know how to “spoof” (make it look like they are calling from a different number) phone numbers.

PLEASE know that no one from Mountain View will ever call you, text you, or send you a personal email asking that you do us a favor by sending money directly to us or by purchasing gift cards and sending photos of the card and its PIN, etc. The best thing to do when you receive these requests is to NOT respond to them and contact the person who is supposedly asking for the favor directly using a means of contact that you have used in the past to let them know that you suspect someone is using their name to scam people. It can also be helpful to take note of the return email address of those who contact you via email - as the company associated with those emails (i.e. “gmail”) can then be notified of the fake/scammer email account and hopefully shut them down.

-Pastor Bruce

Jesus Walked on Water

Leader Bible Study

Jesus had just fed more than five thousand people on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. After sending away the people and directing His disciples to go back across the sea, Jesus went to a mountain to pray. It was late, and He sought to be alone with His Father. Jesus was preparing to fulfill His Father's plan. Before long, He would die on the cross and rescue people from sin.

While Jesus prayed, the disciples struggled to cross the sea. A storm came and tossed their boat up and down. They didn't make any progress against the waves. Then, in the early morning hours, they saw a figure walking toward them on the water. They thought it was a ghost, but it was Jesus!

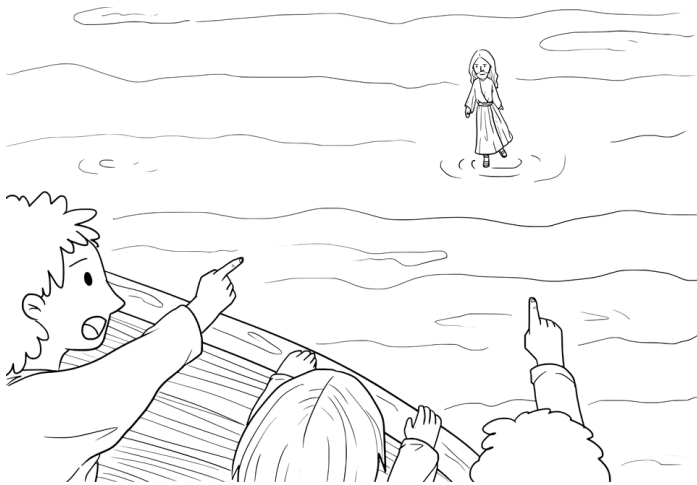
Peter asked Jesus to command him to come out on the water, and Jesus called to him. Peter walked on the water too—until he remembered the storm. Peter took his eyes off of Jesus, and he began to sink. Peter cried out to Jesus, "Save me!"

Jesus took Peter by the hand, and they got into the boat. The wind and waves calmed. Though Peter had doubted, the disciples worshiped Jesus. Clearly, He was no ordinary man; this was the Son of God—the promised Messiah!

Jesus proved that He can be trusted. His miracles, teaching, death, and resurrection showed that He is who He says He is. As you teach kids, encourage them to look to Jesus in faith every day. We can seek Him for our salvation and for help as we live in this world. Even in the midst of fear and doubt, we can hold out our empty hands and cry, "Lord, save me!" He will answer, and we can respond in worship of our Lord and Savior.

The **BIBLE** Story

Jesus Walked on Water



Matthew 14; Mark 6; John 6

Jesus had been teaching crowds of people by the Sea of Galilee. It was getting late, so He told His disciples to get into the boat and go to the other side of the sea. Jesus sent the crowds away and went up on the mountain to pray by Himself.

That evening, the boat was far from the shore. The wind blew, and the waves tossed the boat around. Jesus was still on the mountain alone.

Around three in the morning, Jesus came toward His disciples, walking on the sea. When the disciples saw Jesus, they were terrified.

“It’s a ghost!” they cried.

Right away, Jesus spoke to them. “Have courage! It’s Me. Do not be afraid.”

Peter answered, “Lord, if it really is You, tell me to come to You on the water.”

So Jesus said, “Come!”

