WANT TO WANT TO (LK. 14:25-33)

JESUS IS TALKING HERE ABOUT THE HIGH COST OF DISCIPLESHIP / WHAT IT REALLY MEANS TO FOLLOW HIM. JESUS IS CHALLENGING OUR MOST NATURAL INCLINATIONS. WHY SHOULD YOU BE ABLE TO CONSIDER YOURSELF A CHRISTIAN / A DISCIPLE OF JESUS / A FRIEND OF JESUS IF ALL YOU DO IS LOVE THE PEOPLE WHO LOVE YOU? / IF YOU SPEAK ONLY TO YOUR FRIENDS / FATHER, MOTHER, WIFE, CHILDREN, BROTHERS, SISTERS / IF YOU ARE ONLY CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR OWN LIFE --- YOUR OWN WELL-BEING! IF THAT IS ALL THERE IS TO YOUR REALITY, YOU HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY. EVEN THE PAGANS DO THAT..... THE GREATEST SIGN OF HEALTHY RELIGION / WHAT HOLY CROSS HAS TO BE ABOUT / THE STRONGEST SIGN OF REAL DISCIPLESHIP MEANS GOING AGAINST OUR NATURAL INCLINATIONS FOR LOVING & CARING. THE MOST NATURAL LOVE IN ALL THE WORLD IS THE LOVE OF A MOTHER FOR HER CHILD. THE REASON A FATHER WOULD THROW HIMSELF IN FRONT OF A CEMENT TRUCK IS BECAUSE OF HIS LOVE FOR HIS CHILD. I WOULD RATHER DIE THAN HAVE TO WATCH ONE OF MY CHILDREN OR GRANDCHILDREN DIE. I WOULD DIE IN AN INSTANT FOR MY WIFE! AND THAT IS NO MORE THAN ANY OTHER ANIMAL WOULD DO. HAVE YOU EVER WATCHED A BEAR OR A LIONESS WITH THEIR CUBS?.... BUT TO GIVE MY LIFE / POUR OUT MY LIVE FOR SOMEONE ELSE BECAUSE I AM A DISCIPLE OF JESUS, THAT'S SOMETHING ELSE! NOW I MAY SPEAK MEANINGFULLY ABOUT MY COMMITMENT / MY LOYALTY TO MY WIFE & MY CHILDREN / BUT ONLY JESUS CHRIST CAN CLAIM TO OWN ME! NO MARRIAGE LICENSE OR BIRTH CERTIFICATE GIVES ANYONE THE RIGHT TO RULE OR OWN ME.....JESUS IS SAYING THAT I MUST BE WILLING TO HATE, TO DESPISE THE WHOLE NOTION OF BELONGING LOCK, STOCK AND BARREL TO ANOTHER HUMAN BEING --- TO REJECT THAT COMPLETELY, LISTEN AGAIN: WHOEVER COMES TO ME & DOES NOT HATE HIS MOTHER & FATHER, WIFE & CHILDREN, BROTHERS & SISTERS, YES, EVEN LIFE ITSELF, CANNOT BE MY DISCIPLE. BUT THERE IS EVEN MORE. JUST AS I AM ASKED TO GIVE UP ALL LOYALTY & COMMITMENT TO MY FAMILY, I MUST ALSO ABANDON ALL MY POSSESSIONS. V. 33: NONE OF YOU CAN BECOME MY DISCIPLE IF YOU DO NOT GIVE UP ALL YOUR POSSESSIONS. IN OTHER WORDS, MY POSSESSIONS DO NOT OWN ME OR RULE OVER ME. JESUS DOES! I DO NOT GET MY IDENTITY FROM THE KINGDOM OF THINGDOM. AND BELIEVE ME, BEING A RESPONSIBLE STEWARD IS A CONSTANT STRUGGLE. LORD, EVERYTHING I AM & HAVE BELONGS TO YOU! --- HOW DO YOU WANT ME TO CUT UP THE PIE? HOW CAN I BE A FAITHFUL & RESPONSIBLE DISCIPLE? I BROUGHT NOTHING INTO THIS WORLD, & IT IS CERTAIN I WILL TAKE NOTHING OUT! HELP ME TO GIVE UP ALL MY POSSESSIONS!

