

THE COST

What Salvation Really Took and What It Really Takes

Introduction: The Question No One Asks

We talk about salvation like it's a transaction.

Jesus died. You believe. You're in.

And that's true. But it's not *all* true.

Here's the question nobody asks in church anymore:

What did it actually cost Him?

Not just the cross. Not just the nails. Not just the thorns.

I mean *everything else*.

What did it cost the Son of God—the One who made galaxies, who spoke stars into existence, who had angels bowing day and night—to leave all of that and become a fetus? To become a toddler who had to learn to walk? To become a man who got tired, hungry, rejected, mocked, and misunderstood by the very people He came to save?

What did it cost Him to be God and then *choose* to be contained?

He didn't cheap out.

He didn't hold back.

He didn't look for an exit when it got hard.

He prayed until He sweated blood—*blood*—and said "*Not My will, but Yours be done.*"

If that's not forsaking yourself, what is?

A word before you go further: this book is for people who already call themselves Christians but have gone lukewarm. If you're not sure you believe any of this, that's okay—but this book probably isn't for you yet. This is for the person who knows Jesus is real but has drifted into comfort, distraction, and half-heartedness. If that's you, keep reading. If not, give this to someone who needs it.

And here's where I start to get hot under the collar:

He did all of that for us. And we can't even put our phones down for Him.

We can't even show up to church on time. We can't even read one chapter without checking notifications. We can't even be bothered to pray for five minutes without getting bored.

But we'll watch a two-hour movie. We'll scroll for an hour. We'll spend money we don't have on things we don't need.

And then we wonder why we don't see any power.

We wonder why healing is rare. Why deliverance is strange. Why the Holy Spirit feels distant.

He's not distant. We're distracted.

This book is not for everyone. It's for the one who knows something is wrong. It's for the one who is tired of lukewarm Christianity. It's for the one who wants to know what it actually looks like to follow Jesus—not just believe *in* Him.

Because believing is cheap. Following costs everything.

Let's go.

Chapter 1: What Did It Actually Cost Him?

Let's start here.

Before Jesus was born in a manger—before the hay and the animals and the shepherds—He was *God*.

Not a prophet. Not an angel. Not a good teacher.

God.

The second person of the Trinity. The Word through whom all things were made (John 1:1-3). He spoke and galaxies exploded into existence. He breathed and life began. He was worshiped continuously by millions of angels who never tired of crying "*Holy, holy, holy*."

That was His reality.

Then He left it.

Not metaphorically. Actually.

Paul says it this way: "*Though He was in the form of God, He did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men*" (Philippians 2:6-7).

He emptied Himself.

Think about that.

He didn't just *add* humanity to His divinity. He *set aside* the independent exercise of His divine attributes. He chose to live within the limitations of

human flesh. He got tired. He got hungry. He got thirsty. He got cold at night. He had to learn to walk, to talk, to read, to pray.

The One who held the universe together became a baby who couldn't hold up His own head.

That's not a cute Christmas story. That's the most radical act of self-emptying in the history of existence.

And why?

Because you and I were lost. Because sin had broken everything. Because there was no other way to save us.

He didn't have to do it. He *chose* to.

That's what it cost Him. Not just the cross at the end—but the *entire life* of containment, limitation, humility, and obedience.

He didn't cheap out.

Neither should we.

Chapter 2: Hated by Men, Yet Loved Them to Death

Here's what gets me.

Jesus knew exactly what He was walking into.

He wasn't caught off guard. He wasn't surprised when people rejected Him. He knew their hearts. He knew what they were capable of. He knew they would mock Him, spit on Him, beat Him, and nail Him to a cross.

And He came anyway.

Read that again.

He came anyway.

Most of us, if we knew a group of people would reject us, would avoid them. If we knew they'd talk about us behind our backs, we'd keep our distance. If we knew they'd physically harm us, we'd stay far away.

Not Jesus.