Peter got out of the boat and started walking on the water toward Jesus. But when Peter saw how strongly the wind was blowing, he was afraid. Peter began to sink.

“Lord, save me!” he cried.

Jesus reached out His hand and grabbed Peter. Jesus said, “You have little faith. Why did you doubt?”

They got into the boat and the wind stopped. Then everyone in the boat worshiped Jesus and said, “Truly You are the Son of God.”

Christ Connection: Jesus proved that He can be trusted. His miracles, teaching, death, and resurrection showed that He is who He says He is. Only Jesus can save us when we look to Him in faith.

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Jesus Fed a Crowd

Leader Bible Study

Jesus’ disciples had been working hard, teaching people and healing them. Jesus called them to go away with Him to a desolate place so they could rest. By now, Jesus’ popularity was so great that finding a place to be alone was difficult. When Jesus and His disciples crossed the Sea of Galilee, the crowd of people were already waiting for them on the other side.

Jesus saw the crowds, but He wasn’t frustrated or angry. He didn’t tell them to go away. Instead, He had compassion on them because they were lost—like sheep without a shepherd. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who seeks and saves the lost. (See Luke 19:10; John 10:14.)

The miracle Jesus performed that evening—feeding 5,000 men plus women and children—is the only miracle during Jesus’ earthly ministry that is recorded in all four Gospels. The same God who provided manna for the Israelites in the wilderness multiplied loaves and fish to satisfy the crowd.

But Jesus' didn't intend to only meet people's physical needs. He came to satisfy their spiritual needs as well. In John 6:35, Jesus said, "I am the bread of life." He said that no one who comes to Him will ever be hungry, and no one who believes in Him will ever be thirsty again.

Jesus is the bread that came down from heaven. (See John 6:41.) God provided His Son as the perfect sacrifice to take away our sins. At the first Lord's Supper, Jesus broke bread—a symbol of His death on the cross. (See Matt. 26:26.)

As you teach kids this Bible story, help them know that God can and will provide for our needs. Kids can trust Him for their "daily bread." (See Matt. 6:11.) God met our greatest need in giving us salvation through Jesus. Will He not graciously give us all things? (Rom. 8:32)

The **BIBLE** Story

Jesus Fed a Crowd

Matthew 14; Mark 6; Luke 9; John 6

Jesus' disciples had been hard at work. They had been healing people and teaching them. So many people came and went that the disciples did not even have time to eat! **So Jesus said to them, "Come with Me. Let's go to a quiet place where we can be alone and get some rest."**

Jesus and His disciples got into a boat to cross the Sea of Galilee, but many people saw them leaving. The people traveled by foot, and **they ran ahead of Jesus. When Jesus and His disciples got to the shore, the people were already there waiting for them. Jesus saw the crowd and He cared about them because they were like sheep who needed a shepherd. So Jesus taught the people many things about God's kingdom, and He healed people who were sick.**

By this time, it was late in the day. Jesus' disciples came to Him and said, "We are out in the middle of nowhere, and it's getting late. Tell the people to go away so they can go to the farms and villages to buy themselves something to eat."

But Jesus said, "They don't need to go away. You give them something to eat."

Jesus' disciples were confused. "We can't feed this many people," they said.

"It would cost a whole year's pay to buy enough bread for them to eat," Philip said.

Jesus asked them, "How many loaves of bread do you have? Go look."

Jesus' disciple Andrew said, "A boy here has five loaves and two fish, but what good will that do for so many people?"

Jesus told the disciples to instruct everyone to sit down. So all the people sat down in big groups on the grass.

Jesus took the five loaves of bread and the two fish. He looked up to heaven, and then He blessed the bread. He broke it into pieces and gave it to the disciples. He also divided up the fish. The disciples passed out the food to the people, and everyone ate until full.

Then Jesus told the disciples to collect any leftover food. The disciples collected 12 baskets full of pieces of bread and fish. **Jesus fed about five thousand men that day, plus women and children.**

Christ Connection: By feeding the five thousand, Jesus provided for the physical needs of the crowd. The next day, Jesus called Himself the bread of life. (John 6:35) Only Jesus is able to satisfy our souls forever by providing forgiveness, peace with God, and eternal life.

