

The Cost of Following Christ!

Luke 9:23-25 CSB

What makes a person want to follow another person or a leader. Usually that person is very charismatic and they share a Compelling Vision and Hope that you connect with, which will lead us to accept the cost of following them.

What makes a team follow the Head Coach of their team. They must buy into the vision and hope he has to win a championship, but there is a cost that goes with that. Everyone has to buy into the SOUL of the Team. Tony Dungy

Former Successful NFL Coach,
Follower of Christ

Selflessness

Ownership

Unity

Larger Purpose

Jesus is offering us an invitation today to follow Him and it should not be taken lightly. There is a cost! Let's read about

Read Luke 9: 23-25, CSB

Prayer

Luke 9 marks a shift from miracles and popularity to mission and sacrifice. It emphasizes commitment, requires priority over comfort, family, and security. Coming into Ch. 9 the crowds were very Curious, Intrigued, Desperate, Hopeful and Amazed and what Jesus was teaching. It was a message that they had never heard. It was the opposite of a political King or a conquering Ruler. These verses that we just read show us that Greatness in God's kingdom is defined by humility. It starts preparing readers for Jesus' Journey to the cross. It shows us there is a cost to follow Christ, it isn't a life of comfort.

Chuck Swindoll, "It's tempting to play it safe. To blend in. To avoid the discomfort of standing out or the cost of standing up. To let our faith become so privatized that it makes no visible impact on the world around us." A faith that makes no difference in how we live, love, work and engage our world isn't the faith Scripture describes.

Our world tells us everyday that everything is about us through commercials, billboards, movies, books, psychologists, family, etc... but this passage tells us a different story. God is searching for Available people, Willing People, Ordinary People who will let His extraordinary power work through them to impact their families, their workplaces, their communities, and their world. He is calling us to be Difference Makers. We can not fade into the background. In order for us to be Difference Makers we must Deny Self, Take up the cross daily, follow Christ.

A.W. Tozer, "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us." This determines everything in my life. It will determine if you obey him, What is our view of God. Let's look at three principles in this passage.

1). The Call to Deny Self

The emphases here means submission to His agenda, saying no to what we want and yes to what he wants.

Christianity is not about following a set of rules, it is about a love relationship that leads to obedience. Absolute obedience to the person of Jesus Christ. We must choose obedience over comfort. Saying no to sinful desires and pride

The call to Deny self and follow Christ brings Purpose and Power to our life. It gives us meaning. To Know Christ and Make Him Known. The Holy Spirit gives us the power, Acts 1:8 "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." He gives us the power to fulfill His purpose.

It redefines our entire life and reason for living. Everything in our lives are built around Christ! It is so easy to become distracted in the culture that we live in, but Christ is saying Deny yourself and follow me.

When we live in the shadow of the Cross we can admit that the greatest enemy we face is the enemy of sin within. Paul David Tripp, Journey to the Cross. We begin to understand that sin always deceives, divides and destroys. This is why we must die to ourselves daily and allow Christ to live in us.

Self-centered people try to keep their lives unruffled and undisturbed, safe and secure. A life of comfort.

What area of life is hardest for you to surrender? Ex. Moving to Arizona in Aug. 1999

2). The Call to take up the Cross Daily

When I do premarital counseling I remind each of them that everyday when they wake up they will need to empty themselves out and fill themselves up with Christ. Otherwise everything will be about them, very self-centered.

To take up your cross daily means to continually surrender. You must die to your agenda daily. In the first century, the cross meant death, not a symbolic inconvenience, but total commitment.

The cross was the most painful and humiliating form of execution of the Roman era. Thus to take up one's cross daily is to expect painful situations every day because of allegiance to Christ.

It means Dying to personal ambition:

When we die to our wants and ambitions he will supply and satisfy our needs.

Matt. 6:33, Ps. 23:1

He must be our priority and we must love Him more than any other person, possession, or purpose.