He walked right into the middle of them. He ate with them. He healed them. He taught them. He wept over them. He washed their feet—including the feet of the man who would betray Him.

And when they finally did their worst—when they drove the nails through His hands and feet—He looked up at the Father and said:

"Forgive them. They don't know what they're doing."

Not "Destroy them." Not "Get revenge." Not "I told You so."

"Forgive them."

That's the love that saves us.

And here's the part we don't like to talk about: that same love expects something from us.

Jesus said: *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another as I have loved you"* (John 13:34).

How did He love us?

- Sacrificially.
- Selflessly.
- Costly.
- Without retaliation.
- To the death.

And He says: *That's how I want you to love each other.*

Not when it's easy. Not when they deserve it. Not when they love you back.

Love like I loved.

That's what it means to follow Him.

Chapter 3: The Agony in the Garden – Forsaking Yourself to Blood

Let's go to the garden.

Gethsemane.

Jesus knows what's coming. The betrayal. The sham trial. The whipping. The thorns. The nails. The cross. And worst of all—the separation from the Father when the sins of the world are placed on His shoulders.

And here's what the text says:

"Being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. And His sweat became like great drops of blood falling to the ground" (Luke 22:44).

Medical experts call this *hematidrosis*. It's a real condition caused by extreme emotional distress. The capillaries around the sweat glands rupture, and blood mixes with sweat.

Jesus was under such intense pressure—such deep anguish—that His body literally started bleeding through His skin.

And what did He pray?

"Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me. Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours be done" (Luke 22:42).

Not My will, but Yours be done.

That's the heart of forsaking yourself.

He had a will. He had desires. He didn't want to suffer. He didn't want to be separated from the Father. But He surrendered all of it to the Father's plan.

If that's not taking up your cross, what is?

Most of us think taking up our cross means dealing with a difficult boss or a chronic illness or a challenging family member. And those things are hard. But that's not the cross Jesus is talking about.

The cross is where you die to your own will.

The cross is where you say *"Not what I want, but what You want"*—even when it hurts. Even when it costs you. Even when your soul is sweating blood.

Jesus did that for you.

Now He asks you to do it for Him.

"If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23).

Daily.

Not once. Not when it's convenient.

Daily.

That's the cost. That's the expectation. That's the path.

There is no other way.

Chapter 4: So Now I Look Over the Congregation

I want to ask you something.

When Jesus talked about being "hot" or "cold" or "lukewarm" (Revelation 3:15-16), what do you think He meant?

Most people say:

- Hot = on fire for God
- Cold = against God, unsaved
- Lukewarm = kinda in the middle, half-hearted

And that's not *wrong*. But I think it's incomplete.

Let me tell you what I see.

The cold – These are the honest ones. The non-believers who don't pretend. The backsliders who walked away and didn't fake it. They're cold. They know it. God knows it. At least there's no pretending.

The hot – These are the freaks. The extremists. The ones who sold everything for the treasure. The ones who actually live like Jesus is worth more than their comfort, their reputation, their bank account, and their plans. They're the ones the world calls "crazy" and other Christians call "too intense."

And then there's the congregation.

The lukewarm.

They show up on Sunday. They sing the songs. They nod at the sermon. They post a Bible verse now and then. But Monday through Saturday, Jesus is a side note.

They'd never say it out loud. But their life screams it.

Their entertainment matters more than their prayer life.

Their comfort matters more than their commission.

Their agenda always supersedes God's.

And here's the terrifying part:

Jesus says He will *spew lukewarm people out of His mouth* (Revelation 3:16).

Not correct them. Not discipline them. *Spew them out.*

Because lukewarm makes Him sick.

Think about that.

He'd rather you be cold—honest about your distance—than lukewarm, pretending everything is fine while giving Him nothing of substance.

I'm not saying this to be mean. I'm saying it because I love the church, and I see what we've become.

We've traded passion for comfort.

We've traded power for programs.

We've traded the presence of God for the presence of our phones.