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Jesus Calmed a Storm

Leader Bible Study

After a long day of teaching, Jesus and His disciples got into a boat to cross over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. When their short sailing trip was interrupted by a violent storm, the disciples found themselves in danger with nowhere to turn—except to the One who created all things.

Several of the disciples were experienced fishermen. They had spent significant time on the Sea of Galilee, but this storm was so strong that the waves overtook the boat. The disciples were afraid they would drown. As the disciples panicked, what was Jesus doing? He was sleeping!

The disciples woke Jesus. The situation was out of their control, and perhaps they felt forsaken by God. But their reaction was full of irony: “Teacher! Don’t you care that we’re going to die?” (Mark 4:38).

The disciples obviously did not know why Jesus had come to earth. Jesus had come to rescue people from sin. In dying on the cross, Jesus would truly be forsaken by God. (See Matt. 27:46.) Jesus would die the death the disciples—and all sinners—deserve so that they could live forever with God. Did Jesus care that the disciples were going to die? Absolutely. But He was going to rescue them from something worse than drowning. Jesus would save them from spiritual death.

Jesus calmed the wind and the waves. He displayed His power over creation and demonstrated that He is truly God. God has power over the wind and the waves. (See Job 12:15; 28:25; Ps. 33:7; 107:25-30; Amos 4:13.)

As you teach kids this Bible story, seize the opportunity to share the gospel. Help them understand the truth the disciples did not yet fully grasp. Who is this man? He is the Messiah, the Savior, and the Son of God.

The **BIBLE** Story

Jesus Calmed a Storm



Matthew 8; Mark 4; Luke 8

Jesus spent all day teaching crowds of people near the Sea of Galilee. That evening, Jesus wanted to cross over to the other side of the sea.

So Jesus and His disciples left the crowds. They got into a boat and began sailing. Some of the people from the crowds followed in their own boats. While Jesus and His disciples traveled, **Jesus fell asleep on a cushion at the back of the boat.**

All of a sudden, a storm came. The wind was strong, and the waves crashed into the boat. **Water was coming into the boat, and the disciples were afraid!** Many of the disciples were fishermen. They had survived storms on the sea before, but this storm was different. It was so strong. If the water kept coming in the boat, the boat would sink. Surely they would all drown!

The disciples looked to Jesus for help, but Jesus was still fast asleep at the back of the boat. He didn't seem to even notice the storm. Did Jesus care that they were about to sink into the sea?

The disciples woke up Jesus. "Lord, save us!" they said. "We are going to die!"

Jesus opened His eyes and saw that His friends were afraid. He got up and spoke to the wind. Then Jesus said to the sea, "Silence! Be still!"

At the sound of Jesus' voice, the wind stopped blowing and the waves stopped crashing. Everything was calm. The disciples were safe.

Jesus looked at His disciples and asked, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?" Did the disciples not trust Jesus to take care of them?

The disciples were amazed. "Who is this man?" they asked each other. "Even the wind and the waves obey Him!"

Christ Connection: Jesus' disciples knew Jesus was a good man and a good teacher. But when Jesus calmed the wind and the waves, He showed His disciples that He is also God. God rules the sea and stills its waves. (Psalm 89:9)

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The Good Shepherd

Leader Bible Study

Jesus' teaching caused division among the Jews. They argued about who He was and where He had come from. Had He really come from God? Was He crazy or demon-possessed? In John 10, Jesus taught about Himself by using a comparison that is found throughout the Old Testament: the Lord as the Shepherd of His people.

In Bible times, shepherding was a common occupation. Leaders of nations—even non-Israelite nations—would refer to themselves as shepherds of the people. A good shepherd would guide, provide for, and protect his people. Yet Old Testament prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel criticized Israel's leaders for failing to shepherd God's people well. The Israelites were like sheep—helpless and wandering—and they longed for a truly good shepherd.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd who provides abundant life for His sheep. A shepherd would gather his sheep at night and form a pen to keep the sheep in and to keep wild animals and thieves out. The shepherd would lay across the opening. Like a shepherd provides safety for his sheep, Jesus provides salvation and eternal life.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep. A shepherd protects his sheep from wolves and other wild animals, even at risk to his own life. Jesus gave up His life on the cross to rescue sinners from sin and death.

