



A.P. 08-19-2018

HIGHLIGHT: Luke 9:23-26

H

²³Then He said to them all, “If anyone wants to come with Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me.
²⁴For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of Me will save it.
²⁵What is a man benefited if he gains the whole world, yet loses or forfeits himself?
²⁶For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory and that of the Father and the holy angels.”

E

EXPLAIN

Through the gospel of Luke up to this point, the author has been developing an answer to the crucial question: Who is this Nazarene? Just before the verses we will study today, we get an astounding answer from Peter: Jesus is “God’s Messiah” (9:20). This confession is followed by an exploration of what it takes to follow this Messiah: unashamed dedication and absolute surrender.

v.23 In verse 22, Jesus was explaining what was to happen to Him: He’d suffer, experience rejection, be murdered, and come back to life. Immediately following this is His declaration that whoever wants to follow Him must die to self and take up their cross daily to do so—just as He did.

The cross, in that day, was a common image of pain and suffering. Crucifixion was a trademark of the brutal Roman system of capital punishment. Josephus wrote of a single instance just after the death of Herod in 4 BC where a Roman General named Publius Quinctilius Varus went in to Jerusalem to quell a revolt. Josephus wrote, “the number of those that were crucified on this account were two thousand” (*Antiquities* 17.10.10:295). The Romans were efficient and especially brutal in their practice of it, some sources estimating that perhaps hundreds of thousands of people were crucified in the first century by Rome, alone. When Jesus spoke of taking up your cross, His audience would have connected it with all of its famous ramifications.



v.24-25 The difficulty here comes from a wordplay in the Greek: *psyche* is a word that refers both to a person's physical life and their soul. A way of thinking of what these verses say is, "You will never live until you walk to your death with Jesus" (Guzik). Chasing worldly fulfillment will keep you endlessly searching for it; finding Jesus will keep you permanently fulfilled.

v.26 In a vision, Daniel saw "One like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven." This person was "given authority to rule, and glory, and a kingdom; so that those of every people, nation, and language should serve him" (Daniel 7:13-14). When Jesus calls Himself the Son of Man, He is making an explicit reference to this text, in which Daniel detailed what the one who looked like "a son of man" would do.

A

APPLY

1. **What stuck out to you or challenged you in what you read in the text?**
2. **What do you think Jesus meant by "deny yourself?" How is this different than what our culture tells us to do?**
3. **How do you see people around you trying to "save" their lives? How does that guarantee that we will lose it?**
4. **A cross is not just some burden that you have to bear; it's an instrument of death and total sacrifice. How does this color your understanding of verse 23? What will truly following Jesus cost you?**
5. **What is a part of you that you haven't denied in order to follow Jesus completely?**

R

RESPOND

Challenge your group to respond either privately or corporately to this question:

- **What does "absolute surrender" mean to you?**
- **Are you absolutely surrendered to the King of Kings?**

Encourage one another through email, text messages, or coffee dates throughout the week to build up and encourage each other.

