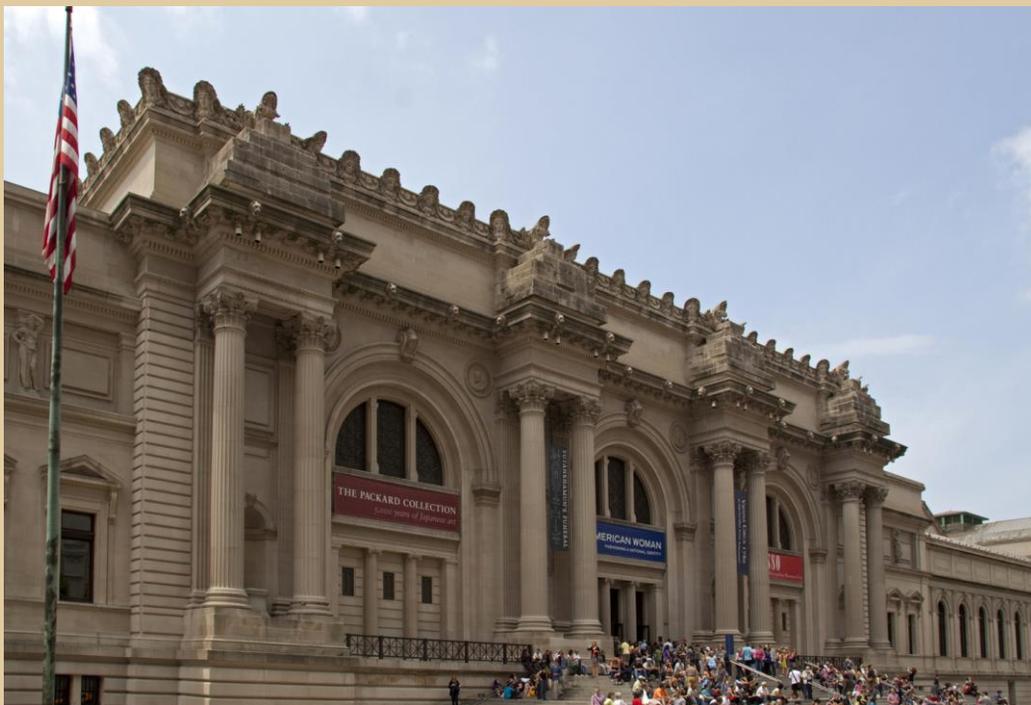


Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC



Siena Cathedral, Italy







Why do tasks go unfinished?

- 1) We underestimate the cost of completion.
 - Financial
 - Time
 - Ability
 - Interest
 - Etc.
- Cost divides into two categories.
 - i. Resources
 - ii. Motivation



The Challenge

- ^{NAS} **Philippians 3:14** ... press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.
- ^{NIV} **1 Corinthians 9:24** Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.
- ^{NAS} **Hebrews 3:14** For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end;
- ^{NAS} **Hebrews 6:11** And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end,
- ^{ESV} **Hebrews 12:1** ... let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,
- ^{NAS} **Luke 9:62** But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."



**Do we have the resources we need
to successfully finish?**



Resources? Yes

- ^{NAS} **2 Corinthians 12:9** And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you ..."
- ^{NAS} **Luke 11:13** "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"
- ^{NIV} **2 Corinthians 1:20** For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.
- ^{NAS} **Philippians 4:13** I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.
- ^{NAS} **Romans 8:37** But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.



What is Jesus worth to you?



No, what is Jesus *really* worth to you?



Weigh the Cost

- ^{NIV} **Luke 14:25** Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: ... ²⁸ "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? ²⁹ For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, ³⁰ saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.' ³¹ "Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? ³² 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. ³³ In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.



The Cost of Discipleship

- ^{NIV} **Luke 14:26** "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. ²⁷ And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. ... ³³ In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple."



Not Teaching Hate

- ^{NAS} **Matthew 5:43** "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ "But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you ⁴⁵ in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; ...
- ^{NAS} **Romans 12:14** Bless those who persecute you; bless and curse not.
- ^{NAS} **Romans 12:20** "But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.



Not Teaching Neglect or Abuse

- ^{NIV} **Mark 7:9** And he said to them: "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! ¹⁰ For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.' ¹¹ But you say that if a man says to his father or mother: 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is Corban' (that is, a gift devoted to God), ¹² then you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother. ¹³ Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that."
- ^{NIV} **1 Timothy 5:8** If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.



Teaching Put God First

- ^{NAS} **Matthew 22:36** "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" ³⁷ And He said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' ³⁸ "This is the great and foremost commandment. ³⁹ "The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰ "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.
- ^{NIV} **Matthew 6:24** "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.



