

## Rediscover Jesus, 28: "Jesus is the Christ"

Luke 9:18-27

Pastor John Eom

Personal Introduction

Hi everyone. Please turn your bibles to Luke 9:18-27.

Sermon Series & Scripture Introduction

Today, we are continuing in the sermon series, studying through the Gospel of Luke in order to Rediscover Jesus, for some of us, discover Jesus for the first time, to learn who Jesus is, what he did, and what it has to do with our lives today.

Last week, we saw how Jesus miraculously fed about five thousand men from just five loaves of bread and two fish. He compassionately welcomed and served people in need, and showed them, especially his Twelve disciples, how he is able to completely satisfy, body and soul. Now let's look at today's text.

Scripture ReadingLuke 9:18-27 (ESV)

<sup>18</sup> 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?" <sup>19</sup> And they answered, "John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen." <sup>20</sup> Then he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered, "The Christ of God." <sup>21</sup> And he strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, <sup>22</sup> 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."

<sup>23</sup> And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. <sup>24</sup> For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. <sup>25</sup> For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? <sup>26</sup> 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. <sup>27</sup> But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."

This is the Word of God. Amen.

Sermon Introduction

- In any relationship that we have, whether in our families, at work/school or among friends, what I have realized that can help deepen those relationships are good questions. Good questions can really help open up our hearts to one another as we give each other the opportunity to share honestly and humbly. I've experienced closeness and connection with my wife as we ask each other good questions about what our dreams are and what regrets we have in life. I have felt love and care from friends who ask me good questions about what I'm learning and what I am struggling with. I've felt supported and empowered by bosses and coworkers who have asked me good questions about what I need help with and if I feel challenged to grow at work.
- We'll see today Jesus ask his disciples some good questions. As we have no friend like Jesus, no brother like Jesus, no master like Jesus, we know his questions are going to be good not only for our relationship with him but also good for our souls. His questions are meant to help disciples fully understand and realize who Jesus is and what it means to follow him. And because Jesus has lived a life of suffering and died a death as a sacrifice for our sins, he will teach his disciples to do the same. His questions are meant to guide disciples to know Jesus deeply and make a personal confession of faith in him. And if we do, then Jesus will guide disciples to commit to the way of his life as we follow him.
- So, as we look to answer Jesus' questions personally today, keep in mind the One Thing today, which is this. We must...

## The One Thing

*Keep our confession of Christ and commitment to Christ true to his cross and his sacrifice.*

### Overview

We'll look at Luke 9:18-27 in two parts:

1. Our confession of Christ (vv.18-22)
2. Our commitment to Christ (vv.23-27)

### Prayer for the Preaching of the Word

So that we can properly, wholeheartedly answer Jesus as he asks us, "Who do you say that I am?"

### Sermon Outline

#### I. Our confession of Christ (vv.18-22)

- Our confession is a matter of knowing Jesus' identity personally and believing that it is true. And so far Jesus has been guiding his disciples to know who he truly is as they have been experiencing his power and authority in order that they make a proper confession of Jesus.
  - The big resounding question through the book of Luke about Jesus has been, "Who is this?"
    - It was asked before in contempt as the Jewish religious leaders asked, "Who is this man who speaks blasphemies?" (Luke 5:21).
    - It was asked in genuine concern as John the Baptist asked, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" (Luke 7:19).
    - It was asked in shock as the Jewish people asked, "Who is this, who even forgives sins?" (Luke 7:49).
    - It was asked in amazement when Jesus calmed the storm by command, and his disciples asked, "Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?" (Luke 8:25).
    - And most recently, it was asked with perplexity as Herod asked, "Who is this whom I hear about such things?" (Luke 9:9).
  - And as more and more people asked, "Who is this?", it seems that many people were trying to give their own answers among themselves (cf. Luke 9:7-9). Look again what it says in verses 18-20:

#### Luke 9:18-20 (ESV)

<sup>18</sup> 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?" <sup>19</sup> And they answered, "John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen." <sup>20</sup> Then he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered, "The Christ of God."

