



October 11, 2015

2 Chronicles 25

*“The Cost of Following Jesus”*

Pastor Gary Hamrick

We can never do more than what Christ has already done for us, but following Jesus will cost us something – maybe materially, relationally, professionally, or even physically with our very lives. But it will cost us something.

In today’s study, Pastor Gary looks at the story of King Amaziah and how we was willing to forfeit \$2 million dollars to be obedient to God. Even still, the prophet said to him, *“The Lord can give you much more than that.”* How true it is that no matter what we give up or sacrifice for God, he can do, and has done, much more than that!

### Historical Background

1. Amaziah was the eighth king of Judah.
2. He was 25 years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem 29 years.
3. In Hebrew, his name means, “Yahweh is mighty.”
4. Officials in Amaziah’s kingdom killed him because he abandoned the Lord.
5. It’s interesting to note that many Bible scholars and commentaries consider Amaziah to have been a relatively good king.
  - a. **2 Chronicles 25:2** - *“He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, but not wholeheartedly.”*

- b. Pastor Gary commented on the fact that there is a lot more evidence for Amaziah not serving the Lord *“wholeheartedly,”* than there is for Amaziah doing *“what was right in the eyes of the Lord.”*

### Amaziah Failed To Praise The Lord

6. Amaziah brought his army out to fight the Edomites and the Lord gave him the victory.<sup>1</sup>
7. Unfortunately, after Amaziah was victorious, he did not give praise to the Lord.
  - a. **2 Chronicles 25:14-16** - *“When Amaziah returned from slaughtering the Edomites, he brought back the gods of the people of Seir. He set them up as his own gods, bowed down to them and burned sacrifices to them. The anger of the Lord burned against Amaziah, and he sent a prophet to him, who said, ‘Why do you consult this people’s gods, which could not save their own people from your hand?’ While he was still speaking, the king said to him, ‘Have we appointed you an adviser to the king? Stop! Why be struck down?’ So the prophet stopped but said, ‘I know that God has determined to destroy you, because you have done this and have not listened to my counsel.’ ”*

### Amaziah’s Arrogance And Pride

8. It must have been the case that Amaziah was impressed by his victory, because almost immediately, he challenged Jehoash, the king of Israel, to battle!
  - a. **2 Chronicles 25:17-20** - *“After Amaziah king of Judah consulted his advisers, he sent this challenge to Jehoash son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, king of Israel: ‘Come, meet me face to face.’ But Jehoash king of Israel replied to Amaziah king of Judah: ‘A thistle in Lebanon sent a message to a cedar in Lebanon, “Give your daughter to my son in marriage.” Then a wild beast in Lebanon came along and trampled the thistle underfoot. You say to yourself that you have defeated Edom, and now you are arrogant and proud. But stay at home! Why ask for trouble and cause your own downfall and that of Judah also?’ Amaziah, however, would not listen, for God so worked that he might hand them over to Jehoash, because they sought the gods of Edom.”*

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<sup>1</sup> The Edomites lived in what is now called Jordan.

<sup>2</sup> Pastor Gary was referring to the shooting at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Oregon. <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/10/us/roseburg-oregon-shooting-christopher-harper->

9. The Lord determined to humble Amaziah, and the details of Amaziah's defeat are provided in [2 Chronicles 25:21-25](#).
10. [2 Chronicles 25:27-28](#) - *"From the time that Amaziah turned away from the Lord, they conspired against him in Jerusalem and he fled to Lachish, but they sent men after him to Lachish and killed him there. He was brought back by horse and was buried with his fathers in the City of Judah."*

#### Amaziah Was Obedient To The Lord

11. We learn from [2 Chronicles 25:5-10](#), that the Lord sent "a man of God" with instructions for Amaziah to send back the mercenary soldiers he hired from the northern kingdom of Israel.
12. The northern kingdom of Israel was not following the Lord, so Amaziah was told that he would face certain defeat if he continued the process of being aligned with these soldiers.
13. Amaziah's reaction to the message he heard was to say, *"but what about the hundred talents I paid for these Israelite troops?"*
  - a. One talent of silver weighed 75 pounds, which means it cost him 7,500 pounds of silver.
  - b. Today, silver is worth about \$16.00 an ounce, which means Amaziah paid approximately \$2 million dollars to hire 100,000 soldiers.
14. To Amaziah's credit, he made the decision to send the troops back if that's what it took to be obedient to the Lord.
15. The result of his decision meant that he believed it would be better to go into battle with 300,000 soldiers and the Lord, than to have 400,000 soldiers and not have the Lord.
16. He trusted the Lord for the victory!

