



BBC UPDATE

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP



M. Ryan Strouse

Introduction

Biblical discipleship and counting the cost of obedience to Christ has been obscured by universal church doctrine and fundamentalism, which are both pervasive in varying degrees in American churches. The Lord's standard for discipleship is all or nothing and it is to be based within the context of an *ekklesia*. Nevertheless, the human nature in believers attempts to pick and choose to what extent they will surrender to the Lord, or to seek to be a rogue disciple that "serves the Lord" outside of the Lord's institution. Many seek to serve the Lord and be a disciple on their own terms instead of submitting to His terms located in the everlasting Word of God. This common practice is the insidious result of the aberrant universal church doctrine that indicates that all believers are baptized into one universal body of Christ. The fluid nature of that doctrine allows for no accountability of believers within individual churches; hence, believers just hop from one church to the next when they are held accountable or unwilling to submit to the direction of the pastor. Furthermore, the lack of accountability to the Lord's *ekklesia* allows for the permeation of para-church ministries; in essence, if one pastor or church cannot get it right then the rogue disciple will serve the Lord in a ministry of their own making. Counting the cost of true discipleship is rooted in submission to Christ, His Word, His *ekklesia*, and His pastor (the position, not the man). What good is a disciple that claims to submit to Christ, but cannot submit to the Lord's "My Church"?

While most Pastors and believers have experiential knowledge of counting the cost, some believers may view this as an archaic teaching that does not have full command in the present time. Even more, some may understand the theory, but they continue to prioritize temporal things over spiritual and are easily dissuaded from spiritual commitments (assembling, personal study in the Word, prayer life, etc). Persecution forced believers from the time of Christ through most of Baptist history to consider the cost of walking in obedience to Christ at the beginning of their sanctification; nevertheless, present day believers can have a "Sunday School Perspective" on living a life for Christ, which exudes a soft perspective on walking with Christ. Many churches have perpetuated a weakened perspective on discipleship and accountability that can allow for a sustainable membership. The Lord Jesus Christ clearly taught that true discipleship requires one to lose their own life, bear their own cross, follow after the master, and submit to the headship of Christ; therefore, the believer needs to consider these costs early in their sanctification. The believer that does not count the cost of discipleship from a biblical perspective can be quickly knocked out of the race when an unexpected cost blindsides their walk. True discipleship is a packaged deal that is not sustainable if the believer tries to pick and choose the concessions they will give to the Lord.

Count the Cost

Total surrender as a disciple is the Lord's expectation for all church members to follow, serve, and worship Christ in the *ekklesia*. Total surrender of one's life to the LORD costs everything. Unfortunately, total surrender and counting the cost of discipleship is often mistakenly reserved

Article Cont'd. on Page 2

for those going into “Full time ministry” or to the mission field. Paul’s letter to the six, small house churches and specific church members in Rome debunked this modern and casual approach when under divine inspiration he penned Romans 12:1, *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”* Paul’s call for total surrender echoed the Lord’s teaching for following Him: hating ones family (putting Jesus above all others), hating one’s life, daily bearing their cross and following Christ, and forsaking possessions (Luke 14:25-33). The feeble house churches in Rome read and applied the *Book of Romans*, which led to thousands being saved and scores of house churches being started in Rome. What more of an impact could our assemblies make if every church member surrendered to the Lord’s criteria for discipleship?

In Luke 14:25-33, the Lord Jesus puts forth instruction and two parables that highlight the necessity of counting the cost of following Jesus. The Lord lays out criteria in this passage for following Him: hating ones family (putting Jesus above all others), hating one’s life, daily bearing their cross and following Christ, and forsaking possessions. In verse 26, Jesus uses the Jewish idiom of hating something and loving another; in essence, it means to love and prioritize the walk with Christ over everything else. Jesus previously indicated in Luke 10:27, *“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.”* The Lord demanded believers love him with heart, soul, strength, and mind; a love that gave Him preeminence over any other person or thing in life. The Lord was not calling for a hatred and neglect of family, but for preeminence in one’s life that would exude truth and love to those around them. During the earthly ministry of Christ, converted Jews faced severe rebuke, criticism, and rejection from immediate family members that rejected Jesus as the Messiah. These believers would have to choose who they would love more as their relatives made it toxically uncomfortable for them live and share their faith. Included in the list in verse 26 is hating one’s own life; this is a continuation of His teaching in Luke 9:23, *“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.”* The Lord is asking for disciples to reject a life based on self-interest and self-fulfillment, and instead seek to fulfill the will of the Lord.