Following Jesus is not seasonal, it is daily. Discipleship requires a cross. Twitter, FB and Instagram defines follow Christ as an add on and everything is about you, but Jesus says If anyone wants to follow after me, let him take up his cross daily and follow me. Cross Carrying is necessary, humbling and it's daily.

We must remember this world is not our home, we must not get comfortable in this world.

What does Cross Carrying look like: Gal. 2:20, 5:24, 6:14, 1Cor. 2:2 (Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones)

We will never endure the suffering of the cross unless we have first been convinced that Jesus is the Christ. Following Christ will always require suffering or inconvenience.

Example

William Tyndale,

Translated the Bible into English

Arrested and executed for making Scripture accessible to ordinary people

His translation work later influenced the KJV

“William Tyndale’s last words before being strangled and burned at the stake on Oct. 6, 1536 were, “Lord, open the king of England’s eyes.” The final prayer reflected his life’s mission to make the Bible accessible to common people in their own language.

He chose obedience to Christ even when it meant danger or death

3). The Call to Follow Christ

The Greek term here means to move behind someone in the same direction, come after. To follow in His footsteps. Ex. Following in their dad’s footsteps

We must hold loosely to all earthly things. Jesus was about doing the Father’s will and that path led to death. It may not mean death for us when we follow Jesus, but it will mean for us to die to our wants, desires and self-centeredness and follow His agenda.

True disciples must be willing to walk behind their Master regardless.

We follow a person, not a set of rules. Obedience flows from our love of Christ, from knowing Christ intimately.

We must Study His word , walk in His character, Live on Mission for Him

The Results of this, brings life, brings freedom, brings peace, brings joy.

The world says: protect yourself, promote yourself, but Jesus says Surrender Yourself

The world says cling to control, Jesus says Surrender Control

We were called to make a Kingdom Impact, and to do that, we must Fix our Eyes on Christ! Heb. 12:2, We must Behold Christ, 1 Cor. 3:18, Gaze on His beauty. When we behold Christ through His word, we will be transformed because His word is Powerful, Penetrating and Personal.

We do not invite God to join us in our activity. he invites us to become involved in His activity.

Are you willing to follow Jesus anywhere at any time?

Ex. In the movie “Courageous” Javier was faced with a decision from his bosses where they had asked him to do something that was wrong and it went against his integrity. Doing this would be tied to a promotion, but in the end Javier told his bosses he could not do what they were asking him to do. It would go against his beliefs of what it meant to follow Christ, it meant compromising his integrity and character and his family needed him to get this promotion for more income. In the end He was the kind of person his bosses were looking for. Several other people had failed their test, but Javier stood up for Christ.

Closing:

Are we looking for the easy way out to follow Christ? There are no quick solutions and no shortcuts to living a transformed life. Following Christ is a journey

What are your eyes fixed on in this life?

Hymn story of Turn your Eyes upon Jesus by Helen Lemmel

Had an incredible singing voice and she moved to Germany to refine her singing ability, where she met and married a European gentleman. At the pinnacle of her fame tragedy struck and Helen became Blind and her husband abandoned her, leaving her financially destitute. When people asked her how she was doing, she would said, “I am fine in the things that count.” One day she was handed a tract and the single line in the tract that gripped her heart was this, “So then turn your eyes upon Him, look full into His face and you will find that the things of earth will acquire a strange new dimness. Helen wrote the hymn that we know today as Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus, Look full into His Wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, In the light of His glory and grace.”

Will you answer the Call to Deny Yourself, To Take up our cross, and To Follow Christ the earth will grow strangely dim. Helen Lemmel answered the call to Die, to take up our cross and follow Christ.

Helen Lemmel said that Jesus Is Enough! Jesus said, you can trust Me. I poured out My life for you. I’ve been faithful from the beginning to the end. Just follow, and I will lead.

When we follow Christ, We gain Eternal Life, True Purpose, Forgiveness and Freedom and Eternal Reward.

Following Jesus costs, but not following Him costs far more.

Response

The call today is to Deny Self
to Take up your Cross
to Follow Christ

Pray with me!