And we call it Christianity.

It's not. It's lukewarm. And it's making Him sick.

Chapter 5: Where Is the Passion? Where Is the Thankfulness?

Let me ask you something honest.

When was the last time you were actually *moved* by what Jesus did for you?

Not intellectually agreed. Not nodded along during a worship song. I mean *moved*. Tears. Awe. A broken heart because He went through all of that and you barely think about it.

When was the last time you thanked Him—really thanked Him—and meant it so deeply that you had to change how you were living?

I'll wait.

Here's the problem: we've heard the story so many times that it doesn't hit anymore.

Jesus died on the cross for your sins.

We say it like we're reading a grocery list.

He was buried. He rose again. He ascended.

Yeah, yeah. Pass the offering plate.

Do you realize what has been done for you?

You were dead. Not sick. Not struggling. *Dead* (Ephesians 2:1). Dead people can't save themselves. Dead people can't try harder. Dead people can't decide to follow Jesus on their own.

But God—rich in mercy—made you alive with Christ (Ephesians 2:4-5).

You were an enemy of God. At war with Him. Following the world, the flesh, and the devil. And Jesus stepped into enemy territory, disarmed the powers of darkness, and brought you home (Colossians 2:15).

That's not a small thing.

That's the biggest thing.

And yet.

We can't forsake a single hour of sleep to pray.
We can't put down our phones to read His Word.
We can't give up one show to sit in His presence.
We can't forgive someone who hurt us because it's too hard.
We can't give beyond our comfort zone because we have bills.

Where is the passion?

Where is the thankfulness?

Look at the early church. They were beaten and rejoiced (Acts 5:41). They were imprisoned and sang (Acts 16:25). They were killed and forgave (Acts 7:60). They had nothing and yet possessed everything (2 Corinthians 6:10).

Why? Because they were *overwhelmed* by what had been done for them.

They didn't treat salvation like a ticket to heaven. They treated it like a death sentence to their old life and a resurrection into something so glorious that suffering became a privilege.

And us?

We get upset if the coffee isn't good.

Something is wrong.

I'm not saying you need to sell everything tomorrow (though some of you probably should). I'm asking:

Where is the fruit of thankfulness in your life?

Because thankfulness that doesn't change your behavior isn't thankfulness. It's just a feeling. And feelings fade.

Passion that doesn't cost you anything isn't passion. It's just hype. And hype dies when things get hard.

Do you want to know if you're truly thankful?

Look at what you're willing to give up for the One who gave up everything for you.

That's the test.

And most of us are failing it.

Chapter 6: We Were Given a Commission – But We Lost the Passion to Fulfill It

Before Jesus left, He gave us a job.

It's called the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). You've heard it a hundred times.

Go. Make disciples. Baptize. Teach.

It wasn't a suggestion. It wasn't for pastors only. It wasn't for missionaries in far-off countries.

It was for every single person who calls Jesus Lord.

And yet.

Most Christians have never led anyone to Christ.

Most Christians couldn't tell you the last time they shared their faith.

Most Christians are too afraid, too busy, or too comfortable to open their mouths.

We've outsourced evangelism to professionals.

Let the pastor do it. Let the evangelist do it. Let the guy with the YouTube channel do it.

But that's not how it works.

The early church didn't have professional evangelists. They had regular people—fishermen, tax collectors, tentmakers, former demoniacs—who couldn't stop talking about what Jesus had done for them.

And they turned the world upside down (Acts 17:6).

Not because they had better training. Not because they had bigger platforms. Not because they had slick marketing campaigns.

Because they had *passion*.

They had seen the Treasure. They had tasted the grace. They had experienced the power. And they couldn't keep it to themselves.

Persecution didn't stop them. Prison didn't stop them. Death didn't stop them.

Nothing stops a person who has truly encountered Jesus.

But most of us? We haven't encountered Him. We've *agreed* with Him. We've *assented* to doctrine. We've joined a church and learned the language.