- People misunderstand Jesus' identity when left to their own knowledge and reasoning. So Jesus prays and guides us to make a personal confession of faith in him.
- Jesus is not asking his disciples about something he doesn't know. He is asking them to set up this conversation with an important contrast: what the crowds say about Jesus with what his disciples say about Jesus. This is why Jesus also separated himself once again from the crowds to be in prayer, with only the disciples there.
  - For the crowds, it's clear they did not grasp the true identity of Jesus Christ. And the crowds were predominantly Jewish because they gave mainly Jewish answers to this question. They all had answers related to Jesus being one of the Jewish prophets:

- The first option for the crowds was that Jesus was the prophet, John the Baptist. Well, Jesus was not John the Baptist.<sup>1</sup> In fact, he was just recently beheaded and killed by Herod (Antipas), the local ruler of the region (Galilee). Jesus should not be mistaken for John the Baptist because John came to prepare the way for Jesus and many people saw them together earlier in Jesus' ministry.
- The second option for the crowds was that Jesus was the prophet Elijah. Well, Jesus was not Elijah either.<sup>2</sup> Because of an old prophecy (Malachi 4:5), many Jews did expect that Elijah would return but again, it was actually John the Baptist who came in the spirit of Elijah before Jesus. At least this option required some knowledge of the Old Testament scriptures and prophecies, but still a wrong conclusion.
- The last option has the least amount of effort. People just said Jesus was some other prophet from the Old Testament. But again, Jesus was not like any other prophet, and he was much more than a prophet. And for those who didn't know their scripture as well, just assumed, maybe even more of a superstition, that Jesus was any dead prophet who was somehow miraculously raised to life.
- These were the popular opinions of Jesus at that time, but they all missed the mark because Jesus should not be compared to any other human being who had come before him. This was their mistake. Jesus cannot be compared to anyone who has come before him because he is from eternity. As God the Son, he remains unmatched in his power, even when compared to the old prophets. He remains unmatched in his authority as Lord over all. So it was a missed opportunity for the crowds who had spent their time hearing Jesus teaching and seeing Jesus heal all kinds of diseases and illnesses. Even just after participating in Jesus' miracle of multiplying food from five loaves of bread and two fish. Even after eating, satisfied to the full, in a miraculous banquet in the desolate place, the crowds could not imagine Jesus being someone greater than themselves. Rather they resorted to comparing Jesus to someone else.
- If people back then struggled with Jesus' identity even when Jesus was living among them, then it is no wonder that people today still struggle and reject Jesus' true identity. Today, the world thinks of Jesus generally as a good person, a moral teacher, or even a great prophet. But they cannot accept that Jesus is more than these things. So they misunderstand. They miss the mark on who Jesus is. And this misunderstanding is a big deal. Because it's a matter of life and death if someone gets Jesus' true identity wrong. They cannot be saved if, to them, Jesus is only a good person, or only a moral teacher, or only a great prophet.
- This is why, as Jesus is about to ask the disciples what they think about his identity, Jesus was in prayer. He is in prayer knowing that we cannot come to understand who he truly is if we are left to our own knowledge and reason. We are all in need of Jesus' guidance and his faithful prayers for us.
- Scripture teaches us that Jesus, as God the Son, is continually praying and interceding for us even in this very moment (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:24-25). He is praying that we know the truth of who he is; he is praying for our salvation; he is praying for our relationship with God the Father; he is praying that we have full joy in him; he is praying for our unity as one family of God; he is praying for our sanctification and purification; he is praying for our faithfulness in God's mission to the world (paraphrased from John 17:9-26). If you feel distant from God or have doubts about God, you can be encouraged and assured that Jesus is praying for you. He is praying for all of us.
- Jesus' prayer extends to those of us here today who have yet to believe and trust in Jesus and his true identity. Yes, scripture says Jesus is praying for you to come to know his truth and believe in his Word (John 17:20). Your presence here with us today I believe is an answer to Jesus' prayers for you. And I join in that prayer that you will continue to study God's Word

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<sup>1</sup> Some said Jesus was John the Baptist. And this probably was because people had mistaken John the Baptist as the Christ earlier (Luke 3:2). John the Baptist was known to preach and speak the truth boldly to the people as he called for repentance. So there was a similarity in their message of the good news. But even though John clearly explained that he was only preparing the way for Jesus and that Jesus was infinitely greater than John, people had them mistaken.

