

## • THE Gospel Part 16 – The Cost of Obedience – Study Guide

This study guide explores the **cost of obedience** as a necessary prerequisite for entering the Kingdom of God. It challenges the "free ride" theology of modern religious systems by emphasizing that while **redemption is an irrevocable act of God**, the future **inheritance is conditional** upon a life of sacrifice and "agony". Using the conversion of **Saul of Tarsus** as a model, the text illustrates that God's sovereign calling often targets His enemies to demonstrate His mercy, yet that calling comes with a mandate to **suffer for His name**. Through the **Parable of the Great Banquet**, the source warns against the "excuses" of temporal life—possessions, business, and family—which can lead even the redeemed to be excluded from the Kingdom.

### Definitions of Key Words

- **Cost of Obedience:** The sacrifice, suffering, and "agony" required of a redeemed person to follow Christ and enter the Kingdom; it is contrasted with the "free ride" often taught in modern churches.
- **Redemption:** God's sovereign, past act of purchasing a people (the elect) by the blood of Christ.
- **Salvation / Inheritance:** A future, conditional event determined by how a redeemed person lives their life and whether they "pay the cost" of following Christ.
- **Subjunctive Mood:** A grammatical state used in scripture (e.g., "may receive") that expresses the **probable completion** of an action while acknowledging the possibility that the action may fail to be completed.
- **Agonize:** The strenuous, intentional effort required to enter the narrow gate; it is the price of obedience.
- **Outer Darkness:** A place of exclusion and regret for the **disobedient redeemed** who manifested spiritual power but failed to follow the Father's specific directions.
- **Temporal:** The seen, physical things of this life (property, family, business) that often become "excuses" for neglecting the Kingdom.

### Expansion of Key Points

## 1. The Necessity of Counting the Cost

Jesus Christ explicitly instructed His followers to **count the cost** before "signing on the line". Just as one does not attempt to build a mansion or go to war without first assessing their resources, the redeemed must determine if they are willing to **sacrifice their lives** to enter the Kingdom (**Luke 14:28-33**). Modern religious systems often hide these "clauses" by teaching there is no cost, yet the scriptures dictate that following the Messiah is a "rough ride" requiring total commitment.

## 2. Redemption vs. The "May Receive" of Inheritance

The distinction between redemption and inheritance is fundamental to scriptural clarity. According to **Hebrews 9:12-15**, Christ secured "age-lasting redemption" for those who are called; however, the text uses the **active subjunctive** regarding the inheritance, stating they "**may receive**" it. This indicates that receiving the Kingdom is not guaranteed; it is a **probable outcome** that depends on the redeemed person's actions and obedience.

## 3. The Sovereign Calling: The Case of Saul

The conversion of Saul (Paul) in **Acts 9** demonstrates that God's calling is based on His mercy rather than human will or works (**Romans 9:11-16**). Saul was a murderer and an "enemy of God" who was not looking for Jesus when he was called. Significantly, Saul's conversion involved **no "sinner's prayer" or quoted Bible verses**; it was a sovereign act of God choosing an instrument to carry His name.

## 4. The "Sufferance" Job Description

The "selling job" Jesus performed on Saul involved a mandate of suffering. God told Ananias in **Acts 9:16** that He would show Saul "**how much he must suffer for the sake of my name**". This highlights that the call to follow Christ is a call to persecution and difficulty, which is why "few" are willing to pay the price.

## 5. The Parable of Excuses and the Banquet

The **Parable of the Great Banquet** (**Luke 14:16-24**) illustrates how the redeemed distract themselves with the temporal. The guests offered "credible" excuses based on **property (fields), business (oxen), and family (marriage)**. Because these "sons of the kingdom" prioritized themselves and their own diaries, the Master became angry and declared they would **not "get a taste" of His banquet**.