But encounter? The kind that burns in your bones and makes you dangerous?

That's rare.

And that's why the commission feels like a burden instead of a joy.

Think about it:

When you fall in love, you tell everyone.

When you find a great restaurant, you tell everyone.

When you discover a life-changing book or podcast, you tell everyone.

But the greatest news in the history of the universe—the God of all creation died to save you from eternal death and give you eternal life—and you *don't* tell everyone?

Something is wrong.

We haven't lost the message. We've lost the *passion* to deliver it.

And until we get it back, the commission will just be words on a page that make us feel guilty instead of a fire in our bones that makes us move.

So here's my question:

Do you actually believe the gospel is good news?

If you do, why aren't you sharing it?

If you don't, why are you calling yourself a Christian?

Think about it.

Chapter 7: The Sales Pitch and the Gossip

Let me tell you something I've seen with my own eyes.

A Christian talks to someone about Jesus. They share the gospel. They give their little spiel. And the person says "No thanks" or "I'm not interested" or—God forbid—actually argues back.

And what happens next?

The Christian walks away and says to their friend: "*Can you believe that person? So hard-hearted. So blind. I tried. They just wouldn't listen.*"

That's gossip. Dressed up in spiritual language, but gossip.

Why do we do that?

Because rejection hurts. And instead of dealing with that pain before God, we process it by tearing down the person who rejected us.

But here's what we forget: It's not about us.

They didn't reject *you*. They rejected Christ. You're just the messenger. And messengers in the Bible got shot at all the time. Jeremiah was thrown in a cistern. John the Baptist lost his head. Stephen got stoned.

But they didn't go home and gossip about how unreasonable the crowd was. They forgave. Or in Stephen's case, they asked God to forgive the people throwing rocks at their face.

We've turned evangelism into a sales pitch.

- Three points.
- A Roman Road.
- A sinner's prayer.
- Check the box.

And when the "customer" says no, we get offended because our pride got bruised.

Let me be clear: I'm not saying don't share the gospel. I'm saying share it like Jesus did—with love, patience, and a life that backs it up.

Can I tell you something hard?

Maybe they said no because they saw something in *you* that didn't match what you were saying.

Maybe they smelled the hypocrisy.

Maybe they heard you talk about Jesus with your mouth, but they saw your life—your marriage, your temper, your gossip, your love for money—and they thought *"If that's what following Jesus does, I want nothing to do with it."*

That's not on them. That's on us.

The early church didn't have a sales pitch. They had a *life*. They loved each other so radically, served so selflessly, faced death so joyfully, that people were drawn to it. They didn't need to close the deal. The Holy Spirit did that.

Here's what I'm saying:

- Stop treating people like projects.
- Stop getting offended when they say no.
- Stop gossiping about them to make yourself feel better.
- And for the love of God, stop selling a gospel you're not actually living.

Take the time. Build the relationship. Cry over them in private. Pray for them when no one's watching. And if they still say no, love them anyway.

That's what Jesus did. He loved the rich young ruler right to his face—and let him walk away sad. He didn't chase him down. He didn't gossip about him to the disciples. He just loved him, let him go, and kept moving.

We could learn something from that.

Chapter 8: "I Listen to the Holy Spirit" – While Watching That?

I'm about to step on some toes. Good.

I've heard it a hundred times. Maybe you've said it.

"I listen to the Holy Spirit. He guides me. We have a relationship."

Really?

Because the same person who says that will sit down and watch a movie full of:

- Murder
- Sexual immorality
- Blasphemy
- Revenge celebrated as heroism
- Darkness packaged as entertainment

And they'll watch it *for fun*.

Two hours of images burned into their brain that the Holy Spirit would never show them. Two hours of their mind being filled with things Paul said not to even *think* about (Philippians 4:8). Two hours of grieving the very Spirit they claim to listen to.

And then they wonder why they can't hear Him.

"God feels so far away."