<sup>2</sup> Other people said that Jesus was the prophet Elijah who had returned. Elijah was an Old Testament prophet who did similar miracles like Jesus, when he stopped the rain for three years, multiplied oil and flour for a widow, and raised the widow's son back to life. Elijah was a powerful prophet who also ended his life on earth by being taken up directly into heaven (2 Kings 2:1-12). So for the Jews who knew their scriptures, they thought Jesus was Elijah who returned.

and come to understand and believe who Jesus truly is. I pray all of us here today will not get Jesus' identity wrong.

- Just one final note on prayer here is that our own prayer ministry has a significant impact on the lives and hearts of the people we pray for. It's not because of how eloquent we are at putting words together or how righteous we feel. No, our prayers are effective because by our faith in Jesus, we are joining in Jesus' prayers for others. Among all the needs we can be praying for, let's pray that people would come to know and believe in Jesus, to confidently confess together that he is truly the Christ.

#### Luke 9:18-20 (ESV)

<sup>18</sup> 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?" <sup>19</sup> And they answered, "John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen." <sup>20</sup> Then he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered, "The Christ of God."

- We see that this is Jesus' desire as he asked his second question in verse 20: "But who do you say that I am?"
  - The "you" here in the original language of the bible is plural and it is also emphasized. So it is like Jesus waited for everyone to quiet down, looked each of his disciples in the eyes and said, "I really want to know what you all say about me. Who do you say that I am? Who am I to you?" Jesus asks us for a personal confession of faith that comes from a personal relationship with him.
    - So I want to make a note for us here, and especially for [our teenagers/for those who grew up in Christian homes]. So please listen carefully. I want to remind you that having Christian parents or growing up going to church does not make you a Christian automatically. Your parents' faith in Jesus does not automatically give you faith in Jesus. No, your confession of faith in Jesus must be personal. Jesus is not going to take your parents' answer as your answer. Jesus is also asking each and everyone personally, "Who do you say that I am? Who am I to you?" How will you answer?
- We can get some help looking at Peter's answer. He answers this important question correctly. He says, Jesus, to me, you are "The Christ of God."
  - The Greek word, "*Christos*" is translated from the Hebrew word, "*mashiyach*", which is how we get our two English words for Christ and Messiah. They both mean the Anointed One, someone who is specially appointed by God. In the Old Testament, this concept of the Messiah refers to a king, who is a descendent of King David, who will establish the new era of God's kingdom and God's salvation. But sadly, the Jewish people were left disappointed by king after king since King David died for a Messiah to come.
  - So, the coming of the Christ was an event that the Jewish people were waiting for, for hundreds of years. The anticipation was like a bride waiting for her groom, like waiting for a child to be born. And finally! Peter declares that Jesus is the one they have been waiting for. Imagine the relief, the joy, the excitement they are all feeling standing in the presence of Jesus the Christ of God, standing before their Messiah, their King, their Savior. But before any celebration could start, Jesus needed to fill in Peter's answer. Yes, Jesus is the Christ of God. Peter's answer was correct, but not complete. It says in verses 21-22:

#### Luke 9:21-22 (ESV)

<sup>21</sup> And he strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, <sup>22</sup> 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."

- We must not make Jesus fit into our own paradigms of what a Savior should do. Rather, giving up our expectations, we must learn to trust in who Jesus says he is.
- In response, Jesus does a strange thing and strictly commands them not to tell anyone that he is the Christ. What is going on here? If people need to know who Jesus is in order to be saved, why did Jesus stop the disciples from sharing his true identity at this point in time?
  - The reason is because the people were still more influenced by popular opinions and their own paradigms of what their Savior should do. The Jewish people wanted a political savior who would

free them from Roman rule and to establish themselves once again as a powerful nation in the world. They wanted the Christ to be a national hero. And they were willing to take Jesus by force to make him their king (John 6:15). But, Jesus did not want a crowd of fanatic followers who do not truly know and believe who he says he is. His kingdom will not be made up of such people who try to force Jesus into their paradigms. Rather his kingdom will be full of people surrendered and submitted wholly to their King, even when it goes against their expectations.

