

The High Cost of Following Christ (Luke 9:23-26; 57-62)

I. Introduction

A. *This Week in Clear Living*

1. Being a disciple requires counting the cost and making a commitment.
2. Following Jesus is a commitment that will likely require sacrifice.
3. Being a disciple of Jesus requires that we align our priorities with His.
4. Being a disciple of Jesus requires an undivided allegiance.
5. Being a disciple of Jesus is a relationship that must be nurtured.

Question: John and Andrew were disciples of John the Baptist. When they saw Jesus, they left the Baptist and followed Jesus. What does it mean to be a disciple of Christ, and how does a person become His disciple?

B. Truer words than the words expressed about have never been spoken.

1. Matthew 16:21-28 and Mark 8:31-38 parallel passages to Luke 9:22-26.
 - a. Below are some similarities among the three passages.
 - 1) They show that Jesus knew that He would suffer at the hands of the religious establishment (elders, chief priests, and scribes).
 - 2) They show that Jesus knew that He would rise again on the third day.
 - a. Jesus' knowledge of His death and resurrection show that His enemies did not overcome Him.
 - b. As the second Person of the Trinity, He knew why He had been incarnated. **But as a human, He gave up His free use of His omniscience (see Philippians 2:7-8 and Matthew 24:29-37).**
 - 3) They show that each author understood what it meant to be a disciple of Christ.
 - 4) They show that each author credited Jesus with saying something about losing and gaining your life and about gaining the whole world and losing your soul. **The Lord's program does not work in the same way as man's program.**
 - 5) They show that Jesus knew that He would come again in full glory and that consequences awaited those that had been ashamed of Him.
 - b. Below are some differences among the three passages.
 - 1) Mark mentioned that Peter rebuked Jesus and was rebuked by Jesus (Mark 8:32-33). Mark could write about the event because Peter was his information source.
 - 2) Matthew also mentioned the rebuke by Peter and towards him (Matthew 16:22-23). Matthew could write about the rebuking because he was there.
 - 3) Luke did not write about it because he was not there, and none of His sources made the information available to him. Ultimately, Luke did not write about the rebuking because he was not led to do so by the Holy Spirit.

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- 4) Peter rebuked Jesus for speaking about the negative treatment that He would receive, but Peter did not yet understand Jesus' purpose for being incarnated.
 - 5) Peter's experience demonstrates how God teaches and corrects us.
 - a) In Matthew 16:16, Peter proclaimed that Jesus was the Christ.
 - b) In Matthew 16:22, Peter was trying to encourage Jesus by saying that things would not go so bad for Him in Jerusalem.
 - c) **In time, Peter would understand everything much better, and in time, we will also understand everything better.**
 2. How can a person become a disciple of Jesus? Luke 9:23 says, "And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."
 - a. Come after me (**erchomai**) - to be established or become known. In this case, followers of Christ would become established or known as Jesus' disciples.
 - b. Deny himself (**aparneomai**) - to forget one's self, lose sight of one's self and one's own interests.
 - c. Take up his cross daily (**airo**) - to take upon one's self and carry what has been raised up, to bear, to bear away what has been raised, carry off.
 - d. Daily (**hemera**) - can refer to the time between sunrise and sunset or to the whole 24-hour day.
 - e. Follow me (**akoloutheo**) - to follow one who precedes, join him as his attendant, accompany him, to join one as a disciple, become or be his disciple.
- II. Luke 9:23 shows life principles for any kind of team activity. In our case, the team is the Lord's.
- A. Discipleship begins with an individual choice, but it demands complete, continuous, and devoted effort on the person's part.
 1. The verse set the condition (if any person will follow Christ)
 2. The verse identified the three requirements of discipleship.
 - a. To forget oneself
 - b. To take on or bear one's personal burden.
 - c. To join the Lord as His disciple
 3. The verse established frequency (we are to do those things daily).
 - B. Luke 9:24-25 sounds like a play-on-words, but Jesus was very serious.
 1. The Greek word for "whosoever" (**hos**) is the same word used in Romans 10:13.
 - a. Who can be saved? Whosoever will.
 - b. Who can be a disciple of Christ? Whosoever will.

Question: How can a person save his or her life by losing it for the Lord, and why will a person lose their life by saving it? What was Jesus telling His disciples?

