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| **Dying Precedes Eternal Life**  *Promise: Christ will complete our salvation by raising us from the grave* Pastor Timothy A. Duesenberg Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Psalm 1; Philemon 1-21; Luke 14:25-35 (13th Sunday after Pentecost, Pr. 18), 9/7/25  *“Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple”* – v. 27  **Lead In –** Jesus could sure draw a crowd; until He didn’t. When word got out that the sick were being healed, demons were being cast out, and even the dead were being raised again to life, it drew a crowd. And when Jesus openly challenged and criticized political and religious leaders who were taking advantage of the people, this garnered attention! Our Gospel Reading begins this morning with these words: “Now GREAT CROWDS accompanied Jesus.” But in short order we learn the difference between fickle crowds and steadfast disciples.   1. **The Path of the Disciple Is One of Dying**    1. The Prayer of St. Francis is full of paradoxes…    2. There is a dying to self that involves…    3. The cross is where Jesus is heading… 2. **It Is Helpful to Situate Our Lives as Pilgrims**    1. Israel’s deliverance in the Exodus as a template…    2. The arduous path represents the temporal age…    3. Salvation is God’s work from beginning to end… 3. **Another Paradox. Jesus Says His Yoke Is Easy!**    1. Jesus promises rest to those who are heavy laden…    2. Think of faith (trust) as surrendering…    3. He makes a way in the impossible path…   **Final Word –** Surprisingly, the difference between the fickle crowds surrounding Jesus and His steadfast disciples is not the difference between the two in their strength or ability. None of us has what it takes to be His disciples. But there are those who come to recognize their desperate straits. There are those who surrender to Christ, not only for a savior, but also to His guidance and strength. It is those who, in spite of the arduous path and the bearing of a cross, find rest for their souls. Help us to see, O Lord, that even if (or when) we pick what we think is the easy path, we will not escape difficulties, pain, and death. And in surrendering to You, may we die in You in hope of being resurrected in You to eternal life in Your kingdom. Amen.  **Prayer of St. Francis:** Lord, make me an instrument of your peace: where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.  **Ga 2:20** I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.  **Ro 6:3-4** Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. | **Luke 14:25-35 ESV**  *The Cost of Discipleship*  25Now great crowds accompanied [Jesus], and he turned and said to them, 26“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. 27Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. 28For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? 29Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ 31Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. 33So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.  34“Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? 35It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.  **He 12:2** looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.  **1Pe 2:11** Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.  **Ph 1:6** And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.  **Mt 11:28-30** “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” |

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