- In the same way, as we confess that Jesus is the Christ, we should also be careful not to force Jesus to fit into our paradigms of what a Savior should do. We need to be aware of how we still come to Jesus with a list of our expectations and desires that we want fulfilled. For me, it is almost automatic for me to come to Jesus with my expectations especially when I'm struggling in a conflict, or in situations that are out of my control. But, if we try to come to Jesus with our paradigms, the danger is that we might convince ourselves it is not worth trusting in Jesus. We will easily feel discouraged, confused and disappointed. We must learn to surrender our expectations and our paradigms when we come to Jesus.
  - This is why, for now, Jesus does not want his disciples to declare to the crowds that he is the Christ. Everyone, including the disciples, need to first see and understand what it will cost Jesus to be the Christ, the Savior of the world.
- Jesus describes the cost when he says that the "Son of Man must suffer, be rejected, be killed, and raised again." This is the cost Jesus must pay as the Christ. Jesus uses a synonymous title here, referring to himself as the "Son of Man." It is an Old Testament title for the Messiah from a prophetic vision that God gave to a man named Daniel. The Son of Man was to receive an everlasting kingdom that will not be destroyed (Daniel 7:14). But Jesus also explains that before such a kingdom will be established, the Son of Man must first lose his life. Before becoming a victorious Christ, he must be a suffering Christ. And the key word here is "must." The Christ must first die to be the Christ who gives life. Jesus' rejection and death was not an accident. But God in his sovereignty, has planned for this to happen. And therefore it must happen.
- For us as readers today, we can understand that this is the gospel message that Jesus has brought to us. Jesus understood he must suffer in our place so that we would no longer have to suffer the curse of sin. Jesus understood he must be rejected so that we would no longer be rejected by God because of our sinfulness. Jesus understood he must be killed on the cross as the sacrifice for our sins to satisfy God's holy wrath. And we can praise God that this is what he faithfully did.
  - But not only did Jesus have to suffer and die, but he would also be raised to life again on the third day. And praise God, he now lives. He continues to be with us. He continues to intercede for us. Now, for anyone who puts their trust in Jesus, who makes their personal confession that he is the Christ, they will be also raised to eternal life to be with Jesus forever in heaven when Jesus returns again. This is God's plan of salvation for sinners like you and me. This is how Jesus is the victorious Christ as he gave his life for us.
  - If you believe this is true, you can answer Jesus' question with great confidence. You can make your personal confession with Peter, with me, and with fellow believers here, that Jesus truly is the Christ of God. And the more we look at what Jesus Christ has done for us, the more we are able to give up our paradigms and expectations. The more we look at the gospel and what it means for the world, we'll see that our expectations of him are too small and too self-centered. And instead, we'll learn deeply and personally, like the first disciples, who Jesus truly says he is.

So, we first looked at our confession of Christ. Now we will look at our commitment to Christ.

## II. Our commitment to Christ (vv.23-27)

### Luke 9:23 (ESV)

<sup>23</sup>And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

- Jesus invites his disciples to a way of life that he himself was faithfully committed to.

- [Read verse 23]. So, right after Jesus explains how he must suffer and die, Jesus invites his disciples to follow him. And yes, following Jesus is indeed a costly commitment for any disciple to make. But we see that Jesus invites his disciples to a way of life that he himself was faithfully committed to. He is not asking his disciples for something he was not willing to do himself. He gave himself up to die and took up his cross that he did not need to take up. But he willingly emptied himself of all his rights as God the Son and he was obedient to death, even death on a cross. There is no greater love than this.
  - So before we jump into these challenging, costly commitments Jesus is asking us to make, we must remember that Jesus himself is our motivation. If anyone goes after Jesus, if anyone follows Jesus in the way he calls us to, we will receive Jesus. We will receive the ultimate source of unending love, joy, hope, peace and satisfaction that we could never find in this world. Are we willing to do whatever it takes to have Christ? To be with Christ and follow him? Is Jesus your ultimate treasure as he forgives all your sins and promises you eternal life? I pray everyone of us here can say “yes” to these questions. Because we will soon see that Christ must be all we have and all we need as we now look closely at what it takes to follow Jesus Christ.
  