Finally, Jesus is the Good Shepherd who knows His sheep. Even when two or more flocks gathered in a pen, a shepherd could call for his sheep and they would respond to the sound of his voice. Jesus knows His sheep personally.

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, came to do His Father's plan: to die on the cross and rise again so that we might be saved. We can live sacrificially as we point others to the sacrifice Jesus made for us.

The **BIBLE** Story

The Good Shepherd



John 10

Jesus told a story to the Jewish leaders: “If a person climbs into a sheep pen, he is not the shepherd; he is a thief. A shepherd enters the pen through the gate. When the sheep hear the shepherd’s voice, they recognize him and follow him. A shepherd calls his sheep by name, and he leads them. If the sheep hear the voice of a stranger, they will run away.”

The people did not understand Jesus’ story. Jesus was talking about God’s people as sheep. The Jewish leaders were the stranger, and **Jesus is the Shepherd.**

Jesus said, “I am the gate for the sheep. They come in through Me and are saved.” Jesus was saying that He is the gate that leads to true life. People who come to Him are like sheep who come to green pastures. **Jesus warned, “A thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.”** Jesus was talking about the devil, who does not want people to follow God. **Jesus said, “I have come so that they may have life.”**

“I am the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep,” Jesus said. “I know My sheep, and My sheep know Me.” Like a shepherd risks his own life to protect his sheep from wolves, Jesus was willing to die for His people. Jesus came to do His Father’s plan, and He was going to die and rise again.

The Jews argued with one another. Many said, “Don’t listen to Him; He has a demon. He’s crazy.” Others said, “That’s not true. How can a demon give sight to the blind?”

The Jewish leaders asked Jesus, “Are You really the Messiah? Just tell us.”

Jesus answered, “I did tell you but you do not believe because you are not My sheep. My miracles prove who I am.” Jesus reminded them that He is the good shepherd. **“My sheep hear My voice, I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of My hand.** The Father and I are one.”

Christ Connection: Jesus is the Good Shepherd. God sent Him to rescue sinners. Jesus laid down His life for His sheep so they could have forgiveness and eternal life. When we trust in Jesus, we are His sheep

who listen to, follow, and obey Him.

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Jesus Taught About Possessions

Leader Bible Study

A very large crowd—thousands of people (Luke 12:1)—had gathered around Jesus as He taught His disciples. The people recognized Him as a rabbi (teacher), so it was not unusual that someone called out, asking Jesus to settle a financial dispute. But Jesus knew the man was motivated by greed, and He told a story.

In Jesus' parable, a rich man had so many crops that he decided to tear down his barns and build bigger ones. That way, he could store everything he had and take it easy. But the man was foolish and short-sighted. He didn't consider he could die that very night. The saying is true: "You can't take it with you." Rather than storing up treasures for ourselves, we should live to glorify God and live generously, using what we have on earth to make an eternal impact.

Jesus also addressed worry with His disciples. Jesus' followers should not be anxious about their basic needs. God takes care of the birds and the flowers. People are God's most valuable and beloved creatures; we can trust Him to provide for us!

Jesus contrasted the way the unsaved Gentiles lived with how believers should live. Unbelievers seek wealth and possessions as if that was the main goal in life. They act like God does not care about their needs. But our focus should not be on ourselves, our wealth, and our possessions; we should focus on God's kingdom. We do not need to worry. God will provide. He is glad to give us what we need!

God gives us good gifts on earth. We can steward these gifts for His glory. Earthly treasures will not last forever. When Jesus is our greatest treasure, we can live generously and trust God to provide what we need.

The BIBLE Story

Jesus Taught About Possessions



Luke 12

Thousands of people came together to listen to Jesus' teaching. Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, tell my brother to share our father's inheritance with me."

