



And Follow Me

Luke 9:18-27
Week of January 2, 2021

Before Connect Group

- Luke 9:18-27
 - Watch the sermon by going to <http://switzerlandcommunitychurch.org>
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Now it happened that as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him. And he asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" And they answered, "John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen." Then he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered, "The Christ of God." And he strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised." And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."

Luke 9:18-27, ESV

Sermon Notes

God is glorified as we stand with one another, hold one another up, for the sake of pursuing God in all aspects of our life.

Last week we talked about denying ourselves and began to talk about taking up our cross. We discussed the impact of identifying with Jesus Christ with his death and burial so that we can experience the fullness of His resurrection and ascension. We cannot appreciate the gloriousness of His grace without first pondering the depth of our depravity. As we take up our cross, we take up the cross of Christ, not to bear it on our own, but to put to death the flesh and everything within us that does not glorify and worship God. We not only deny ourselves but we pick up our cross putting to death our flesh.

Yet, in a turn around, for the Christian, death is not the end but rather the beginning. By dying to ourselves in the death of Jesus Christ, we come alive with Him as well. Luke wrote of Jesus' words in Luke 9, *For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.* Our lives, in our own hands is already dead, victims of our own sin that separates us from God. Yet, our lives in the hands of Jesus Christ establishes us for all eternity in Him. Paul in Romans 6:5-11 says this *"For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus."*

We have been looking at what it means to be a disciple. A disciple, in its most simple terms is a follower. Everyone who calls themselves a Christian should also be able and willing to call themselves a follower. To be a disciple is simply to follow Jesus and identify with Him in His life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. As we take up our cross, we identify ourselves as a follower of Jesus Christ, putting to death the old so that we can come alive to the new. In our identifying with Jesus, death is not the end but merely the beginning for the believer.

Take Up Your Cross (Part 2)

- *Luke 9:26 For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.*
- In taking up our cross, we willfully identify ourselves as Christians and bear witness to the life we have in Him. Yet, if we are honest, many of us shy away from openly walking in our faith in our daily life. Our witness is one that we depend on eternity while ignoring the impact of our relationship with Christ in our current day.
 - Eternity with God starts now, not in a far off
- Many of us, if someone accused us of being ashamed of the Gospel would become immediately offended. "Not me! I would never be ashamed"
 - Peter responded similarly as Jesus informed the disciples that He was about to be taken away and crucified. Peter, emphatic that He would stop any such attacks against Jesus was shocked to learn that rather than standing up for Him, Peter would deny Him three times.
 - Peter, who had been following Jesus for years, when faced with the confrontation of the world and the clash of the world against the truth of the Spirit shrunk down, scared

that they had lost the battle.

- In truth, Peter did not comprehend or grasp the battle, but instead had held to his notion that Christ came to overthrow the powers of Rome. The image of a battered and beaten Jesus shocked Peter and he gave in to fear.
- Our identifying mark as followers of Jesus Christ is love.
 - *John 13:31-35* When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.' A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."
 - The temptation to snark, hit back, verbally or physically injure runs high. Yet, it is difficult to point to an example of Christ doing that.
 - Consider the works of Christ in comparison to the potential of works of Jesus Christ. An option existed, and it would have still been a just option, for Christ to come bringing war against those who stood against the Kingdom of God. While the people of God thought they would have been safe, their sin would have stated otherwise.
 - Instead, Jesus came with grace and mercy, loving the unlovable, helping the lost causes, and restoring the rebellious.
- *Romans 1:16* For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
- To take up our cross and follow Him is to fully delve into the richness of the goodness and glory of God as revealed to us in His Gospel.
- We were once sinners, fully dead in our sins until Jesus Christ came to a rebellious people took the punishment of their sins upon Himself by dying on the cross. On the third day, He rose from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in final judgment and those who are in Him will be with Him forever.
- What is there to be ashamed of here?
- Yet, for many of us, we fear failure, being embarrassed or just maintaining a general sense of inadequacy.
- The battles and struggles you face in taking up your cross are battles and struggles you absolutely cannot lose. They are not dependent on your strength
- *Matthew 11:29-30* Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.
- Following in Christ means we take up His yoke and His burdens as He takes on ours. We do not need to be ashamed or fearful because our victory is secured in the already established and won victory of Jesus Christ.

Follow Me

- Pattern your life after the life of Jesus Christ while we eagerly await the coming assured victory that is in Jesus Christ
- Following Jesus is not just about don't do a sin but about living in your new identity that far surpasses the old identity.
- *Ephesians 5:8* for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.
- There are plenty of things you give up to follow Christ. At the end of the sermon last week, we put those to death. While there may be some we have trouble letting go, ultimately,

this is a putting to death of the pain and frustration of death, sin, and darkness so that we can take hold of the glory and goodness of living in the light.

- Now, the command to Christians, knowing the impact and redemption that comes from being in Christ, is to live as people who have been redeemed.