- Jesus clarifies two commands about how his disciples must follow him. He says, “let him deny himself and take up his cross daily.” “Let him deny himself” simply means to say “No” to self. Jesus didn’t say, deny certain “things” in our lives. He said, “let him deny himself.” It would be easier if Jesus said deny a certain career, or deny a certain salary, because we could still have many options to choose from. But no, Jesus said, deny self, our very being. Doesn’t this sound impossible? Well, it is possible and Jesus guides us along.
  - Because the only way we can do that is if we have a new self that denies our old self (Ephesians 4:22). Our old self is our natural, sinful self with our selfish, self-centered will. Our old self thinks that I am in the center of the world. Our old self demands everything and everyone should serve me and my desires. But those who are in Christ, we have a new self. We are a new creation in Christ fitted with new, Christ-exalting desires. Christ is now the center of our lives and we desire everything and everyone to serve Christ and his desires. So, denying ourselves looks like willingly and intentionally decreasing so that Christ will increase in our lives in every way. This is possible and it is a better way to live, but this will be a long process in God’s grace and power.
    - Pastors struggle with this too. For pastors, at least those I have heard from or read, there’s a great temptation and a blurry line between exalting Christ and exalting self because of our line of work. I will be the first to confess even though it’s embarrassing. But if I hear from people, “Pastor, that was the best sermon I ever heard,” or see people crying in tears after I preached, it’s very tempting to forget God who was undeniably at work through me. PE talked about being glory-thieves a few weeks ago and, yes, I too am tempted to steal God’s glory for myself. Sometimes I do. And whenever I try to steal God’s glory, I quickly realize how destructive this mindset can be. When I’m caught in self-exaltation mode, the work and serving that I love to do for God and the church quickly becomes draining and meaningless. The sacrifices Jesus calls me to make for my family seem too difficult and not rewarding enough. These are the lingering desires of my old self crawling back into my heart. So please pray for me.
    - But thank God he is faithfully at work in me to sanctify my heart’s desire. And I know this is true because I hate my old self. Jesus is teaching me to deny my old self through constant confession and repentance of my sin. This is what denying self looks like for selfish, self-exalting sinners like you and me. As Jesus said he must suffer, we must deny ourselves if we want to follow Christ as his disciple. He doesn’t ask of us something he wasn’t willing to do. All the more, without denying self, there is no way we could do this next command without denying ourselves.
  - The next command is to “take up your cross.” This is a figurative expression that means “to be prepared to suffer even unto death”.<sup>3</sup> This is because the cross refers to the literal punishment and execution that the Roman government used against the worst of criminals and enemies. It

<sup>3</sup> Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 285.

involved the person to physically carry a heavy wooden beam throughout the city on the way to the place of crucifixion. It was a path of extreme suffering and complete shame, and the end was death. No one would choose to take up his cross unless it was forced upon his will.

- So what exactly does Jesus mean when he calls us to take up our cross? Well, we need to note that Jesus mentions a singular cross. There is just one cross we carry, not many. So this does not mean that we call our problems or other people as our crosses we have to endure. The reality is, the problem is none other than our old self with its selfish, self-exalting desires. Our old self might even be willing to endure some suffering or some shame if it is to get what we selfishly want. But this is not what it means to take up our cross.
- Taking up our cross means that we willingly endure suffering, shame and even death for Jesus. To follow Jesus. And taking up is something we are willing to do daily, not just a one-time suffering and it's done. It's a daily commitment to Jesus.
- So when we think about what a disciple looks like, we should see this image of someone taking up his cross daily. It helps us to see what living out our confession of Christ looks like. Just saying the words, "Jesus is the Christ" is not what Jesus is describing here. But to those who make such a personal confession of Christ, it must be marked by this profound, passionate commitment to follow Christ. If our lives as disciples are not marked by any suffering, or any shame or death to our old self as we follow Jesus, it most likely means we have not denied ourselves in the ways Jesus commands us to.
- Our old self wants nothing to do with suffering, shame or death especially if it is for the sake of someone else. Our old self seeks out just the opposite: it craves comfort, honor and life.<sup>4</sup> But our new self loves Jesus, treasures Jesus more than these things.

