

Take Up Your Cross Daily
Luke 9:23-26

Introduction:

- I. A group of elementary school students taking a test in Bible class had the question asked of them: “What is an epistle?” One reply was, “A wife of an apostle.”
 - a. There are several words in the Bible that we often read over without thinking of their true meaning. When we are teaching the Bible, this becomes a most dreadful mistake. It can lead us to confuse others because of our lack of concern for what words mean.
- II. Today we will study the meaning behind the word, “Disciple.”
 - a. This word could also be explained as a follower, or in the case of Christ’s disciples, “Christians.”
 - b. By studying Luke 9:23-26, we will understand what it means to be a disciple of Christ.

Discussion:

- I. If any man wants to come after me...
 - a. Jesus did not force anyone to believe what he preached or to do what he said. He left it up to the person to choose him.
 - b. This gives us the first thing necessary in order to be a disciple: Desire.
 - i. Matthew 23:37 – Jesus wanted to protect Jerusalem, but they were unwilling.
 - ii. We can also see this in the verses to follow – “whoever will save his life will lose it, and whoever will lose his life for my sake will find it.”
 1. “Will” and “Shall” are different in the KJV. “Shall” is a prediction, while “will” is a desire.”
 2. We might translate, “Whoever wants to keep his life will lose it, but whoever is willing to lose his life will keep it.”
 - iii. I Peter 2:1-2 – Lay aside all of the evil, and desire the sincere milk of the word, “that ye may grow thereby.”
 1. Spiritual growth does not come automatically, like it does physically. It comes with desire and effort.
 - a. II Peter 1:5-11 – We must actively grow.
 - b. Romans 10:17 – Growth comes from study of Scripture
 - c. II Timothy 2:15 – Study (Be diligent) to show yourself approved.
 2. Without effort, we will not grow.
- II. Let him deny himself and take up his cross daily...
 - a. We tend to forget the *reason* behind the cross. The cross was the 1st-Century version of the electric chair. Its only purpose was to kill, in order to bring justice.
 - i. For a person to be crucified and live to tell about it was unheard of.
 - b. There are several things in this phrase.
 - i. First, we must get the *time* that we are supposed to follow this command.

1. “Daily” – We do not take up the cross when we feel like it, or on certain holidays, or on one day out of the week. It is a daily process.
 2. Taking up our cross daily is how we begin to nourish our spiritual lives. It does what eating does for our physical bodies. What would happen if you only ate once per week?
 - ii. Second, we must take up the cross for ourselves.
 1. Jesus took up the cross without being forced.
 - a. What?! – cf. Matthew 26:53
 - i. Legion – usually close to 6,000 soldiers
 - ii. 12 Legions – 72,000 soldiers
 - iii. Jesus went willingly!
 2. Galatians 2:20 – I’m crucified with Christ...
 - a. This will remind us that we have died to ourselves!
 - i. Shame will not prevent me from teaching.
 - ii. Selfishness ...
 - iii. Worldliness...
 - iv. I will not allow sin to control me
 1. Romans 6:2-4, 6, 11
- III. And follow me.
- a. Jesus said this on several occasions. What examples do we have?
 - i. Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead (Matthew 8:22).
 1. This was referring to the spiritually dead. We are to leave bad influences.
 - ii. Levi – Follow me (Matthew 9:9).
 1. This refers to leaving sin, and the *circumstances* that lead to sin.
 - iii. Sell all that you have, and follow me (Matthew 19:21).
 1. This refers to leaving what is holding us back from obedience.
 - a. Cf. Hebrews 12:2
 - iv. If any man serve me, let him follow me (John 12:26).
 1. If we are going to worship him, we must obey him.
 - v. What is that to you? Follow me (John 21:22).
 1. No matter what lot we are given in life, we follow him.

Conclusion:

- I. The Bible tells us clearly what discipleship is.
 - a. It is based only on desire,
 - b. It comes only when we die to ourselves,
 - c. It can only come when we follow Christ.