## 6. Radical Priority: Loving Christ More than Family

Jesus set an uncompromising standard for discipleship in **Matthew 10:37**, stating that anyone who loves father, mother, son, or daughter more than Him is "**not worthy**" of Him. Being a disciple requires a person to **renounce all they have** and take up their cross, putting their own life in a position of "hate" relative to their devotion to the Messiah (**Luke 14:26-27**).

## 7. The Deceitful Heart

Many believers believe they will be "okay" regardless of their lack of change because "God knows my heart". However, **Jeremiah 17:9** warns that the heart is "**deceitful above all things and desperately wicked**". Consequently, the redeemed must rely on God's mercy and grace at the judgment seat rather than the perceived goodness of their own hearts.

### Biblical References within the Source

- **Genesis / Leviticus 16:** Reference to the tent of meeting and atonement.
- **Jeremiah 17:9:** The deceitful and wicked nature of the human heart.
- **Ezekiel / Daniel 12:2:** Resurrection of the just and the unjust.
- **Matthew 5-7:** The Sermon on the Mount and the narrow gate.
- **Matthew 10:37-39:** Loving family more than Christ; losing life to find it.
- **Matthew 22:** The wedding banquet and the invitation to Israel.
- **Luke 14:12-14:** Being repaid at the resurrection of the just.
- **Luke 14:16-24:** The Great Banquet and the excuses of the invited.
- **Luke 14:26-33:** Counting the cost; renouncing all to be a disciple.
- **Acts 9:1-33:** The conversion of Saul; his blindness and the mandate to suffer.
- **Romans 1:7:** Addressing those already called by God.
- **Romans 9:11-16:** God's purpose in election; Jacob and Esau; mercy and human will.
- **Romans 11:28-29:** Irrevocable calling; redeemed as "enemies" for a time.
- **Hebrews 9:12-15:** Christ entering the holy place once; the "may receive" of the inheritance.

### Study Questions

- According to the sources, why is it necessary to "**count the cost**" before following Christ?
- What does the "**subjunctive mood**" in Hebrews 9:15 imply about the future inheritance of the redeemed?
- Why is the conversion of **Saul of Tarsus** used to illustrate that redemption does not depend on human will?
- In the **Parable of the Great Banquet**, what were the three main excuses given by the guests?
- How does the source define the difference between "**redemption**" and "**salvation/inheritance**"?
- What is the significance of the Master's response to the excuses in **Luke 14**?

### Answer Key

- Because entering the Kingdom requires **sacrifice and agony**; one must ensure they are willing to finish the "building" they started by renouncing all they have.
- It indicates that the inheritance is **conditional and probable**, but not guaranteed; it depends on the actions and obedience of the redeemed.
- Because Saul was a **murderer and an enemy** of the church who was not seeking God when he was sovereignly called and chosen.
- Buying a **field** (land), buying **five yoke of oxen** (business/equipment), and **getting married** (family).
- **Redemption** is the irrevocable act of being purchased by God; **Salvation/Inheritance** is a future, optional reward based on walking in the Father's will.
- The Master became **angry** and excluded the invited guests from His banquet, showing that "credible" temporal excuses lead to being **cast out** of the Kingdom.

### Exhortations

- **Count the Cost Today:** Do not blindly follow a religious system that promises a "free ride." **Sit down and deliberate** whether you are willing to sacrifice your life for the Messiah.
- **Prepare in the Present:** Do not wait for Christ to return to start your

preparation. The time to **agonize for the narrow gate** and change your life is **now**.

- **Prioritize the Eternal:** Reject the "excuses" of the temporal world. Do not let your **possessions, business, or family** take precedence over the invitation to the Kingdom Banquet.
- **Embrace the Sufferance:** Understand that being a follower of Christ involves **suffering and persecution**. If you are looking for an easy life, you are listening to a "watered down" gospel.
- **Guard Your Heart:** Recognize that your heart is **deceitful and wicked**. Do not rely on your "good intentions," but strive for the **active change** required by the King.