#### Luke 9:24-26 (ESV)

<sup>24</sup> For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. <sup>25</sup> For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? <sup>26</sup> 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.

- Jesus provides three pressing reasons why every disciple should deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Jesus.
- Now, after making his invitation clear, Jesus continues and provides three back-to-back reasons why every disciple should follow Jesus. There are three of these "for-statements", one in each verse. Following Jesus is a costly commitment so Jesus doesn't want to lose us in the challenges. So in case anyone is questioning and doubting, "why-why-why?" Jesus explains saying, "because-because-because." So, why should we deny ourselves and take up our cross?
  - The first reason is in verse 24, "For/because whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it."
    - This means that everyone desires to save their lives. But if we try to save our lives in the selfish way, by clinging to comforts, we will lose our life in the end. If we try to resist the cross, we will lose our lives. The only way to truly save our lives, which is what we all want, is the selfless way. It is to say "yes" to Jesus' way of suffering, shame and death. If we say "yes" to Jesus and live for his sake, his desires and purposes, we will save our lives.
    - Jesus here is teaching us that we should look beyond what's temporary and look to what will last. All earthly pleasures will soon fade away and they will never fully satisfy. But why do we keep pursuing these temporary things? It's because we are easily tempted with quick comforts, easy solutions, and immediate satisfaction. Not only are we easily tempted but the world is full of such temptations to build our own kingdoms of comfort and our own paradises of pleasure on this earth. And this is the reason why money, sex, and power are such effective marketing strategies of the world. These things look like and feel like true life. But Jesus is warning us now not to be fooled or deceived. Pursuing these things will not give life. But they will end up stealing life from us and the end will be in spiritual death. All of us must be convinced that saying "no" to our old self and taking up our cross daily is the way to true and eternal life in Christ.

<sup>4</sup> Adapted from John Piper, "Deny Yourself for More Delight," <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/deny-yourself-for-more-delight>.

- Jesus makes the warning of spiritual death clearer in the second reason. In verse 25, Jesus asks a rhetorical question, “For/because what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?”
  - The answer is obvious. If someone gains the whole world by trying to save his life the selfish way, he will profit nothing in the end. He will lose as he forfeits himself to eternal death and separation from God. In other words, even gaining the whole world in all of its riches, it will still not be enough to save his life. It just won’t work. We would never put our money toward an investment or a company we know would cause us financial losses. And in the same way, Jesus is warning us not to risk our lives for the sake of worldly gain because we will lose our lives in the end. Our eyes need to be opened to the reality that worldly gains will end in spiritual destruction.
  - It’s not a coincidence that Jesus is using financial language here. Jesus is highlighting how our selfish desires are specifically expressed through our use of money. Because how we view money, spend money, and manage money all deal with the desires of our hearts. In the area of money, we must also deny our old self. Our old self is stingy with our money and would make excuses to the financial needs of others. Our old self treasures money and the power, ability and reputation it can give us. Our old self thinks my money is my money and therefore, ironically, he will profit nothing from his money in the end.
  - But when we realize that Christ sacrificed himself, becoming poor so that we would become spiritually rich in him (2 Corinthians 8:9), we will no longer pursue money as our savior. Instead, Jesus becomes our greatest treasure and our greatest desire. Because in Christ, we have been crucified to the world and the world has been crucified to us (Galatians 6:14). And the new self will see my money as God’s money that we steward for his purposes. The new self realizes money cannot buy true satisfaction for our souls. Instead, the new self experiences joy in being generous and blessing others as I have been blessed. No one will profit anything from gaining the whole world in turn for his own life. If we are not yet convinced, Jesus provides one final pressing reason.
- Lastly, in verse 26, Jesus says, “For/because 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.” How is being ashamed of Jesus and his words related to gaining the whole world but losing your soul?
  - I see Jesus is pointing out how shame is another powerful motivator of the old self. Selfish desires for money draws us to the world—it is a force of attraction. On top of that, the fear of shame and embarrassment in the world pushes us away from Jesus—it is a force of repulsion. These forces are working in us so that in the end, we would lose our life and forfeit ourselves. If we are ashamed now of Jesus and his words, if we choose a life free of shame for Jesus, there is a greater shame coming for us. Because when the Son of Man comes in all his glory, he will be ashamed of us. He will be ashamed of those who confessed with their mouths that Jesus is the Christ but their lives were not true to that commitment. Not everyone who says to him “Lord, Lord” will enter the kingdom of heaven. And he will say, “Depart from me, I never knew you.” And a shame-free life will end in eternal humiliation and embarrassment. May none of us hear those words from our Lord and Savior when Jesus returns.
  - What does this mean for us now? It means that as we follow Jesus in this life as his disciples, there will be points of friction where other people will question our way of life. They will ridicule us for not pursuing money, comfort and security like the rest of the world is doing. They might even hate us and exclude us as we deny the kingdoms and riches of this world. They might even slander and persecute us as we live for Jesus’ sake. But remember Jesus’ words, that we are blessed when we face such shame in the world. We can rejoice and leap for joy because our reward will be the glory of the Father and the holy angels in heaven as we are received into eternal life (cf. Luke 6:22-23).
  - So even when the world around us is putting us to shame, when our fear of shame pushes us away from Jesus, we look to Jesus and the cross he bore for us. We look to where Jesus took on the ultimate shame and humiliation on the cross for us. Where God the Father turned his