#### Amaziah Was Willing To Count The Cost

17. Pastor Gary said we should be challenged by the account of Amaziah's decision, because the fact is, being obedient and following the Lord will cost us something.

18. Following the Lord may cost us materially, professionally, relationally, personally, and it may even cost us physically, with our life.
19. The Lord calls each of us to count the cost.
20. **Galatians 5:1a** – *“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.”*
21. Pastor Gary said, “Freedom is given freely, but freedom was not gained freely; freedom was gained at a cost: by the blood of Jesus Christ, shed on the cross.”
22. When Jesus laid down his life, in what is ultimately described as the great exchange – his life for our life.
  - a. Jesus took on our sin, and gave us his righteousness.
  - b. Jesus took on our punishment, and gave us his peace.
  - c. Jesus sacrificed his life, that we might have life.

#### Nothing We Lose Compares To What We Gain In Christ

23. **Luke 14:25-27** – *“Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: ‘If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters – yes, even his own life – he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.’”*
24. Jesus challenged the people in the crowd by basically saying that he was skeptical of the notion that all of them were following him.
25. Pastor Gary said, “In modern terms, Jesus was saying, ‘Are you willing to take a bullet for me?’ ” <sup>2</sup>
26. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who wrote *The Cost of Discipleship*, was faced with faced with this very same challenge in Nazi Germany in the 1940s.
  - a. Bonhoeffer chose to live out his faith in Christ, and it cost him his life.
  - b. Bonhoeffer was hung by order of Adolf Hitler on April 9, 1945, less than one month before the fall of Germany to the Allies on May 8, 1945.
27. **Luke 14:28-30** – *“Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it?”*

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<sup>2</sup> Pastor Gary was referring to the shooting at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Oregon. [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/10/us/roseburg-oregon-shooting-christopher-harper-mercier.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/10/us/roseburg-oregon-shooting-christopher-harper-mercier.html?_r=0)

*For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'* ”

28. Jesus' was telling his hearers, "Don't follow me unless you are going all the way, and be 'all in.' "
29. Pastor Gary challenged us by reminding us that following Christ may cost us our job, our home, our friends, our family, and it may even cost us our life.
30. Pastor Gary made it clear that Christians in the United States have been, in many ways, isolated from the costs others around the world have paid for following Christ, but that doesn't mean that it will always be that way.
31. **Luke 14:31-33** - *"Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple."*
32. Jesus, in this story, tells us that we are going to be in a war/spiritual battle, and it won't be easy to follow him.
33. **Luke 14:34-35** - *"Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."*
  - a. In Jesus' day, salt was sometimes used, in moderation, as a fertilizer.
34. Jesus' remarks are a commentary on the person who is not wholeheartedly following him.
35. "A Christian is only good, in terms of usefulness, when he or she retains the nature of Christ." - Pastor Gary Hamrick
36. We must remember the words of the man of God, who, in reference to the money paid to the mercenary soldiers, told Amaziah, *"The Lord can give you much more than that."*

#### Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.

2. Read [2 Chronicles 25:5-10](#) to provide the foundation for this study.
3. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about times when they received a blessing from the Lord, and they failed to give thanks.
4. How have arrogance and pride (self-sufficiency, autonomy, etc.) negatively impacted your life?
5. Have you, like Amaziah, made a decision to give up something in order to be obedient to the Lord?
6. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's statements concerning the "great exchange."  
(See #22 above)
7. Read and discuss [Luke 14:25-35](#).
8. What are some of the ways you're counting the cost of following the Lord?
9. How would you describe your experiences concerning Pastor Gary's statements?
  - a. "Nothing we lose compares to what we gain in Christ"
  - b. "A Christian is only good, in terms of usefulness, when he or she retains the nature of Christ."
10. Do you think others would say you are "sold out to Jesus"?
11. Close your time in prayer as the Holy Spirit leads.

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).