The Cost of Discipleship

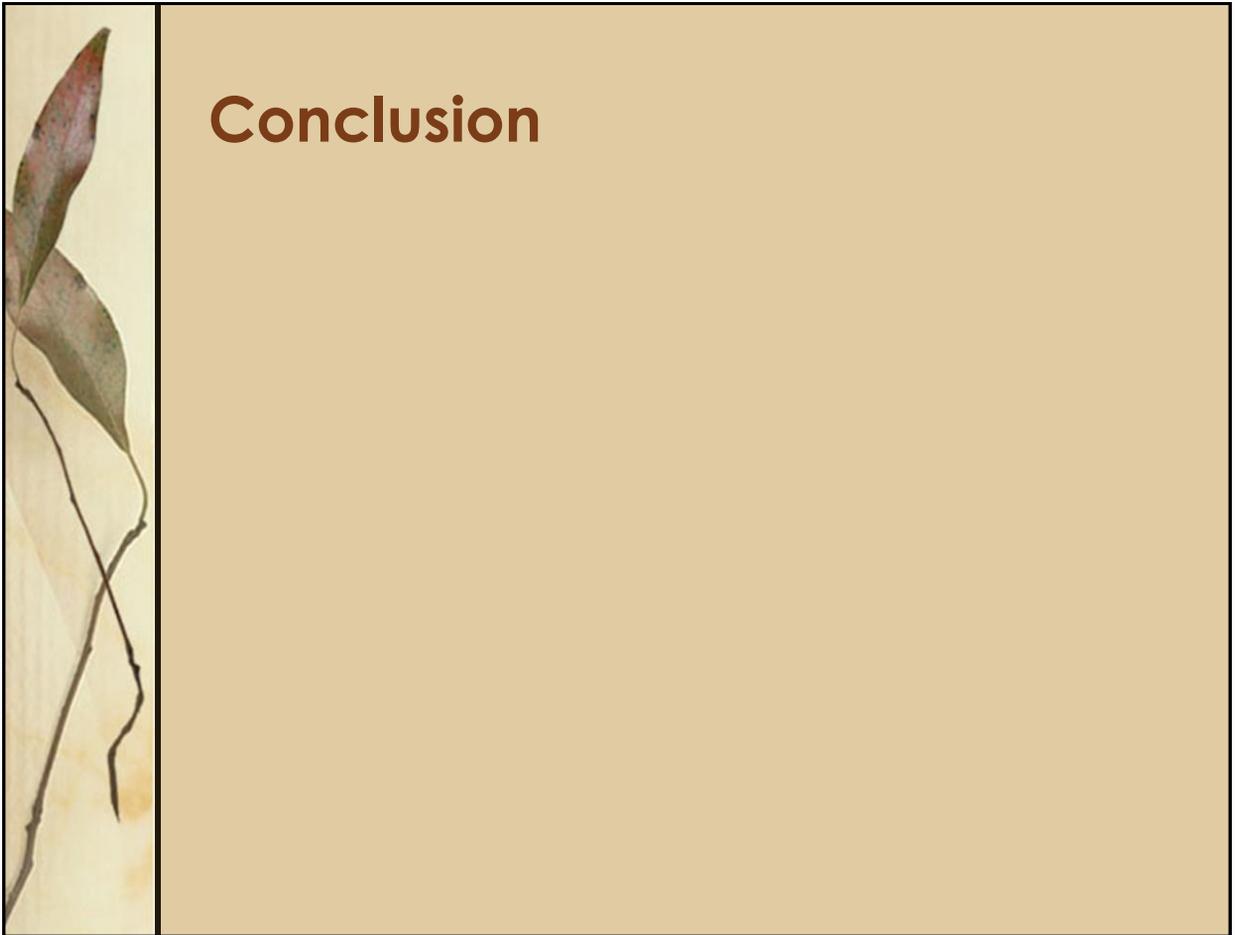
- “Jesus indicates the stringent demands which accompany his invitation to God’s banquet. Discipleship means a person’s readiness to place his claims above those of both family and self. Disciples must be prepared to deny themselves completely—whether *carry his cross* means literally to be ready for martyrdom or metaphorically to ‘die’ to all personal desires. People should count the cost involved in saying ‘No’ to self before starting on a course which they may not be able to follow to the end. A disciple who gives up in midstream because the going is too tough is like salt which has lost its taste and is unfit for seasoning food or even for use on the ground; it cannot be made useful again.”

➤ *I. Howard Marshall, New Bible Commentary*



Examples

- Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna (d. 155 AD) - "Eighty and six years I have served Him, and He has done me no wrong. How then can I blaspheme my King and Savior? You threaten me with a fire that burns for a season, and after a little while is quenched; but you are ignorant of the fire of everlasting punishment that is prepared for the wicked."
- Bonhoeffer (d. 1945 AD) – "I have come to the conclusion that I made a mistake in coming to America. I must live through this difficult period in our national history with the people of Germany. I will have no right to participate in the reconstruction of Christian life in Germany after the war if I do not share the trials of this time with my people"



Conclusion



Our Lord

- ^{NAS} **John 3:16** "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.
- ^{NIV} **John 15:12** My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.
- ^{NAS} **Romans 5:6** For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly... ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.



Our Dedication

- ^{NAS} **Philippians 3:7** But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, ⁹ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, ¹⁰ that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹ in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.



Our Mission

- ^{NAS} **Galatians 6:14** But may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.
- ^{NAS} **Philippians 3:12** Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. ¹³ Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.