No. You moved. You filled your ears with things He didn't say and your eyes with things He didn't show you. And then you expect Him to just shout over all that noise?

That's not how it works.

To be clear: I'm not saying all movies are evil. I'm not saying you can only watch sermons. I'm saying: don't fill your eyes with what grieves the Holy Spirit and then wonder why you can't hear Him.

Let me ask you something:

Would you invite Jesus over for dinner and put that movie on?

Would you sit next to Him on the couch while a scene plays that makes you want to look away?

Would you feel comfortable with His eyes watching what your eyes are watching?

"Well, it's not real. It's just entertainment."

Tell that to your soul. Tell that to the images seared into your subconscious. Tell that to the Holy Spirit who is *holy*—which means He doesn't do darkness. He can't. It's not in His nature.

If you claim to listen to the Holy Spirit, live like it.

- Turn off what grieves Him.
- Walk away from what He wouldn't watch with you.
- Stop pretending you can fill your mind with the world's filth and still be sensitive to heaven's voice.

You can't drink from the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons (1 Corinthians 10:21). That's not my rule. That's Paul's. And he got it from God.

So here's the test:

For one week, don't watch anything you wouldn't feel comfortable watching with Jesus physically sitting next to you.

See if your spiritual sensitivity doesn't come back.

See if you don't start hearing Him more clearly.

The problem isn't that God stopped speaking. The problem is we stopped listening—because we filled our ears with everything *but* Him.

Chapter 9: The Man Who Sold Everything for One Treasure

Jesus told a story. A short one. Easy to miss.

But if you get it, it changes everything.

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field" (Matthew 13:44).

Read that again.

He found something so valuable—so precious—that selling *everything* he owned wasn't a sacrifice. It was a *joy*.

Not a burden. Not a duty. Not a reluctant obedience.

Joy.

He sold his house. His furniture. His extra clothes. His savings. His retirement. His family heirlooms. Everything.

And he wasn't sad about it. He was *happy*. Because what he found was worth more than all of it combined.

Here's the detail most people miss: He didn't find the treasure and then try to keep his old life and add the treasure to it. He sold the old life entirely. The field wasn't his before. Now it is. But getting the field meant losing everything else. That's the point. You don't add Jesus to your existing life. You trade your existing life for Him.

That's the kingdom.

That's what it means to encounter Jesus.

Not to agree with doctrine. Not to join a church. Not to clean up your life enough to be acceptable.

To *find* Him. To see His beauty. To taste His goodness. To realize that He is the Treasure—and everything else is just... stuff.

Paul said it this way:

"Whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ" (Philippians 3:7-8).

Rubbish. Garbage. Dung.

That's what Paul called his religious credentials, his education, his status, his achievements.

Not because they were bad. Because compared to Jesus, they were nothing.

And here's where we need to get honest.

Most of us haven't sold everything. We've added Jesus to our existing life. We go to church *and* live for ourselves. We read our Bible *and* chase the world. We pray *and* hold onto our comfort, our money, our reputation, our plans.

We want the Treasure without selling the field.

But that's not how it works.

Jesus doesn't get *added* to your life. He *becomes* your life (Colossians 3:4).

And until you see Him as the Treasure—until He is worth more to you than your house, your career, your relationships, your dreams, your very breath—you haven't really found Him.

You've found religion.

You've found morality.

You've found community.

But you haven't found the Treasure.

And the proof is in what you're willing to sell.

What are you holding onto that you wouldn't give up for Him?

Your comfort?

Your reputation?

Your money?

Your plans?

Your sin?

Whatever it is, it's less valuable than He is.

But you won't know that until you actually see Him.

So here's my prayer for you:

That God would open your eyes to see the Treasure.

Not a doctrine about Him. Not a system of beliefs.

Him.

And when you see Him—really see Him—selling everything won't feel like a loss.

It will feel like the smartest trade you ever made.

Chapter 10: A Call to Abandonment

So here we are.

