

The Cost of Christ-Centered Living

In 2 Samuel 24, we see King David's repentance after committing a grave sin. Israel was afflicted because of his sin, but the plague stopped suddenly at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. David intended to build an altar to the Lord there on the instruction of Gad the prophet.

David offered to buy Araunah's threshing floor, but Araunah wanted to give it to David (v. 22-23). But David insisted on paying (v. 24). He refused to offer God something that has cost him nothing.

Contrary to the notion of easy-believism, there is always a cost in serving Christ. It can be great or small at times, but there is always a cost. We understand from daily living that whatever is worthwhile will cost us something--whether it be time, money, or other activities. What are those costs when it comes to living for Christ?

Christ-centered living will cost:

First, *it will cost you your favorite sins*. What do we knowingly tolerate? What sins do we indulge in? How do we know what sins we love?

- the sin we do not accept reproof for;
- the sin to which our thoughts most often run;
- the sin that has most power over us;
- the sin we argue to defend;
- the sin we think of first when we are troubled;
- the sin we have most trouble giving up.

What sins keep us in bondage? What grieves the Lord? Of what would you be ashamed if Jesus returned right now? What do you keep secret from others? What makes others suspect if you are genuine?

We must deal with favorite sins in order to be truly Christ-centered. Someone has said, "One stone in the pipe keeps out the water." One sin treasured will keep us out of fellowship with the Father.

Second, *it will cost you favor of the world*. 1 John 2:15-16 reminds us that God and the world (that is, this present human-centered world system) are at odds. The world loves darkness (1 John 3:19); God and His people love the light. The world tries to hide its sin; we are to shine with the light of God's truth (Matthew 5:16). The world rejected Christ and His followers (John 15:19-20).

J.C. Ryle, the evangelical Anglican bishop, wrote, "He must be content to be ill thought of by man if he pleases God."

Third, *it will cost you financially*. David bought the threshing floor and the oxen. Then he was ready to make his sacrifice. It cost him 50 shekels of silver, but it was well worth it to have the deep fellowship with the Lord. Jesus, in His teaching, emphasized the connection between our deepest desires and our spending of money. No matter how poor or wealthy someone may be, you can see a definite correlation of spending habits and devotion to the Lord.

Fourth, Christ centered living *will cost you first place in your affections*. Matthew 6:33 reminds us that we are to "Seek first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness." After you have put away your sins, what else is there that harbors your deep affections and desires? There are indeed many good things that compete for our attention, but ought they take the place of that which is best--our fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ?

Have you been offering Christ that which costs you nothing? Christ gave His all for you. Choose to be Christ-centered. There may be definite benefits in this life, but our focus should be centered on Christ, and finding in that, our life and breath and being, whether or not we benefit from such living.