Luke 14: 28-30 & 31-32
The Twin Parables:
- The Tower Builder
- The Campaign Planner

The Tower Builder
- 14:28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost to see whether he has enough to complete it?
- 14:29 Otherwise, when has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him,
- 14:30 saying, “This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.”

The Campaign Manager
- 14:31 Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down fist and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand?
- 14:32 If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks the terms of peace.

Ian Pollock, Illustrator: Tower Builder and Warring King

What literary form is used in the Twin Parables?
A SIMILITUDE:
- A simile with some detail
- A word picture is painted, OR
- Narrative parable with less detail
- Has a beginning, middle or end

What these parables have in common!
- Found only in the Gospel of Luke
- Have the same setting
- Raise similar issues
- Appear to be rooted in the wisdom tradition
Gospel Parables of Wisdom

- Six parables have “being wise” as the main theme according to Hultgren
- They focus on need to possess and practice wisdom
- Jesus is a sage or teacher of wisdom
- Not very different from wisdom teachings in the OT

Twin Proverbs 24:3 – 24:6

24.3 By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; 24.4 by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches
- 24.5 Wise warriors are mightier than strong ones, and those who have knowledge than those who have strength;
- 24.6 for by wise guidance you can wage your war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory

Jesus Seminar Vote: The Twin Parables

Jesus Seminar Overall Rating

- BLACK
- Jesus did not say this. It represents the perspective or content of a different tradition. This information is improbable. It does not fit verifiable evidence; it is largely or entirely fictive.


- Eating at a Pharisee’s House 14:1-14
- The Parable of the Great Banquet 14:15-24
- The Cost of Discipleship 14:25-35
  - Hating Family
  - The Cost of Building
  - The Cost of War
  - The Purpose of Salt

What Comes Right Before the Twin Parables?

Luke 14:26 ‘Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. 14:27 Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.’

Matthew 10:37 Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; 10:38 and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me.
The Tower Builder: *Vocabulary*

- τίς γὰρ ἐξ ὑμῶν: “For which of you” is a rhetorical question that serves as the introduction to the parable.
- πύργος: Tower - For a dwelling or a farm building; or an agricultural building for watching over a field or vineyard.

Other Towers: Exact matches

- Genesis 11: The Tower of Babel -- And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad…

More Tower Matches:

- Isaiah 5:2 The tower with the winepress therein; but the choicest vine brought forth wild grapes
- Matt 21:33 and Mark 12:1 Both parables about the householder who planted a vineyard and built a tower. His son is killed by the tenants.

Vocabulary continued

- τὴν δαπάνην: means to “count up, reckon, add up; figure out, interpret, come to understand the significance of a number”.
- ἐμπαιζεῖν: means to express verbal mockery and derision ridicule, make fun of, mock someone.

What is the purpose of this parable?

- To reduce the size of the crowds following Jesus?
- To encourage to the disciples to get advanced degrees in planning?
- To inspire the disciples to have “calculating minds”?
- To show the disciples how to avoid shame and embarrassment?

Why This Plot?

- Who is the tower builder?
- A typical follower of Jesus? Someone else?
- Are there any surprises?
- Why is Jesus telling this story at this point in his ministry?
- Does it highlight the cost of discipleship?
The Campaign Manager: *Introduction and Text Critical Issue*

- ἢ τίς βασιλεὺς: “Or what king?” highlights rhetorical tie to 1st parable
- τὰ πρὸς εἰρήνην: “The things (terms) of peace. Nestle-Aland
- πρὸς εἰρήνην: Other important texts read simply “for peace”.

The Campaign Manager: *Vocabulary*

- ἀπαντήσαι: “To encounter” is sometimes translated as “to meet” or “to oppose”
- προσβείν: “Delegation” suggests ambassadors or envoys.
- ἐρωτᾷ τὰ πρὸς εἰρήνην.: “ask the terms of peace”. This term appears in an account in which King David is asked by another king what his terms are for peace. “A truce”

What is the purpose of this parable?
- To make his disciples feel like kings/campaign managers?
- To encourage Jesus’ disciples to be strategic?
- To teach them how to be prudent?
- To let them know that it’s ok to give up when the odds are against you?

Why This Plot?

- Who is the Campaign Manager?
- Is what the Campaign Manager doing admirable?
- Is this someone we should emulate?
- Are there any surprises?
- Does it highlight the cost of discipleship?

What Follows the Twin Parables: Luke 14:33

So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions

- Does this verse belong here? Or does it belong after 14:26-27?

Standard Interpretations:

- However fearful the task of being a disciple may be, it is not so dreadful as to fight against God
- A disciple of Christ should count every cost. It is well to understand that every obstacle to the service of Christ must be given up.
- Discipleship requires military-like conduct. Do you deserve to wear the uniform?
- We must consider the expenses of our religion; we must consider the perils of it. Sit down and count the cost.
Questions:
- In our spiritual lives, should we act like the tower builder?
- How will we know if we can defeat the larger enemy?
- Is God the force we cannot beat?
- Can we calculate the costs ahead of time?

Or, is the cost incalculable?