

“Life’s Most Important Question”

Luke 9:18-26

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I. Introduction

- A. The great Galilean ministry of our Lord Jesus has now come to an end; Jesus is now living in the shadow of the cross. He is soon to set His face toward Jerusalem, where He will be received up or crucified.
 - 1. He wants His disciples to understand three important things:
 - a) Who He is
 - b) Why did He come
 - c) What it means to follow Him
 - 2. Life’s most important questions

II. Who is Jesus? (Luke 18-20)

- A. The Christ of God
 - 1. “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God” (Matthew 16:16)
 - 2. Jesus accepted Peter’s confession and action, which would have been blasphemy had it not been true
 - 3. Jesus answered and said, “flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven”
 - 4. Be careful you don’t get your understanding of who Jesus is from “flesh and blood.” It should come from the Bible and be given by the inspiration of God

III. Why Did Jesus Come? (Luke 9:21-22)

- A. Another important question
 - 1. The first of three times:
 - a) Must suffer many things
 - b) Be rejected
 - c) Be slain
 - d) Be raised the third day
- B. He came to die for our sins
 - 1. “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).
 - 2. Not to make us happy
 - 3. Not to make us healthy
 - 4. Not to make us wealthy
 - 5. To make us holy

IV. What Does it Mean to Follow Jesus? (Luke 9:23-26)

- A. Jesus lays out the terms of discipleship
 - 1. Confessing Christ always requires embracing the cross

2. Jesus says, “If any man will come after me...” (v. 23)
- B. Deny himself (v. 23)
1. Why do we hear so little today about self-denial?
 - a) The fear of falling into asceticism
 - b) Because of a false teaching on holiness
 - c) Because we live in a self-centered, self-focused, self-absorbed culture
 1. Illustration- “Lovers of self” (2 Timothy 3:2)
 2. What did Jesus mean by “deny self”?
 - a) It’s not simply giving up something you like
 - b) It’s a complete submission to the lordship of Christ so that self has no rights. It’s taking yourself off the throne and letting Christ take His place as king of my life
 - c) It’s being Christ-centered, not self-centered
- C. Take up his cross daily (v. 23)
1. What it is not
 - a) The problems of everyday life
 2. What it is
 - a) In the Roman world. The cross is a pathway that is deliberately chosen. It involved the will. It means saying “yes” to something for Jesus’ sake
 - b) It’s saying “yes” to:
 1. Seeking God
 2. Service for Christ
 3. Suffering for Christ
 - a. (Philippians 3:10)
 4. Being a living sacrifice
 - a. (Romans 12:1)
 3. “When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die” – Dietrich Bonhoeffer
 4. The demands of the cross:
 - a) Universal (for all Christians)
 - b) Perpetual (daily)
 - c) Intentional (you must willingly take up your cross)
 - d) Painful (it’s the crucifixion of the “self-life”)
 1. (Galatians 2:20)
 - e) It’s done in faith
 - f) It’s joyful
 1. (Hebrews 12:2)

V. Follow Me (Luke 9:23)

- A. The words “deny himself” and “take up his cross” are in the aorist tense, but “follow me” is in the present tense. It is “keep following me.”
1. I must follow Jesus moment by moment
 - a) It’s following His example
 - b) It’s following where He leads me
 2. The logic of the cross
 - a) Jesus gives us three reasons we should deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him
 - 1) “By losing your life we find it” (v. 24)

- 2) The value of a soul (v. 25)
- 3) Jesus will be ashamed of us (v. 26)

VI. Conclusion

- A. Which do you choose today?
 1. Salvation
 2. You are not your own. You were bought at a price.