Counting the Cost: Taking the Risk

By Donna Streufert

Opening Hymn: “Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus” (LSB 685; LW 381; TLH 409)

Introduction: In many modern households women are in charge of the purse strings. Women business owners make their own financial decisions. LWML leaders manage offerings that total millions of dollars.

In each case women make choices, deciding if the investment or expenditure is worth the risk: will the money, time and energy spent be profitable and result in a blessing for all involved?

Women must count the cost before taking the risk.

Women Who Counted the Cost and Took the Risk

Scripture names three women specifically who counted the cost and took the risk to defy convention in their devotion to Jesus, their Savior. Read about these women in Luke 8:1–3.

1. Name the women. Why was it unusual for these women to travel with Jesus and the 12 apostles?

2. What did the women risk by accompanying Him? (Note Luke 14:25–35.)

3. What do you think motivated the women to leave their homes and follow Jesus? (Note also Luke 7:36–50 which just precedes this account as well as 1 John 4:19.)

Remember: God’s great love for sinners moved Him to send His Son to buy us back from sin and death. When we are baptized in Him, the Holy Spirit works saving faith in our hearts, sealing us to the Savior forever.

4. What do you think the women would receive or experience that would make their risk worthwhile? (See also John 6:35, 37–40.)

5. How did the women express their devotion to Jesus?

Not all those Jesus healed were allowed to follow Him. He sent some home. But He allowed Mary Magdalene and the others to come with Him. He wanted them in His group. They became His disciples. Perhaps the most counter-cultural aspect of Jesus’ earthly ministry was His willingness to teach women. He taught them along with the male disciples. They heard the stories, the lessons; they witnessed the miracles. Surely, the women wanted the opportunity to hear and share the truth Jesus taught them.

Notice that Mary Magdalene is not identified as someone’s wife or mother. Perhaps she was a widow or maybe her family had turned her out because of the demons. She...
Planning with Reckless Abandon

By Rev. William Wrede

We pray: Gracious and loving Father, I am extremely thankful that You have called me to be Your child. You sent Your Son Jesus to be my Savior. You also permit me to tell others about Your great love for them as well. Now, Lord, I ask that Your Holy Spirit would open my eyes to know Your will as I continue to plan how I can be about sharing the Gospel. Help me to become a more bold witness for You. In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Introduction

On your way to Bible study today, did any bumper stickers catch your eye? Share briefly with the group.

I don’t much care for most bumper sticker philosophy or, even worse, bumper sticker theology. Most of the time, the phrases we see printed on bumper stickers are clever and make their point rather well. Still, I don’t often agree with what I read! Take this one for example: “We plan. God laughs.” Perhaps it would be better to say, even if it doesn’t sound quite so clever: “We plan. God gives success.”

Read what Paul says to the “foolish Galatians” in Galatians 3:1–5.

Being foolish has nothing to do with going to the right school. Also, being foolish has nothing to do with ACT or SAT scores that get students into college or whether or not you have been able to figure out how to use a computer. Rather, being foolish means the people of Galatia — to whom Paul wrote this letter — and we today sometimes miss the point. For this reading, the goal is salvation in Jesus Christ. It’s the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus that brings us to the goal of being made righteous in His sight. This does not happen because we are such great people or because we planned for that to happen!

Goal Setting: The Spiritual Compass

Perhaps Paul's words to the Galatians can also shed some light on another type of goal. In our efforts to keep the law and to do what is right, we forget the One who created us the ability to do anything at all! Again, I have a bumper sticker in mind. I’ve never quite understood why someone thinks “God is my copilot” holds any hope for us at all. Perhaps we remember the One who blesses us, but we do indeed treat Him as the copilot. What tremendous hope and confidence we have when we finally under-