Ten chapters in. You've read the hard things. You've felt the conviction—or at least I hope you have. You've seen what it cost Him and what it costs us.

Now the only question left is:

What are you going to do about it?

Because that's where most people stop.

They read the book. They nod along. They say "Amen" to the sermon. They feel a little guilty for a day or two. Maybe they even try a little harder.

And then life goes back to normal.

The phone comes back out. The comfort comes back. The compromise creeps back in. And nothing really changes.

I'm not writing this book so you can feel something for a week.

I'm writing it so you *abandon everything* and follow Him.

Not someday. Not when it's easier. Not when you're older or retired or have your finances in order.

Now.

Jesus didn't say "Follow Me when it's convenient." He said "Follow Me" to fishermen who dropped their nets *immediately* (Matthew 4:20).

He didn't say "Sell your possessions when you feel ready." He said it to a rich young ruler right on the spot (Mark 10:21).

He didn't say "Take up your cross when the circumstances are favorable." He said "Take it up *daily*" (Luke 9:23).

Daily.

Not once. Not when it's dramatic.

Every. Single. Day.

That means waking up and choosing His will over yours. Over and over and over again.

It means putting your phone down when He says "talk to Me."

It means opening your mouth when He says "speak to that person."

It means opening your wallet when He says "give."

It means forgiving when He says "let it go."

It means stopping when He says "that's enough."

It means going when He says "follow Me."

This is not a one-time decision. It's a thousand small deaths that add up to a life that looks like Jesus.

A Few Hard Questions Before You Close This Book

I'm not going to let you off easy.

Answer these. Not out loud necessarily. But in the quiet of your own heart, where only you and God can hear.

1. What are you still holding onto that He's asking you to let go of?

You already know what it is. That thing in the back of your mind that you've been ignoring. That area of compromise you've been protecting. That sin you won't name. That comfort you won't surrender. That relationship you won't walk away from. That grudge you won't release.

What is it?

2. If nothing changes after reading this book, why did you read it?

Seriously. If you close this book and go back to business as usual—same entertainment, same lukewarm prayers, same passive Christianity—then this was just entertainment. Religious content to consume and forget.

Is that what you want?

3. Do you actually believe Jesus is worth more than everything else?

Because your life is answering that question right now. Not your words.
Your *life*.

What you spend your time on. What you spend your money on. What you think about when your mind is free. What you get excited about. What you're willing to suffer for.

That's what you actually believe is valuable.

Does your life say Jesus is the Treasure? Or does it say He's a side note?

4. What would need to change for you to live like the early church?

Not copying their specific practices necessarily. But their *heart*. Their passion. Their willingness to lose everything for the sake of the One who lost everything for them.

What would that look like for you? Practically. Specifically.

5. Are you willing to start today?

Not tomorrow. Not Monday. Not next month.

Today.

What's one thing—just one—that you can do right now to move toward abandonment and away from lukewarm?

Turn off something. Turn on something. Give something. Apologize to someone. Delete something. Start something. Stop something.

What's your one thing?

The Last Word

I'm not your pastor. I'm not your judge. I'm just a person who has seen the Treasure and can't stop talking about it.

I've been lukewarm. I've held onto things I should have sold. I've been more passionate about my comfort than about my King. I've failed this test more times than I can count.

But here's what I know:

He is worth it.

Whatever you're afraid to lose—He is worth it.

Whatever it's going to cost you—He is worth it.

Whatever people will say about you—He is worth it.

Whatever dreams you have to bury—He is worth it.

Whatever comfort you have to surrender—He is worth it.

He. Is. Worth. It.

The early church knew it.

The disciples knew it.

Paul knew it.

The man who sold everything for the treasure in the field knew it.

And now you know it too.

The question isn't "What is the truth?"

You already know the truth.

The question is: What are you going to do with it?

"He who has ears to hear, let him hear." (Matthew 11:15)

Don't just hear.

Do.