The Lord’s first parable reveals the common sense of any reasonable individual that would start a building project; that person would carefully and diligently sit down to plan the costs of supplies for the entirety of the project. Unfortunately, the individual that does not consider all the expenses beyond the initial foundation will realize they cannot complete the building project. The Lord indicates that there is public shame that follows the individual that started but could not finish the project. The Lord uses the unique phrase *“Counteth the cost”* as an action of diligence in planning to build. The Greek verb *ψηφίζω (psphizo)* is used only twice in the *Textus Receptus (TR)* and it simply means “to count” or “to calculate.” The Greek noun *δαπάνη (dapane)* is used only once in the TR and it means “cost” or “expense.” The act of diligently counting and assessing the cost of discipleship should mirror the parabolic example of counting the entire cost of materials for a project and determining if one has enough funds and the desire to spend the necessary cost. The Lord wants believers to seriously consider and prepare for the costs of discipleship so they anticipate and persevere when they arrive.



The Cost of No Accountability

The Lord gave a broad and sweeping criteria for following Him; however, Scripture provides specific costs of discipleship such as: the cost of our will, the cost of our sight (a life of faith), the cost of family relationships, the cost of life, and the cost of no accountability to name a few. This author will focus on the cost of no accountability. A disciple of Christ forfeits a life of no spiritual accountability to the Word of God, and submits to the Lord and His institution; the *ekklesia*. The cost of no spiritual accountability probably deters more casual disciples than anything else. The rogue disciple that doesn't submit to the Lord's institution, church membership, and a pastor is in rebellion; Submission to the Lord's *ekklesia* requires humility and subjection to being held accountable. Many "self-made" adults balk at the idea of submitting to the seemingly feeble and foolish *ekklesia*; they often claim to submit to Christ in their personal walk, but not to a pastor or assembly. The varied and pervasive universal church doctrine has allowed for misconstrued ideas on church membership and accountability. In particular, some individuals claim they only answer to Christ; however, they entirely miss the integration of Christ, His body/assembly, and discipleship. True disciples follow Christ and His Word; hence, they need to serve and submit to Him in the "*House of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth*" (1 Tim. 3:15).

The Lord's *ekklesia* model is perfect; however, He uses saved sinners to carry out its mission. The atrocities of abused pastoral authority in Catholic, Protestant, and fundamental Baptist churches have triggered many to be wary and distrustful of following and submitting to a man. Revelation 1:20-2:1 reveals the importance of ensuring a believer is in a true candlestick assembly, "*The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches. Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.*" In a biblical *ekklesia*, the saved pastor is in the hand of the Lord and has direct accountability to the Lord for how he runs that particular church. The pastor of an assembly has tremendous responsibility on how they proceed, and should live in light of this Truth. The believer's role is to ensure they are in a biblical church, and then to submit to the Word by submitting to the role of pastor, not the man.

Conclusion

In His infinite wisdom, the Lord uses a multi-pronged approach to accountability to the Word of God, which ultimately warns believers from wandering from truth; the multi-pronged approach insulates from the abuse of lording over another. The multiple forms of accountability for the disciple within the *ekklesia* include the following: 1) holding oneself accountable to the Word of God (Ps. 119:59, Prov. 4:26), 2) true friends that hold you accountable to the Word of God (Prov. 27:17, Mt. 18:15), 3) a pastor that holds you accountable to the Word (Gal. 4:16, II Tim 4:2), and 4) the Holy Spirit brings the Word to remembrance (Jn. 14:26). Finally, the *ekklesia* holds individuals accountable through self-reflection during weekly preaching of the Word, the Lord's Supper, and the church accountability/discipline process (Mt. 18:15-35). Biblical discipleship costs the believer a life that is free from accountability; instead, a disciple submits themselves to the Lord's accountability structures to prevent them from erring from Truth (Jam. 5:19-20).