Jesus said, "Watch out and be on guard against all greed. True life is not found in what you own."

Then Jesus told the people a parable: "A rich man owned land that produced many crops. He didn't have anywhere to store all of his crops, so he said to himself, 'I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then, I'll have so much stored up that I can stop working and relax.' But God told the man, 'You are a fool! You will die this very night, and then what good is everything you have stored up?'" Jesus told this story as a warning for any person who stores up treasure on earth and is not generous toward God.

Then Jesus told His disciples, "Do not worry about your life or your body—what you will eat or what you will wear. Think about the birds: They do not plant or collect grain, yet God feeds them. Aren't you worth more than birds?"

Jesus also said, "Think about the wildflowers. They don't work or make clothing, yet they are lovelier than a great and rich king in his fancy clothes. If that is how God takes care of grass—which grows today and is cut down tomorrow—how much more will He do for you?"

Jesus told His disciples not to worry about food or drink. **"Seek God's kingdom," He said, "and God will provide what you need."** God is happy to give His children the kingdom.

Finally Jesus said, "Sell your possessions and give to the poor. A thief can take away treasure on earth, but treasure stored in heaven lasts forever. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Christ Connection: Jesus is our greatest treasure. Jesus left His place in heaven to live humbly on earth. Jesus obeyed God to set up His kingdom. We can give generously and trust God to provide everything we need.

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Face Masks

Our Colorado Governor has issued a statewide mandate that all individuals (with some exemptions) over the age of 10 wear facial masks/coverings when inside public places — including places of worship. While we know that the wearing of masks is uncomfortable and a nuisance for many if not most of us, ***we are asking those of you who plan to worship with us at Mountain View Church to plan to wear a mask/facial covering when inside our Worship Center.*** For those of you who are unable to worship with us in person for any reason, we will continue to livestream our 8 AM Worship Service via Facebook and then make the recording available via our www.greeleychurch.com site and our Mountain View YouTube channel shortly after the 8 AM service has concluded. Let us be grateful that we can gather together for worship — even if it means some restrictions!

-Pastor Bruce

Jesus Taught About Prayer

Leader Bible Study

Prayer is personal communication with God. Many people aren't sure how to pray or feel uncomfortable praying. To pray effectively, then, we must be taught how to pray. This is why Jesus' disciples asked Him to teach them to pray.

Jesus began with the Lord's Prayer, not to establish the words we should use but to show how we should pray and what we should pray about. Through prayer, we demonstrate our dependence on and faith in the Lord. We should approach God as a Father and pray for His kingdom first and then for ourselves and others.

Then Jesus told a story about a man who went to his friend in the middle of the night to ask for food for a visitor. The friend did not want to be bothered but because the man did not give up, the friend finally gave him what he needed. God is not a sleepy neighbor. If a grumpy friend will reward persistence, how much more so will God! He cares about His children and is happy to give us what we need when we ask.

In a similar way, a human father who loves his child would not give him a snake if he asked for a fish. Will God give us everything we ask for? No, but when we are persistent with our prayers, we can trust Him to answer according to His glory and our good.

Jesus used another parable in Luke 18: A judge was unwilling to grant a widow's plea for justice, but the woman did not give up. So the judge gave her justice. We should not give up praying if we have not received an answer from God. God is not like a wicked judge. When we pray consistently, God will give

us justice and He will act quickly.

The **BIBLE** Story

Jesus Taught About Prayer



Luke 11; 18

Jesus had just finished praying when one of His disciples said, “Lord, teach us to pray.” So Jesus told them, “When you pray, say, ‘Father, Your name be honored as holy. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone in debt to us. And do not bring us into temptation.’”

Then Jesus told them a story. “Imagine one of you goes to a friend at midnight and says, ‘Friend, let me borrow three loaves of bread because a friend of mine has traveled to visit me, and I don’t have anything to offer him.’ The friend shouts from inside his house, ‘Go away! My family is in bed. I don’t want to get up to help you.’ Even though the man does not want to help his friend, he will get up and give his friend what he needs because he asked boldly.”

