

If You Want to Follow Jesus – part 2

Luke 9:23—discipleship will cost you your life. The “IFs” of discipleship; it’s a big if.

--Jesus places several “ifs” or conditions in front of actual discipleship.

--We looked at two of those conditions last time:

1. The condition of Desire: do you really want to be a disciple?

--“**If anyone wants**” – Until you desire to be a disciple, you won’t be one.

2. The second condition of discipleship is Denial.

--Self-denial – your dreams, goals, ambitions, plans—put it away or be willing to.

--I deny self because I’m not my own, I’ve been bought out and belong to another:

I Cor. 6:19-20

--It is either self or the Savior, there is not an alternative.

1. The third condition of discipleship is Death.

--“**Let him take up his cross daily and follow Me.**” – Called to take up the very thing that will take your life.

--Not something you have to do; it is something you choose to do; in fact you will have to choose again and again.

It is individualistic and unique to each one of us.

--It is your own cross because you can’t make decisions for me and I can’t make decisions for you; we have to decide for ourselves and take it up ourselves.

--It is not, by the grace of God, our original cross—the reason why God chose a cross for Jesus to die on when there was so many other ways to die was because it was and remains the cruelest form of torture and death ever invented.

--That cross is a message about many things: God’s great love and grace; God’s great hatred of sin; what eternal punishment in Hell would have been like.

--Look at **V. 22** – Jesus makes a private announcement of His own death on a cross and then a public announcement of our deaths if we wish to be disciples.

It is estimated that over 30,000 people died on crosses throughout the Roman empire just during Jesus’ lifetime. There were occasions when the roads around Jerusalem were lined with hundreds of crosses bearing everything from live victims to maggot covered corpses. The purpose of the cross wasn’t just to kill but to instill absolute fear.

--When Jesus picks the imagery of the cross, He picks one that would turn the most people away.

--This was to rule out the groupies and the less than serious—it was intended to cause us to swallow hard at what it takes to be a disciple.

Are you willing to lose the things that are nearest and dearest to you—your closest friends?

--Are you willing to be alienated from your family? Live on the other side of the world from those you love.

--Are you willing to lose your reputation?

--Are you willing to lose your life?

--All these came true for the first disciples.

Cross bearing means you’re willing to pay any price for Christ’s sake.

--Easy to say it but much harder to do it.

2. We have romanticized the cross.

--It’s not what we hang around our neck or the pretty gold on the front of our Bibles.

--What would you think of a person who wore a miniature guillotine around their neck or a hangman's noose, or a miniature electric chair?

We somehow got the idea that bearing our cross is some sort of difficulty like an illness or putting up with some obnoxious relative.

--In Jesus' day, everyone knew that a person with a cross was saying goodbye to everything and everyone and that they weren't coming back.

--"Take up your cross" – Say goodbye to everyone and everything because you are not coming back.

--It's a death—death to our rights of self-fulfillment, self-promotion, Self centeredness.

--It is self-sacrifice – Jesus lays claim to our ambitions, money, minds, work, children, our say over our lives in general.

--This is a one-way ticket, and there is no alternative way to serve our Lord.

--We have the burden of making people into those who will take this one-way ticket—we have to stop teaching that if we follow Jesus we get to be happy and fulfilled and we get to live a long life and live in the suburbs and will not be deprived and have all of our dreams come true—this is not what Jesus promised us. "in this world you will have trouble."

--The one with the cross on his back was headed in only one direction (no return), Had no further plans of his own.

3. Discipleship is a daily decision.

--One step at a time, one day at a time.

"Getting rid of the self-life is like peeling back the layers of an onion: layer upon layer of giving up your own control; and, just like an onion, it's a tearful process."

--I Cor. 15:31 – "I die every day"

--Gal. 2:20; Gal. 5:24—we need to be able to say that!

You cannot be a disciple without denying self and taking up your cross—dying to self. In case you missed it—self is the issue.

How did the gospel get to you? Not through someone who thought somebody else will do it, not through someone who had better things to do with their life, not through some who just couldn't commit faithful service

--It was a Cross bearers who denied and died to themselves so that their world could hear the truth.

Heb. 11:36-38 – No matter who you are, somebody somewhere denied their own rights, agendas, lifestyles, plans, dreams, money. Died to their own ambitions (whatever they or anyone else could have made of them) and did whatever it took to get that message to you.

Salvation is free, but discipleship will cost you your life.