

One of the great benefits of the technological age we are living in is the ability to compare prices. Anyone with access to the Internet can quickly find the lowest price for just about any item he or she wants to purchase—from a gallon of milk to a new Tesla.

Of course, it wasn't always like this. In the "old days" a person had to actually drive from store to store to compare prices— which was a lot of work; consequently, many people simply chose to buy the item in the first store they came to— provided the price seemed reasonable.

But that's all changed. There are all sorts of apps to help us find the cheapest prices for all sorts of commodities— insurance, medicine, airline tickets, you name it. And as a result, more and more people have the ability to find the absolute lowest price for just about anything and everything.

**“Can you drink the cup that I drink?”**

This is, perhaps, the most difficult question Jesus ever posed to his disciples. St. Mark tells us that James and John are “jockeying for position” in the kingdom—one of them wishing to be at Jesus' left and the other at his right. St. Matthew, interestingly, identifies their ‘mama’ as the instigator. Both men are apparently obsessed about the power they will wield in this new world order, this new reality, this new kingdom.

In other words, they still saw this new age that Jesus was ushering in as following many of the same constructs of the present age—those same dated categories and classes and hierarchies. Put somewhat crudely, it is as if they were wondering, what's in it for us?”

Of course, Jesus would have none of it and he lays out for them the cold hard truth. Hey guys, so you want to be “great”? You want to be “first”? Are you sure? Answer carefully. Tread lightly.

**“Can you drink the cup that I drink?”** There might be nothing in Christianity more difficult to embrace than those very words. Now, some might argue otherwise. The Incarnation? Surely that must be more difficult to embrace. The miracles? The resurrection? The Trinity? Surely, these take priority on the list.

Not really. Profound? Yes. Incredible? Absolutely. Hard to wrap our minds around? Without a doubt. But none of those historical events demand anything specific from us. They don't clearly lay out for us any concrete consequences of believing those things. But being a servant of all? Being a slave of all? Drinking the same cup as Jesus?

That's real. That's tangible. That's specific. That demands all sorts of blood, sweat, and tears. These are choices that call us to think a certain way, see others a certain way, act a certain way. And that will almost always be more difficult than believing particular statements of faith, dogmas, and doctrines.

If we ever find ourselves wondering what our faith “costs”, what discipleship “costs”, the event in today's Gospel lays it out pretty clearly. Following Jesus costs everything. There isn't a cheaper price out there. There isn't a lower cost to be found. There isn't an easier way we might discover.

Our challenge is to stop searching for the lowest price when it comes to following Jesus. Rather, let us pledge to embrace the highest price possible, the way of life that costs us the most, the possibility of having a life truly worth living.

Because if following Jesus doesn't cost you anything, well, then, you're not following Jesus.