

**“LOVE COSTS”**

**Pastor Mike Corwin**

**TEXT:** LUKE 14:25-33

**GOD’S WORD:** PSALM 139:1-6 & 13-18

**I – WHY LOVE?:**

I had the honor this past week of officiating at the funeral of Wanda Rowlinson. A dear lady who had connections in various ways to my ministry and to this congregation through her occasional attendance and her being related to members of our family here. I noted at this funeral as I have at numerous ones before it, that people cry. People are upset over the loss of someone and tears flow. I always tell people that it’s more than OK to cry because those tears represent the love you had for the deceased. They mean that you loved them and they loved you and the memories of that love and loss causes us pain. That’s OK because the alternative would be not to allow yourself to love others.

If you have been married for any length of time, even though you love that other person dearly you know that with that love comes some pain. As you help them through trying times, or watch them go through physical calamities, or just get irritated at them sometimes...you have learned that even though you love them deeply, even though you have willingly agreed to share your life with him or her...they can sometimes be the most irritating people you have ever known and sometimes it just plain hurts emotionally to love them. If you have children then you have probably discovered that what was born sweet and innocent grows up. That what you held and cuddled in your arms as you saw that first look of recognition, heard that first giggle, that little person you gave your heart and love too, can sometimes take your heart and crush it. Can cause you grief and pain over some of what they do in life. And yet you keep loving them anyhow.

So the question becomes, “Why Love?” Why allow an emotion to take over that will result in some pain? Because that’s how we’re made!

**II – GOD IS LOVE:**

We are told over and over again in the Scriptures that “God Is Love” (1 John 4:16). We are told how much he loved us and wants us to love him. Over and over again in numerous passages we are told this and taught this. If I remember the beginning of our story with God in the book of Genesis we are told that we are made in whose image? GOD’S. It says that we are created in the image of God. If I am in the image of God then I must have that attribute of Love as passed on to us in that image.

And as I look again at Psalm 139 I see that love. I see a God who created me to know him and love him and to be loved by him. A God who didn't start me out as a casual acquaintance, but with a penetrating, intimate, knowing relationship between the Creator and the created. A God who makes us vulnerable to his knowledge, who has made our lives open to him all the time in all ways, whether good or bad. Our lives are a result of God's intentional actions, not just a biological accident. God is with us and we are with God. This should give us the confidence to trust all of our life with God.

But wait a minute...if there is pain caused between human and human who love one another...is there pain between God and humans? If we go back to the story of being created in his image at the very beginning and look at the story right after that one we see that it didn't take long for us to cause God pain. It didn't take long for the children to disappoint the father and cause him pain. All throughout our history we have continued to cause pain to the one who loves us the most...GOD.

I have to wonder as I think back over my life what the costs to God have been. The aches and the pains he has suffered because of my actions...my thoughts...my deeds? How much does his love for me cost him? If you think back over your lives I'm guessing you have to ask the same questions don't you? How much does his love for us cost him?

### **III – LOVE COSTS:**

Human love costs. There is a price to be paid for loving others and wanting them to love you. And sometimes that cost hurts! Sometimes the other person doesn't love you back the way you love them. Sometimes you are all in and they aren't. Sometimes our kids do really stupid things and it costs us a lot of time, energy, and sometimes money. But the biggest cost is how your heart breaks when they walk away from that love, when they tell you "I hate you" or tell you "I never want to see you again." They may be very young and not even know what they're doing...but it still hurts. You pay the price in that moment for your love.

Heavenly love costs too. God paid the ultimate price for loving you. No matter how many times his creation turned their backs on him, no matter how many times they worshipped idols instead of him, no matter how many chances he gave them to stop being a bunch of unruly children and turn back to him they continued to turn their backs on him. Continued to cause him pain and sorrow. Then one day his love costs him his own life. In the form of his one and only Son he came to earth and put on human skin, human pain, human sorrow, and human emotions. He became Emmanuel – God With Us. He was born in a stable, experienced our lives on our levels. And then after 3 years of ministry in his 30's he went to the cross and died for us to return us to a right standing with God. I see how much pain I and you caused him in this action. Have you ever seen the movie "The Passion of Christ" by Mel Gibson? I didn't go see it for a few years because I didn't want to see any more vividly what Jesus had done for me. I finally watched it one night and I was OK through the movie until the end of the crucifixion scene. Jesus is hanging on the cross dying and yells out that it's over and he gives his spirit to God and dies. It's at that moment it shows a giant drop of water falling

from the sky and making a hole in the dust at the bottom of the cross. It's at that moment I lost it because I realized it was a tear from heaven...shed by God as he witnessed the sacrifice of his one and only Son. Heavenly love for humankind had a cost. It caused God pain and sorrow. And yet we're told he did it out of love as John 3:16 says – "For God so LOVED the world that he gave his only begotten son..."