Jesus told this story to teach the disciples about prayer. **He said, “Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you.”**

Jesus asked, “Does any father, when his son asks for a fish, give him a snake instead? Or if the son asks for an egg, does the father give him a scorpion?” Jesus said that fathers who are sinners know how to give good gifts to their children. God is an even greater Father! He gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask.

Jesus told another story—a parable—to teach the disciples to pray without giving up. “In a town was a judge who did not care about God or people. Over and over, a widow went to the judge and asked him to protect her from wrongdoing. The judge did not want to help, but after awhile he said, ‘I will give this widow what she wants so she does not keep bothering me.’”

Jesus pointed out that the unjust judge did what was right because the widow did not give up. “When people cry out to God day and night, will He ignore them?” Jesus asked. “No! He will quickly make things right.” Jesus wanted His followers to have faith that doesn’t give up.

Christ Connection: Jesus taught us to pray. Because of Jesus, we can pray to God as a Father and ask for what we need. We can trust that God is good and loving, and we can count on Him to do what is right.

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The Cost of Following Jesus

Leader Bible Study

The benefits of following Jesus are wonderful: justification from sin, lifelong sanctification, and adoption into the family of God. But following Jesus also comes at a price. People had waited so long for the promised Messiah to come into the world, so many were eager to follow Him. Yet as Jesus taught, He urged people to consider the cost of being His disciple.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus explained to one disciple that following Him might involve giving up worldly comforts. He told another disciple that following Him should be higher priority than anything else—even one's commitment to his parents. (See Matt. 8:18-22.) In Matthew 16 and Luke 9, Jesus told His disciples, "If anyone wants to follow after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me."

Jesus shared two examples in Luke 14 of people who must count the cost of doing something. If a person is building a tower, he must first calculate the cost. If he begins the project and is unable to complete it, onlookers will ridicule him. In a similar way, a king counts the cost of going to war before sending out his army. If he is not able to oppose the enemy, he doesn't foolishly send out a small group to fight a larger group. Instead, he seeks peace.

Many who wanted to follow Jesus changed their minds. Jesus even asked the twelve disciples if they wanted to turn away as well. Peter answered, "Lord, to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68).

Paul acknowledged the difficulty of following Jesus in 2 Corinthians 4 but kept his eyes on eternity: "For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory" (v. 17). As you teach, emphasize that following Jesus is not easy, but He is worth it.

The **BIBLE** Story

The Cost of Following Jesus



Matthew 8; 16; Luke 9; 14

Large crowds traveled with Jesus; many people wanted to follow Him. One man said, “Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.” Jesus told the man, “Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head.”

Another disciple said, “Lord, I will follow You, but first let me go and bury my father.”

Jesus replied, “Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead.”

Jesus told the people that following Him wouldn’t be easy. It would cost them a lot.

“Anyone who comes to Me must be willing to leave his family. You must love me most of all—more than your own life! **Anyone who is unwilling to suffer cannot be My disciple,” Jesus said.**

Jesus urged the people to think about what they were doing. **He told them a story: “If you wanted to build a tower, you would first sit down and figure out what it would take to complete the tower. Otherwise, you would build the foundation and be unable to finish. People would laugh at you.”**

Then He told them another story: “If you were a king, you wouldn’t go to war against another king without considering whether your army would be great enough to win the war. If you have too few men to fight, you would send some men to ask for peace before the battle even started.”

Jesus wanted the people to consider the cost. “If you are not willing to give up everything you have, you cannot follow Me,” Jesus said. Following Jesus means giving Him complete control of your life. That is not easy, but it is worth it.

Jesus said, “Whoever gives up his life for Me will find true life. What good is it to have everything you want in the world if you give up life with God forever?”

Christ Connection: Jesus taught that following Him is not easy. It requires commitment and sacrifice. When we trust in Jesus, we give Him complete control of our lives. True life is found in Jesus, who gave up His life to rescue us from sin and death. He is worth it.

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