

The Lord's Message: Toxic Jesus? Hatred of Family?

Date: October 4, 2026

Where: Tilghman Methodist Church

Scripture Reference: Luke 14:25-33

For the month of October, we are going to begin a new sermon series entitled "Toxic Jesus?". Jesus made statements which, as we read them from the Bible, they seem very toxic to us. For example, the statement which we are going to look at this morning in verse 26, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters-yes, even his own life- he cannot be my disciple." What is Jesus saying?

Let us pray.

If you might remember the Ten Commandments, not the ten suggestions, one of those commandments is to "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you." In **Matthew 5:17-20**, Jesus says that He has not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it. He also goes on to say that if anyone breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. Then Jesus doubles down on this and says that unless your righteousness surpasses the Pharisees, you will certainly not enter into the kingdom of heaven. In other words, if you break a commandment and teach others to do the same, then you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Very strict statements.

The Greek word used here for hate is *miseo*. *Miseo* does mean to hate, detest, or regard with ill will. The Hebrew word for hate is *sane*. This is the same word used in **Genesis 29:31**. If you remember the story, Jacob was told by his father, Isaac, to go to his mother's land to marry a woman there and not in Canaan. Jacob did as his father told him, he fell in love with Rachel the daughter of Laban. Laban tricked Jacob and instead Jacob ended up marrying Leah, the old sister of Rachel. Then after working another seven years, Laban finally consented and allowed Jacob to marry Rachel. In verse 30, it says that Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah. In the NIV translation of verse 31, says that "When the Lord saw that Leah was not loved." In the King James translation of this verse, it says "And the Lord saw that Leah was hated." What is going on here? Did Jacob really hate Leah or did Jacob love Rachel more than Leah? I think the latter is true. Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah.

The same idea is occurring in **Luke 14:26**. Jesus is using hyperbole to intentionally create a strong reaction when saying we should love Him more than our father or mother, our sister or brother, or even our very lives. Examples of hyperbole would be “I am so hungry I could eat a horse, or this bag weighs a ton, or I have told you a million times.” Jesus is not telling us to literally hate our parents, or siblings, or even our lives. Jesus is saying that if we are going to be His disciples, then He must be first in our lives.

Jesus further emphasizes this point in verse 27, by saying that we need to carry our cross or we cannot be His disciple. A person carrying a cross in Biblical times was a person heading to a crucifixion. Jesus is saying that you need to completely surrender your life to Him. This is not a one-time event, but a daily act of obedience. We do this not to receive salvation. Salvation was paid in full by Jesus on the cross. We cannot change that fact. We can only accept it. The reason for our surrender our life to be obedient to Jesus is in gratitude for what Jesus has already done for us. We want to be a disciple of Jesus.

Deciding to be a disciple of Jesus is not an off the cuff decision. This is not a decision that is made because everyone else is making that decision. This is not a decision that we make because our parents have made that decision. No, this is a decision that requires careful examination. Jesus points this out in verses 28-32.

In verses 28-30, He gives us this scenario of a person who is building a tower. He says that the person should start by sitting down and estimating the cost of building the tower. He must be certain that he has enough money to complete it or if he does not, he will look like a fool if he is unable to complete the foundation. There have been many building projects started and not brought to completion. There is bridge in West Virginia that has no road to it. A tunnel in North Carolina that was supposed to connect one county with another and was never completed. There are high rises throughout the world that are uncompleted because the owner ran out of funds.

In the other example in verses 31-32, a king goes off to war. He sits down and determines whether he can win the war. If he figures that he cannot win the war, then before he is slaughtered, he should ask the other king what the peace terms might be.

Once we have counted the cost and determined that we want to be Jesus’ disciple, then in verse 33, we come to the realize that everything we have is His.

The cost of discipleship is a serious commitment. It shows in how we live our lives for Him. We see it and know it. People around us see it and know it. Jesus sees it and knows it. The Good News is that when we fail, notice I said “when” and not “if,” we can confess our sins and receive forgiveness for our sins.

Jesus is not being toxic here. Jesus is saying that we must love Him more than all our other relationships or possessions. I like that Jesus uses hyperbole to point this out. I think that it causes all of us to stop and consider the cost of what it means to be a disciple for Him.

Sadly, some of the new translations of the Bible have taken out the word, “hate” and changed it to “more than.”

In **Mark 12:29-31**, Jesus says these are the two greatest commandments.

So, let us continue to listen to God and do what He says. Amen.