

# **MIDWEEK SERVICE AT ALL SAINTS CATHEDRAL**

## **KAMPALA 21<sup>ST</sup> JUNE 2017**

**SHARING BY Rev. Canon Amos Turyahabwe Tindyebwa**

- Opening Prayer
- Self introduction especially about my walk with the Lord since 14<sup>th</sup> October 1976
- Marital status
- Work and ministry
- Appreciation to management of All Saints for invitation
- Appreciating the people for coming and God for enabling you to come despite your busy schedules in Kampala we cannot not take you for granted.

I was given a topic of **“THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP** “in the text of Matthew 16: 24-28 //Luke 14:25//Mark 8:31-9:1.

### **The meaning of the topic:**

A Disciple means a learner or a follower who learns from his/her teacher or master and leader. The word disciple also comes from the same root word for discipline. Straight away, this gives us a sense that whoever is called upon to be a follower, a learner, is expected to show the highest level of discipline in as far as following the master is concerned. Discipleship therefore is a process of growing in the discipline of learning how to follow the master, the leader and the teacher.

The idea of the word Cost has the connotation of the price to pay for something. In the context of our sharing today and in the context of the texts mentioned above, Jesus gives a teaching that He was going to go to the cross to die to pay the final cost for our salvation. In the preceding verses 21-23 and even 19, Peter had expressed his commitment and knowledge of who Christ was as the Messiah from God but who was to live with them forever without facing death and at worst the death of the cross. The death on the Cross was very embarrassing and meant for criminal among the Roman government. And Peter perhaps as a zealot was thinking this is not the way for you to go g but to stay with us and begin to give us our rewards for our support for you and be able to rule and “Fall into things” as people say when one is given a position of responsibility.

To Peter, these ideas seemed contradictory. Surely the Messiah could not die. He expected Him to be recognized by the Jewish people and be given the throne of His father David. (v. 22). Jesus would then subdue the world, beginning with the Romans, and would rule the world on God’s behalf from Zion and so because Peter had no idea of the suffering messiah and he took Jesus aside to rebuke Him.

Jesus understood Peter’s rebuke as a temptation from Satan and He gave him the same treatment He had given Satan in Mat. 4:10 during His temptation in the wilderness and said **“Get out of here Satan”**.

To Christ our teacher, leader and mentor, the cross was not optional but it was an integral part of his mission. There could be no glory without it. His attitude contrasts with that of many of us and our leaders who use any appointment to the position of responsibility as a chance for personal gain. But Jesus was prepared to die in order that the whole world that believes in Him would gain eternal life.

Therefore Jesus expects no less of His disciples. A follower of Christ therefore a disciple like his/her master is expected to do 3 things namely: deny him/herself, take up his/her cross and follow Jesus (V. 24).

- Self denial means abandoning one's assumed right to self determination. Only God's will matters for life and for eternity
- Cross bearing requires surrendering even one's life in order to fulfill one's calling to discipleship. Bearing the cross is not easy and in this case it is used to even refer to situations of suffering where followers of Christ face afflictions or even persecutions for righteousness' sake, every trouble that befalls us for either doing well or not doing ill. The troubles of Christians are fitly described as crosses. And Jesus makes it very clear that in this life we shall suffer but He makes it clearer by saying that if we suffer for what is right we should rejoice and He puts it this way

**“Blessed are you when people mock you, persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way.” (Matthew 5:11-12 NLT)**

Carry your cross and continue following Jesus - (An illustration of a Roman Catholic husband who looked at his wife as the cross and he took her to the Rev. Father)

- Following is walking in the footsteps of Jesus, doing what He came to do .It is worth losing everything in life in order to gain Christ's approval. The final destination of followers of Jesus is not earthly bound but heaven bound. That

is why we deny ourselves all other things and friends it my prayer that we shall not have a double loss – lose here and lose in heaven.

But Jesus rebukes Peter on v. 23 and actually calls him Satan for he spoke as a mere human being like anyone else. Yes, friends we are in the world but we are not of the world. And Jesus after this gives his followers a hard message that while salvation which He gives is free it is not cheap. (Turn to your neighbor and tell them “Salvation is not cheap”).