#### **IV – TEXT:**

Human love costs...heavenly love costs...it only follows that when you bring the two together there is a cost too. If we love Jesus and become a disciple we find that there is a cost to that too. Jesus himself describes the cost in this morning's text.

#### **Luke 14:25-33 (NLT)**

<sup>25</sup> A large crowd was following Jesus. He turned around and said to them, <sup>26</sup> "If you want to be my disciple, you must, by comparison, hate everyone else—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple. <sup>27</sup> And if you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple.

<sup>28</sup> "But don't begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it? <sup>29</sup> Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of money, and then everyone would laugh at you. <sup>30</sup> They would say, 'There's the person who started that building and couldn't afford to finish it!'

<sup>31</sup> "Or what king would go to war against another king without first sitting down with his counselors to discuss whether his army of 10,000 could defeat the 20,000 soldiers marching against him? <sup>32</sup> And if he can't, he will send a delegation to discuss terms of peace while the enemy is still far away. <sup>33</sup> So you cannot become my disciple without giving up everything you own.

There is a lot packed in to this one piece of Scripture.

Jesus is headed for Jerusalem and Luke again tells us how popular he has become with the people. There are large crowds of people following him. They are tagging along wherever he goes to hear his teachings, see his miracles. Some have come to believe he is who he says he is, others are trying to figure it out, and yet others are just curious. So Maybe Jesus is ready to start seeing who is serious. You can be a follower on the fringes or you can be a disciple in the inner circle. He tells them that to be a disciple was not an easy path. There was a cost to be paid. He uses the example that to follow him you have to hate everyone else. Hate your mother, father, brothers, sisters, wife, children, and even your own life.

Jesus is using this as a comparison. He isn't really telling them they need to hate their family or break the commandments about honoring mother and father. He's saying that when it comes to being his disciple he had to be the first love of their life and everything else came in second. Some families in his day and in ours did and do break apart over the decision to be a disciple of Jesus.

This goes to our possessions too. He's not telling us not to have any. In fact he gives us some to be good stewards of and use in his service. It's when those "things" become more important to us than Jesus is. When we follow them instead of following Jesus. Everything must become secondary to Jesus....family, job, hobby, possessions, money, EVERYTHING.

Then he tells them and us that if you don't pick up your cross and follow him, you can't be his disciple. Back in chapter 9 of Luke we see that Jesus adds that you have to do this daily. This is a conscious decision each and every moment of each and every day. Discipleship is an ongoing, demanding way of life that requires diligence, courage, and sacrifice. It comes with a cost. We can't cheapen the cross. It doesn't mean if you miss an OSU game to be a disciple you have made the ultimate sacrifice. The cross represents the brutal, bloody, crushing death of the one who saves you from your sins. Just because you're inconvenienced or whine a little bit means you have carried the cross.

This all goes to say as he points out that there is a cost to discipleship, a cost to love Jesus as he loved you and you should make sure you're willing and ready to pay it before you start down the path.

### **V – WILL YOU PAY THE COST:**

So the question is...will you pay the cost of love for your Lord and Savior? Will you shoulder your cross and follow Jesus and live as he calls you to live. Can you leave everything else behind and put him in the #1 spot?

Can you try? Will you try?

This Thursday night from 6 – 7:30 we will begin the study of the Sermon on the Mount. 3 chapters in the book of Matthew where Jesus tells the people how to live to be his disciple. It's a good place to start your journey. All you need is your Bible and I'd bring something to take notes.

Can you? Will you? I hope you'll start the journey of serious discipleship with us. I look forward to seeing you drag your cross there.

AMEN