..... JESUS HIMSELF IS OUR EXAMPLE / OUR MODEL. HIS WHOLE LIFE CENTERED AROUND THE DICTUM: I MUST WORK THE WORKS OF HIM WHO SENT ME WHILE IT IS DAY – BEFORE THE NIGHT COMES WHEN NO MAN CAN WORK. HE TOLD HIS DISCIPLES STRAIGHT OUT: DON'T WORRY ABOUT WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO EAT AND DRINK .... TAKE NO THOUGHT FOR THE MORROW..... SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD & HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS & ALL THESE THINGS WILL BE ADDED TO YOU. ..... EARLY IN HIS MINISTRY JESUS CAME HOME TO NAZARETH. HE HAD BEEN DOING ALL THESE MIRACLES & HIS FAME HAD SPREAD. NOW HIS MOTHER & BROTHERS SHOW UP OUTSIDE THE HOUSE WHERE HE IS TEACHING. SOMEBODY CRAMS HIS WAY INTO THE HOUSE & SAYS TO JESUS: YOUR MOTHER & BROTHERS HAVE COME TO FETCH YOU HOME. JESUS TELLS THEM: YOU GO OUTSIDE & TELL THEM THAT MY MOTHER & BROTHERS & MY SISTERS ARE ONLY THOSE WHO DO THE WILL OF MY FATHER IN HEAVEN....ANOTHER MAN COMES UP TO HIM & SAYS: I WILL FOLLOW YOU WHEREVER YOU GO; BUT FIRST LET ME GO HOME & BURY MY FATHER / MY FATHER JUST DIED & THAT'S THE LEAST I CAN DO. REMEMBER WHAT JESUS SAID? LET THE DEAD BURY THE DEAD! YOU COME & FOLLOW ME!.... HERE WE ARE TOLD LARGE CROWDS WERE TRAVELING WITH JESUS. AND JESUS DOES NOT TELL THEM THAT THEY MUST LOVE HIM MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE. HE USES THE WORD HATE. YOU BELONG TO GOD / TO GOD ALONE! --- & IF YOU LEAVE GOD OUT OF THE EQUATION, YOUR WHOLE LIFE WILL GET SICK! THIS WHOLE BUSINESS OF MY COUNTRY RIGHT OR WRONG --- JUST THINK OF WHAT WE ARE STILL GOING THROUGH BECAUSE OF VIETNAM. ..... ON THIS LABOR DAY WEEKEND, I HAVE TO AT LEAST TELL YOU HOW IT IS WITH ME: I AM A CHRISTIAN BEFORE I AM AN AMERICAN. I AM A CHRISTIAN BEFORE I AM A LUTHERAN. REMEMBER THAT TIME WHEN JAMES & JOHN COMPLAINED, THAT VILLAGE JUST REJECTED US! LET'S CALL THUNDER DOWN ON THEM! JESUS SAID, YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT KIND OF SPIRIT YOU ARE DEALING WITH. I CAME NOT TO DESTROY PEOPLE, BUT TO SAVE THEM. MARY & MARTHA TRIED TO GET HIM TO DO THIS OR THAT. JESUS WOULDN'T CONFORM. HE RESISTED THE CROWD & PUT HIS LOYALTY TO GOD BEFORE HIS LOYALTY TO HIS FRIENDS..... NOW LET'S BE HONEST, LEST WE GO HOME LITERALLY OVERWHELMED WITH GUILT. I AM A BIG HYPOCRITE! I CAN TALK THE TALK, BUT THERE IS THIS GREAT STRUGGLE GOING ON INSIDE OF ME. I CAN IDENTIFY WITH ST. PAUL: THE GOOD THAT I WOULD, I DO NOT..... I QUITE NATURALLY JUST LOVE THE PEOPLE WHO LOVE ME. I CERTAINLY DO NOT HATE THEM. AND TO LET GOD- IN CHRIST TAKE OVER MY HEART & LIFE – WELL, I WANT TO WANT TO / I WANT TO BE JESUS' DISCIPLE. I WANT TO SAY WITH LUTHER, GOODS, FAME, CHILD & WIFE; LET THESE ALL BE GONE.... GOD, I CAN ONLY HOLD MYSELF UP TO YOU & ASK YOU TO GIVE ME THE POWER TO DO THAT!