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2. Individual enemy number one is self. Most people are self-centered and selfish.
 3. Save (*sozo*) - in a biblical sense, to deliver from the penalties of the Messianic judgment. In a human sense, to keep safe and sound or to rescue from danger or destruction.
 4. Lose (*apollumi*) - in a biblical sense, to devote or give over to eternal misery in hell. In a human sense, to put out of the way entirely, abolish, put an end to ruin, to render useless.
 5. Jesus' words apply to those that are lost, but they can also apply to those that are saved.
 - a. Romans 8:29 says, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate ***to be conformed to the image of his Son***, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."
 - b. Progressive sanctification - Romans 8:29 shows that we are being conformed to Jesus' image gradually over time, not instantly at the time of salvation.
 - c. I Corinthians 12:13 says that we are baptized into one body when we are saved. I Corinthians 6:19-20 says that the Holy Spirit dwells within us. ***We got all of the Holy Spirit when we got saved.***
 - d. Galatians 2:20 says, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but ***Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God***, who loved me, and gave himself for me."
 - e. Before we get saved, we live for self. After we get saved, the Holy Spirit becomes our Comforter, Teacher, and Guide as we strive to live for the Lord.
 6. What does all of this mean?
 - a. When a person does not enter into a personal relationship with the Lord, he or she is lost. They will have selfishly held onto their own dreams and hopes for this life, and they will lose their life a second time when they stand at the white throne judgment.
 - b. When a person enters into a personal, saving relationship with the Lord, but resists the leading of the Holy Spirit, he or she will lose a life of service to the Lord and enter into eternity with few or no rewards (I Corinthians 3:14-15). He or she may also experience a premature death (John 15:2).
 - c. When a person enters into a personal, saving relationship with the Lord and lets the Holy Spirit conform him or her to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29), then that person will gain their life and be ready for the Judgment Seat of Christ.
- C. Luke 9:25 and Matthew 16:26 ask a couple of rhetorical question.

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1. What good is the whole world if one is cast away? **The correct answer is that it is of no good or benefit.**
 2. What shall a man give in exchange for his soul? **The correct answer is nothing.**
- D. In Luke 9:57-62, Jesus showed that following Him is not a casual choice.
1. The man's father may not have been dead.
 2. The Jews had a customary mourning for the dead that could last for several months.
 3. Jesus was not living a life of luxury, and He knew that casual choices and an easy lifestyle did not go hand in hand with being a disciple.

Question: If being a disciple is so demanding, then how can any of us ever be the Lord's disciples?

- III. The requirement of a systematic theology - when a person's theological system is logically consistent, everything fits like a glove.
- A. When a person gets saved (or enters into a personal relationship with Jesus (John 3:16 (*eis*) and Acts 16:31 (*epi*))), he or she becomes a Jesus follower.
 1. The Holy Spirit baptizes the individual into the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13).
 2. The Holy Spirit indwells the individual (I Corinthians 6:19).
 - B. The Holy Spirit begins conforming the individual to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29).
 1. Progressive sanctification - over time, the Holy Spirit does His work in an individual's life.
 2. To be conformed (*summorphos*) - describes what is the essence in character and thus complete or durable, not merely a form or outline. **We are not only conformed to the form of Christ, but we also take on the essence of His character.**
 3. Again, this happens over time.
 - a. We grow by the milk of the Word (I Peter 2:2).
 - b. We grow by the Lord's chastening when we make mistakes (Hebrews 12:7-8).
 - c. We grow by experiencing our own shortcomings (Romans 7:14-25).
 - d. We grow by preaching (II Timothy 4:2).
 - e. We learn to hear and recognize the Lord's voice (John 10:27).
 - C. As we get closer to the Lord, we love Him even more.
 1. We desire to serve Him (Matthew 20:26-28).
 2. We love Him and our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-39).
 3. We learn that we can trust the Lord in all things (Matthew 6:33).

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- D. Before you know it, the Holy Spirit will have you following the Lord as His disciple. Then, the things of this world will start to mean less and less and the things of God will start to mean more and more.
1. You will start to wonder why you did not come to the Lord sooner.
 2. Living for the Lord will not be grievous.
 3. You will enjoy the peace and understanding that comes from a close personal walk with Christ.

IV. Next week's lesson: "Humble Pie" (Luke 9:46-50; 18:9-14)