Repentance and Redemption

- Repentance is simply just to turn from one direction and go in the other direction.
- Previously, we had been skipping happily to our death. Now, in repentance, we turn from our death, crucifying the flesh, and coming alive to Jesus Christ.
- *Proverbs 26:11 Like a dog that returns to his vomit is a fool who repeats his folly.*
- We know the sin we do is sin and yet we return to it. Proverbs has some descriptive words to compare what it is we are doing. And yet, we continually return to the vomit.
- I can get up here and make some complex theological cases for things that should and should not be considered sinful. But that would absolutely miss the point. Frankly speaking, many of us already know the areas of our sin.
- Instead of working on them, repenting of them, crucifying them on the cross of Christ, we attempt to hide them so that no one else knows our shame. We think that we can hide things from God. Which is insane!
- As Adam and Eve sinned in Genesis 3, they realized their shame and attempted to sew clothes for themselves. Then tried to pass off like nothing had happened. It was an obvious sign.
- if you for a moment think that you are doing a good job of hiding your sin and presenting this image of perfection I have very freeing news for you; Absolutely no one believes it.
- Ignore other people for a moment, as a disciple of Jesus Christ, there parts of your old life that you simply cannot take with you. But those parts were terrible and leading to your death. So why be ashamed of it?
- One of the greatest testimonies you have is that you were once dead and now you are alive.
- We strive for perfection as we enter into the first step of eternity here knowing that we will continually wrestles with our dead flesh. The desires of the flesh though are dead. Not dying, dead. However much we crave them, indulging them will only provide death.
- Honesty about our sins and struggles while still striving to be more like Christ every day serves as a witness that there is grace and mercy from God who calls us into deeper relationship despite our failures and flows with the command of "Follow me."

Life Done in Community

- God in Trinity provides the basis of our understanding that mankind is designed to be in perfect unity with God and in perfect unity with one another.
- There is no such thing as a lone wolf Christian off on their own.
- *Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*
- Every time Christ sent the disciples out they were always in pairs at a minimum.
- The body of Christ consists of many parts that all need each other.
- Church Gathering Together
 - We need to come together in worship and in unity to be with the body of Christ at Switzerland Community Church. Remember that year when they told everyone

they all their interactions had to be on zoom and the world got super depressed in the process?

- Come. Worship. Sing. Praise God.
- “But I’m not good at singing...” We are called to make a joyful noise, not necessarily a joyful melody.
- Connect Groups
 - Our connect groups are opportunities to grow in community in a smaller context.
 - Need to ask questions about the sermon? Connect Groups are a fantastic place to start to discuss a sermon or study the bible in a more interactive way.
 - We want these to be the representations of Christ in our communities as we meet in one another's homes and living rooms, inviting our neighbors and friends as we expand our reach into the places where God has established us.
- Discipleship Relationship
 - Discipleship relationships are those relationships where two or three people get together to encourage one another and hold one another accountable to wage war on the sin in our lives.
 - Our conversations become honest, raw, and personal but for the sake of continuing to pursue God by willfully crucifying the flesh and holding one another up when the strength of one fails.
 - We will have training available on how to start and maintain a discipleship relationship.
- God is glorified as we stand with one another, hold one another up, for the sake of pursuing God in all aspects of our life.

To be a follower of Jesus means we put aside our preferences, our desires, and humble ourselves before God. We submit fully to the things of God and pattern our life after Him through our continually pursuit of His will for our lives from the big decisions to the small day to day decisions.

After transitions at church, my job is to focus on Discipleship and Ministry Development. I want to be clear why though. The why is the most important part. We have a good church filled with good people. We have a skilled congregation who whether we know it or not, is ready to take our next steps in Jesus Christ. We are all uniquely equipped and situation to share the Gospel to those around us. We can all be praying for our friends and family who are not here and make steps to invite them to church and grow together.

Communion, the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the wine bonds us together as the body of Christ, consuming Him and uniting with Him in His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension.

Connect Group Discussion Questions

- Describe some of the qualities and the nature of Jesus Christ that makes Him worthy to follow. How does the command to follow Jesus relate to Peter's statement that He is the Christ of God?
- What are some of the ways the people become ashamed of the Gospel, the word of God, and of Jesus Christ? Why do you think people get to this place?
- How do our lives change when we deny ourselves, pick up our cross daily, and follow Jesus Christ?
- How is attempting to live our lives as Christians on our own dangerous? What happens when people live unaccountable?
- Why do people tend to try and hide our sin? What are the benefits to waging war on our sin in community?
- How does living our lives in community glorify God and enrich our spiritual well being?

Challenge For The Week

To be a disciple means to follow Jesus in heart, mind, soul, and strength. We deny ourselves and our preferences, take up our cross daily, and follow Him.

- Where in your life do you allow your preferences and desires to rule over the direction of Jesus Christ? Spend some time in prayerful reflection this week.
- As you walk out your faith, you will have opportunities to share your faith with others who need the good news of the Gospel. Prayerfully ask God to reveal one person in your life that you can pray for and impact.