4TH OF JULY COOK-OUT

4th of July Cookout

4

Photos

4th of July Limerick

We all gathered at Pastor's house on Independence Day,
For some fried chicken and a competitive game of croquet.

And all who came,

Watched an exciting badminton game.

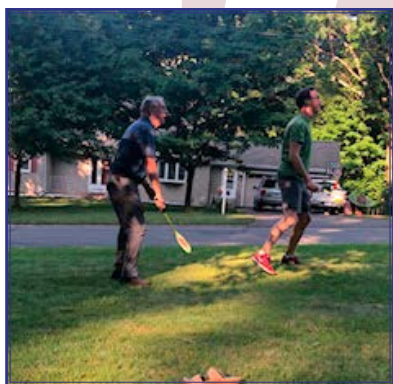
Concluding the fun was Ryan's "firework" display.



The food and fellowship is always enjoyable



August & Sophia (above) challenge Pastor & Ryan (below)



The croquet players are in deep concentration as Ryan tries to pass Bill in the remaining wickets of the game!

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

CHAMPIONS FOR THE LORD

EXAMPLES OF GODLY QUALITIES WE CAN USE TODAY

WHEN: AUGUST 6 & 7 Thursday and Friday Evening 6:30-9:00pm
AUGUST 8 Saturday Morning 9:00am-12:00pm

WHERE: BBC, 40 Country Squire Rd., Cromwell, CT

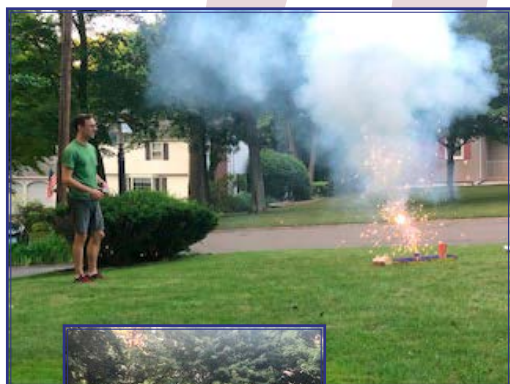
WHO: All children entering Grades K4-6 or ages 4-12



For more information contact
Ryan Strouse 860-878-2395

VBS is a time of Bible learning,
songs, games, snacks, and fun!

VBS 2019



Run, Jack,
Run !



The celebration continued
on Sunday July 5th, with
hamburgers after the
service.



Pastor Cas Reeves

FAITH EXPERIENCE

“Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.”

Psalm 106:1

Everyone who has ever been saved has had a faith experience when they received the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. We understand that our salvation is given to us by the love and grace of God. There are two verses that make this abundantly clear. The first verse is John 3:16, *“For God so loved the world that He gave us his only begotten son...”* And the second verse, is Ephesians 2:8, *“For by grace are ye saved...”* Nevertheless the avenue which God has chosen for us to come to Him is through faith. Consider Hebrews 11:6, *“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is...”* Yet another verse dealing with receiving eternal life is John 6:47, *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”* Yes, a faith experience is necessary for sinners like all of us to be saved.

In Psalm 106, the psalmist reveals the deliverance of the children of Israel from the hand of their enemies, the Egyptians, at the Red Sea. It was here, at the Red Sea, they learned of God’s salvation or deliverance from troubling moments and people. There is no doubt that as Christians we have had our troubling times either in moment or with people. But just as God can deliver us from

the enemy of sin and save us to live forever with Him instead of apart from Him and in hell, so God can deliver us from our troubles and problems.

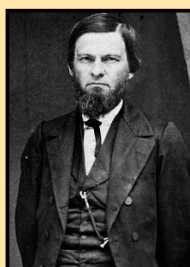
The Children of Israel believed God and crossed the Red Sea on dry ground and within the surrounding walls of water. This was a faith experience for them, which led to their deliverance at the hand of God.