face away from God the Son as Jesus became sin for us. Jesus endured the greatest suffering. He endured the ultimate shame and he died so that we would choose to follow him, choose to find true, eternal life in him. So what will we choose? Ourselves or Jesus? Will we choose the world or Jesus? A shame-free life now or endless glory forever with Jesus? As we consider this question, let's look at the final verse. Jesus says...

Luke 9:27 (ESV)

<sup>27</sup> But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."

- For the disciples standing around Jesus in this very moment, this was a promise of hope. That even though the Christ, even though their Messiah will suffer, be rejected and killed, the full promise of his kingdom was still in effect. And even before these disciples died, they would see the kingdom of God. They would see a glimpse of God's glory, a glimpse of Jesus' resurrection, and a glimpse of his kingdom advancing through the church.
  - For us today, we see much more of the kingdom of God than these disciples ever did. We see many nations and peoples confessing their faith in Christ and committing their lives to him. We see many churches planted and participating in his kingdom work to reach the remaining nations and the plentiful harvest with the gospel, even in the most remote and most hostile places on earth. We see many disciples face persecution with faith and confidence in Christ, knowing that they have faithfully followed Jesus in suffering, shame and death as they take up their cross daily.
  - So, how will we answer Jesus? He is asking us, "Who am I to you? Who do you say that I am?" Is Jesus your all-surpassing worth? Is he your ultimate treasure? Is he your Lord and Savior? If this is your confession, then will you commit to be his faithful disciple? Will you deny yourself and take your cross daily to follow him?
  - Jim Elliot, a missionary who died in attempts to reach a hostile people group, shares his conclusion upon reading these words of Jesus. Quote: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep in order to gain what he cannot lose." I pray that all of us will gladly, willingly give the temporary life and the comforts and riches of this world so that we gain what we cannot lose, Jesus Christ himself in eternal life with him.

### Life Application:

1) Who is Jesus to you? Seek to know Jesus personally and deeply in the Word as you put aside popular opinions and your own paradigms of a savior.

- People misunderstand Jesus' identity when left to their own knowledge and reasoning. So Jesus prays and guides us to make a personal confession of faith in him.
- We must not make Jesus fit into our own paradigms of what a Savior should do. Rather, giving up our expectations, we must learn to trust in who Jesus says he is.

2) Will you follow Jesus? Say "no" to self-exalting desires and repent for not exalting Christ in specific areas of your life.

- Take just one step today by committing to follow Jesus.
- What are the ways you are drawn by the comforts and riches of this world? What are the ways you are driven by the fear of shame if others saw how you are living for Jesus?
- If our lives as disciples are not marked by any suffering, or any shame or death to our old self as we follow Jesus, it most likely means we have not denied ourselves in the ways Jesus commands us to.

### The One Thing:

*Keep our confession of Christ and commitment to Christ true to his cross and his sacrifice.*

Potential Closing songs:

All I Have Is Christ

One Pure and Holy Passion