Yes, following Christ which in this case is synonymous to salvation is absolutely free and yet very costly. It is freely given to us but once we get it we must walk in it following the footsteps of our master who is its author and perfector of our faith as the writer to Hebrews 12:2 teaches us.

In the text of our sharing and other parallel texts as given in these 3 gospels, we learn that following Jesus Christ as Lord and savior calls upon us to turn from our selfish desires and follow Jesus in obedience and humility.

*Humility is complete absence of pride. It is solid foundation of all virtues. Humility is emancipation from oneself freedom from the urge of boast, it is the correct estimate of oneself, an estimate which neither degrades nor exalts.*

Every disciple in this case the follower of Jesus needs this kind of discipline – I need it, you need it and we all need it as a church. Praise the Lord.

**Isaac Watts in one of his songs “Come dearest Lord” he says:**

*I have given up all for Jesus  
This vain world is naught to me  
All its pleasures are forgotten  
In remembering Calvary.*

Friends, following Jesus is costly because it calls for giving up all. **All** means **all** including what would be your pleasures and rights because of knowing that our master and savior who is /was God emptied Himself of all the glory and in humility suffered shame and went to the cross and yet this is why we now exist as a Church. (Philippians 2:1ff).

As we continue to follow Christ I would like to point out just a few things that make it hard to do so on our own:

- ❖ **Opposition:** we now live in the world where opposition and rebellion is the order of the day. There is opposition if you insist on what is right – You block people's way and you will not be popular
- ❖ **Attention:** As we labour to follow the Lord as our master and as His disciples, there are many things calling for our attention. We live in the age of distraction, smart phones and entertainment, economic plans and individual development plans and for those of us who work we count years and we must do something for our future including retirement plans-(I am personally 55 years I do not know you and this is another challenge among the believers declaring their age). For heaven's sake am not saying these plans and pursuing them is bad but am saying are we pursuing them in line with following our master or we ask Him to excuse us for now?
- ❖ **Pleasing others:** This is a great cost for some of us because as Paul says in 2Timothy 2: 4 “**Our aim is to please the one who enlisted us**”. Not everyone who joins us in church and even at worst fellowships with us is worth pleasing. One of the hardest aspects in discipleship is choice and selection. Jesus chose the 12 and left many thousands at the time. In discipleship, it is important to remember that our aim is and should be to please Jesus and this will in many cases as already mentioned cost us our

favor with certain persons, especially when we have to say NO to involvement in programmes that do not give glory to God. Yes we lose friends but gain Christ and His future glory. **“What shall it benefit you if you gain the whole world and lose your own soul? Jesus asked His disciples. (Matthew 16:26).** We must make choices to please God not man because at the end of the day it is required of us to give an account to our master and creator.

- ❖ **Perseverance:** Following Christ in this challenging world is not easy but it is possible because He overcame and needless to say we look up to Him as our Lord, savior , friend and model, and we are forward looking for living with Him in future glory. Praise the Lord. We need patience and discipline to obey and listen to our teacher/mentor.

But then what can we do since we are heaven bound despite the challenges?

1. We must on daily basis carry our cross/es and follow on in the footsteps of our master
2. Forgive those who make following Jesus hard for us at all levels-families you could be the only one who is born again and people are even tired of your prayers –where is your God and what has He done for you? At work place, in business etc. Forgive and bless them do not curse them (Rom 12: 14) and exactly like our master did when he would have pronounced their death at Calvary, He said **“Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.”**
3. We should continue to do what is right before God our master who called us and selected us to be His disciples. Let us continue to make Him the Lord of our plans even when we have many pressures around us -the world, the

body and the devil, let us remember that like us in all ways our master was tempted but He is a conqueror and so we are.

4. Finally let us stand and speak like St. Paul in Romans 8:31-37, and say that nothing shall separate us from the love of God and v. 37 “No, despite all things we are more than conquerors in Christ Jesus who loved us” (NLT) God bless you and continue to be faithful disciples no matter what the world and all that is in it says. In the name of God the Father, the son and the Holy Spirit. AMEN and AMEN.