

GROWTH GROUPS  
**WEEK 6**  
WEEK OF OCT 25



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Growth Group Fall 2020  
*What Will You Do?*

Week 6 – October 25, 2020 - Matthew 13:44-46 and Luke 14: 25-33

**Growth groups are one of the best and easiest ways to find community at a church. In this time of Corona19 and “social distancing” please don’t meet in person, but do continue to check in with each other. If your growth group would like to meet online or if you are aware of needs that the church can help fill, please let us know at [connect@ljpres.org](mailto:connect@ljpres.org). Thank you for loving and caring for each other.**

## Setting the Context

This week we look at a passage in Matthew and a passage in Luke where Jesus used parables to talk about the cost of discipleship. In the parables from Matthew, the leading emphasis is around the idea of being “moved by joy.” The farmer, who happens upon a treasure in the field, sells everything he has to possess the field. “Buried treasure” was not abnormal in the days of Jesus. Since there were no banks or safe deposit boxes people would often “bury” money or things of great value.

The merchant, in Matthew, is looking for pearls and comes upon a pearl of great price. He responds similarly to the farmer. He sells all that he has and purchases the pearl. Jesus says the kingdom of heaven is like the treasure or the pearl. It is of such value that people joyfully liquidate everything they have so they can “own” the field or the pearl. What is interesting is that neither the farmer or merchant really seem to count the cost. Their joy is so great and complete that they think nothing of relinquishing everything.

We should also note that the kingdom of heaven, in our text, is found by people who are searching, as well as by those who are just going about their daily tasks. The great news about the gospel of Jesus Christ is that it meets us where we are.

In Luke, the idea of counting the cost is certainly emphasized. Jesus starts by telling his followers to “hate” their family. Then he tells them to pick up their own cross and follow him. This is a very stark teaching and it is interesting that Jesus tells it to the crowd, and not just the disciples. In a family dominated culture Jesus is telling people that they need to re-prioritize their lives if they are going to follow him. Their new priority must be loving Jesus first.

To be a disciple we must be willing to carry our cross. To take up the cross means to put oneself in place of a condemned criminal. It is the last action a person takes, but it is okay because it reminds us that we are in Christ and that is all we need. There is nothing left to prove. The path of discipleship is not easy, but ultimately that path ends with glory and resurrection.

Disciples need to consider the cost of following Jesus. The gospel calls forth a response and it is a response of denying self and living for Jesus.



# Exploring the Text

**Read** Matthew 13:44-46 and Luke 14: 25-33

*“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.*

<sup>45</sup> *“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. <sup>46</sup> When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.*

<sup>25</sup> *Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: <sup>26</sup> “If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. <sup>27</sup> And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.*

<sup>28</sup> *“Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won’t you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? <sup>29</sup> For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, <sup>30</sup> saying, ‘This person began to build and wasn’t able to finish.’*

<sup>31</sup> *“Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won’t he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup> If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. <sup>33</sup> In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.*

## Questions

*If you are answering these questions alone, we would urge you to try journaling. Rather than just pondering the answers, try writing them out along with a prayer to the Lord.*

- 1) Have you ever gone looking for “buried treasure,” or “found” something of great value? What was that like?
- 2) Jesus defines the kingdom of heaven as “treasure” and a “pearl of great worth.” He is obviously using images to help make his point. How would you talk about the kingdom of heaven?
- 3) What is joy? Is joy different than happiness? Is it similar to “the peace that surpasses all understanding” that the apostle Paul writes about Philippians 4:7?
- 4) Luke 14:25 tells us that Jesus addressed this teaching to the crowd. The words that follow seem more appropriate for the disciples of Jesus, rather than the crowd. Why would Jesus speak with such strong words to the crowd?
- 5) Why do you think Jesus uses images like hating our parents and family, when it comes to being his disciple? How would the people of that society have responded to his teaching? Does that kind of language make you uncomfortable??
- 6) In Luke, Jesus tells two parables that discuss the importance of “counting the cost” of discipleship. How do those parables help us to consider what the “cost” is of following Jesus?
- 7) The people of Jesus’ day knew what it looked like to “literally” see a person carrying their cross. Why do you think Jesus uses the image of carrying our own cross in his teaching on discipleship?
- 8) We have been talking about discipleship for six weeks, focusing on following Jesus and becoming like Jesus. Have you taken any steps over the past couple of months in the area of your own personal discipleship?