

Luke 14:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,

Analysis

And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, The phrase *syneporeonto autō ochloi polloi* (συνεπορεύοντο αὐτῷ ὄχλοι πολλοί, "great crowds were traveling with him") uses an imperfect tense indicating ongoing action—masses continuously following Jesus as He journeyed toward Jerusalem (9:51). Yet Jesus *strapheis* (στραφείς, "having turned") confronts them, suggesting their motivation needed testing. Popularity is not discipleship; accompaniment is not commitment.

This moment marks a crucial transition in Luke's narrative. Jesus moves from parables about banquet invitations to direct teaching on discipleship's cost (vv. 26-33). The crowds following likely sought healing, miracles, or political liberation—Jesus responds by raising the bar to expose casual followers. His 'turning' suggests deliberate confrontation, a test to separate genuine disciples from mere curiosity-seekers.

The pattern mirrors the Great Supper parable—many invited, few truly committed. Multitudes accompanied Jesus to the cross's vicinity, but only a few remained at Golgotha (23:49). This verse introduces teaching designed to winnow the crowd, to ensure followers understand what they're committing to. Jesus refuses to gather a movement based on false pretenses; He demands informed, costly discipleship.

Historical Context

As Jesus journeyed toward Jerusalem for His final Passover, growing crowds accompanied Him. Messianic expectations were high; many anticipated Jesus would establish a political kingdom and overthrow Roman occupation (Acts 1:6). The crowd's composition likely included genuine seekers alongside those wanting miracles, political revolution, or association with a popular rabbi.

Jesus' decision to 'turn' and address them directly reflects rabbinic teaching method—setting high demands to test students' commitment. Unlike modern evangelistic approaches that minimize the cost to maximize conversions, Jesus repeatedly narrowed His audience by raising demands (John 6:66). This moment occurs during the final journey to Jerusalem where Jesus would face crucifixion—making these demands on discipleship particularly urgent and relevant.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' confrontation of the crowds challenge modern church-growth strategies that minimize the cost of following Christ?
2. What is the difference between being part of the crowd around Jesus and being His true disciple?
3. In what ways might we be 'traveling with' Jesus without truly counting the cost of discipleship He demands?

Interlinear Text

Συνεπορεύοντο	δὲ	αὐτούς	ὄχλοι	πολλοί	καὶ	στραφεῖς
there went	And	them	multitudes	great	and	he turned
G4848	G1161	G846	G3793	G4183	G2532	G4762

εἶπεν	πρὸς	αὐτούς
and said	unto	them
G2036	G4314	G846

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