“Nevertheless he saved them for his name’s sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known. He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness. And he saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left. Then believed they his words; they sang his praise.” Psalm 106:8-10

Just as God delivered Israel, has your faith experience delivered you from the hand of your enemy, sin, and delivered you into the kingdom of His dear son? It takes a faith experience with God. Have you had that experience? -CAR



Bill and Jack practice
Hebrews 13:7



John A. Broadus
1827-1895

Quotes From the Past:

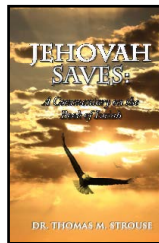
*“To teach our distinctive views is not only a duty to ourselves,
but is a duty we owe to Christ;
it is a matter of simple loyalty to him.”*

19th Century Baptist Preacher in USA

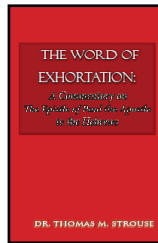
THE BOOK CORNER

These Books may be purchased through
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860-229-5387

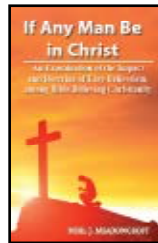
drtms_bbts@juno.com



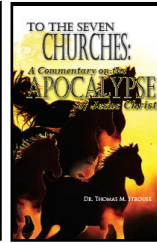
Isaiah
\$20.00



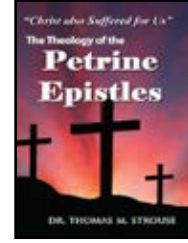
Hebrews
\$30.00



If Any Man Be ... I & II Timothy
\$10.00 \$20.00



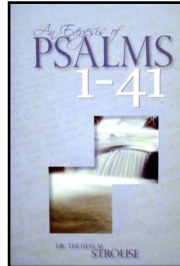
Revelation
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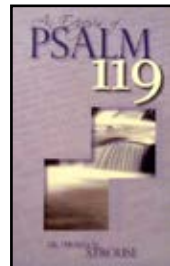
Peter
\$20.00



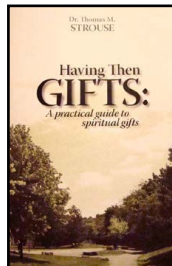
I & II Thessalonians
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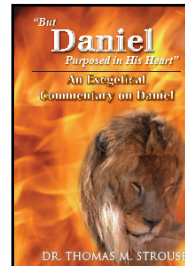
Psalms 1 - 41
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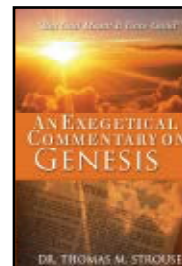
Psalm 119
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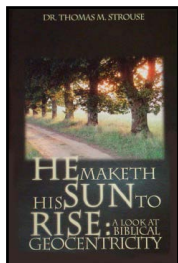
Spiritual Gifts
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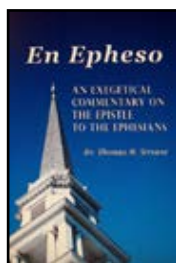
Daniel
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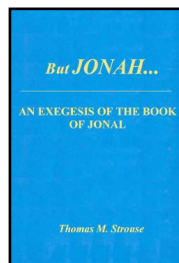
Genesis
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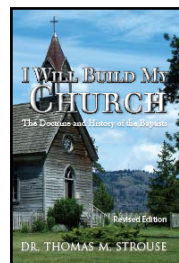
Geocentricity
\$10.00



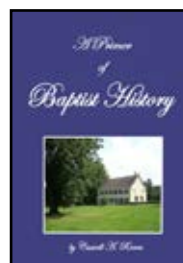
En Epheso
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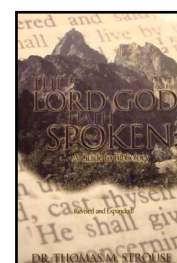
Jonah
\$10.00



I Will Build My Church
\$15.00



A Primer of Baptist History
\$20.00



The Lord God Hath Spoken
\$15.00

BBC 2020 SCHEDULE

July 20-24

Plymouth, NH
"The History of the English Bible"

August 6-8

Vacation Bible Time

August 24-28

Fairhaven Baptist Church
"Minor Prophets"

September 7

Labor Day Cookout
Strouse House

September 14-18

BBC of Nashua, NH
"Bibliology"

October 6-17

Israel Tour

October 25-28

Willow Grove Baptist Church
"Timeless Truths Bible Conference"

November 13

BBTS Fall Lecture Series

If you have any news for the next issue of the BBC Update, please send email to:

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