

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

**Think Twice about Discipleship** Thirty-first Week in Ordinary Time Wednesday,  
November 5, 2014 8:15 AM **Phil 2:12-18; Lk 14:25-33** (The most important thing is  
a relationship with God in Christ and our being connected to Christ, which begins in our  
Baptism when we become part of his body.)

**“In the same way, everyone of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot  
be my disciple.”**

Here we see **Jesus** once again not the salesman, if I dare say, not the evangelist, not trying  
to get followers at all, but **warning people about the cost of true discipleship. He is  
addressing the crowds here**, Luke is very clear. It starts out “Great crowds were traveling  
with Jesus.” He is trying to say, well, you know, you really ought to think about this. Do you  
really want to be here with me, because if you want to be my disciple, **you have to be  
willing to pick up your cross?** The cross is of course a symbol and a sign of death. You  
have to be willing to die, to let go of life, to let go of what you have, including your families:  
hating your father and mother. It sounds like a strong word. It’s parabolic. It’s exaggerated,  
but it makes the point. **If you are going to be Jesus’ disciple, then nothing can come  
before Jesus and his mission**, not father, not mother.

Now to devout Jews taking care of parents was a primary responsibility, and it is in the  
natural order. This is more important. **To be a disciple of Jesus is supernatural.** It  
transcends the natural order. It puts the natural order almost into a shadow. So brothers and  
sisters and wives and husbands and all of that, all that’s important, it’s all part of who we are  
at this moment of our lives, but it’s not the most important thing. **The most important thing  
is a relationship with God in Christ and our being connected to Christ, which begins in  
our Baptism when we become part of his body**, a member of his body with a purpose  
within his body that goes beyond anything that we might have in this world, any role, any

responsibility, any position, any profession, any occupation, all of which are important but not as important as this place we have in the body of Christ, this mission if you will, this ministry if you will.

In a way Jesus is trying to tell people to **think twice about getting involved with him.** He used these two examples. What if someone is building a tower, and he says, well, you know, you need certain resources to build a tower. What good is the start if you can't finish? The same with discipleship. **What good is it to get involved with Christ if you are not going to continue with Christ?** This is reflected in the first reading when it talks about working out your salvation. It's well and good to come to the gift of faith, but now perseverance is what's required, working out our faith, finishing the tower. Do we have the wherewithal to do that? **Now spiritually we will be given all the gifts we need, but do we have the willingness?** Do we foresee that it's going to cost an awful lot? You could say the same thing about marriage. Do you have what it takes to sacrifice yourself for another person? Here do you have what it takes to sacrifice yourself for Christ? But what about a general or a king with an army. You know, **life is a battle**, like it or not. This is not paradise. Life is a battle.

Now on our own we really cannot overcome the enemy. **We can only overcome the enemy with the power of Christ**, with his force, with his power. So we have to recognize what we can't do and what we can do. **We have to discern what we are willing to do versus what we are not really willing to do.** This is all part of being a disciple of Jesus.