

The cost of discipleship: sermon notes discussion guide

based on **John 15:18-27** (Linked to sermon of 07/11/21)
which can be accessed at www.stjamesbythepark.org/talks



This was part of a series: Being an apprentice

Intro: Most of us like to be liked, don't we? We like the feeling of being popular and well-thought of. In this passage Jesus challenges our natural desire to be part of the "in crowd" and bluntly tells his disciples that they had better get used not just to being unpopular but hated as well. I wondered how that makes you feel?

Worship: Read Psalm 63 or listen to this sung version <https://youtu.be/UdS6fFDf170> , then spend some time thanking God for His provision and asking him to open our hearts to His word and all He has to say to us.

Head:

Read John 15:18-27 a few times, then discuss the following questions:

- 1. In verse 17 Jesus has just been talking about love, why do you think he starts to talk about hate almost immediately afterwards?*
- 2. In what way do the disciples no longer belong to the world?*
- 3. Why does Jesus say the disciples will experience persecution?*
- 4. In what ways does Jesus say people have no excuse for sin (v.22, 24)*
- 5. In what way will the Holy Spirit help the disciples? (v26-27)*

Now read Luke 9:57-62 and consider the following:

- 1. What 3 reasons are given for not following Jesus immediately?*

2. *The reasons seem quite rational to us, why do you think Jesus challenges them?*

Heart:

These are challenging passages, reminding us that following Jesus involves sacrifice and often persecution. Spend some time thinking about and discussing:

When have you experienced persecution or opposition as a Christian? How did you feel? How did you react? Were you able to experience the Holy Spirit's support at that time.

Are there times when you have watered down the gospel or not been open about your beliefs because you worry that people won't like you?

Imagine Jesus saying to you, as he did to the man in Luke 9, "Follow me!" Is your first reaction, "yes!" or like these men, are we saying "first let me.." What would those things be for you?

To what extent do you feel that you "do not belong to this world"? Have we become so comfortable with life that we no longer stand out as Christians?

Hands:

I find these passages very challenging as I hope you do too. Perhaps spend some time in quiet prayer, asking God to reveal to you areas of your life and behaviour where you know you are compromising your faith and witness. You might like to share these things in small groups and pray for one another to end.

"Since Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same intention...so as to live the rest of your earthly lives no longer by human desires but by the will of God" 1 Peter 4:1-2