

TAKE UP HIS CROSS DAILY

LUKE 9:23

Text: Luke 9:23

Luke 9:23

²³ And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

Introduction:

T-Shirts with messages on the front are popular with a certain segment of society. I was in a shopping mall and saw a young man approaching me who had an interesting message on the front of his T-Shirt. These were the words: "I once was lost in the shuffle, but now I just shuffle along with the lost." Those were the actual words!

Disciples do not shuffle along with the lost. Discipleship is about the undisciplined being disciplined; the untaught being taught; the fuzzy-thinking Christian becoming a focused Christian; the casual Christian becoming a committed Christian.

The great omission from the Great Commission, in this present day, is the failure to make disciples.

Matthew 28:19-20

¹⁹ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

It is my prayer that this series of messages on Discipleship will result in two things: (1) the enlistment of new disciples of Jesus and (2) the encouragement and strengthening of those who are already disciples.

What is involved in enlisting in discipleship? There are four main thoughts in Luke 9:23 that give us the answer.

1. THE CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

Luke 9:23

²³ And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

Mark 8:34

³⁴ And when he had called the people *unto him* with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

Notice the words, “And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also.” This was a mixed multitude – “the people,” meaning the general population, the outer circle, and “his disciples,” the inner circle. His remarks fell on the ears of the curious as well as the committed.

This call of Christ comprises an invitation.

The Lord gave two great invitations during His earthly ministry.

The first is in Matthew 11:28:

Matthew 11:28

²⁸ Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

“Come Unto Me”

The second is in our text:

Luke 9:23

²³ And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

“Come After Me”

It is obvious that one cannot come “after” until one has come “unto” Him. These are two completely different invitations directed at two different groups:

- One is a call to faith – “Come Unto Me”
- One is a call to follow – “Come After Me”
- One is a call for a relationship – “Come Unto Me”
- One is a call for discipleship – “Come After Me”

- One is to lay down something – “Heavy Laden”
- One is to take up something – “Take Up His Cross”

I have heard these two invitations treated as though they were one and the same. It is obvious that they are different and require different responses. Jesus Christ continues to extend these dual invitations. Have you accepted both? If not, why not?

2. THE CANDIDATE FOR DISCIPLESHIP

Luke 9:23

²³ And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

As we noted, in Mark’s Gospel Jesus addressed “the people” and also “His disciples.” In the curious crowd there may have been those who would respond to His call and join those who were already His committed disciples. Therefore, Jesus called out, “If anyone will to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”

There are, at the very least, two qualifications in Jesus’ call that open the door to a life of discipleship. The qualifying words are: “anyone” and “desires.” One word presents an appeal; the other pertains to an appetite. I will explain as follows:

A. The Extent of the Appeal – “If anyone”

Mark 4:23

²³ If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

John 6:51

⁵¹ I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

John 7:17

¹⁷ If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of myself.

John 7:37

³⁷ In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

John 10:9

⁹ I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

John 12:26

²⁶ If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will *my* Father honour.

3. THE CONDITION OF DISCIPLESHIP

Luke 9:23

²³ And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

A. Condition One – Rejection of Self

B. Condition Two – Reception of a Cross

4. THE CONTINUATION OF DISCIPLESHIP

Luke 9:23

²³ And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

A. Discipleship is a Day by Day – “daily”

B. Discipleship is Step by Step – “follow me”

There are two types of followers

- Far-off Followers – (Example of Peter)
- Faithful Followers

Revelation 14:4

⁴ ... These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.

Close:

Are you a follower or a fan of Jesus? To become a fan of Jesus is much easier than to become a follower. A fan can admire Him from a distance but true followers have an intimate association with Him. They submit to His disciplines, obey and follow Him. Are you a fickle fan or a faithful follower?

A seminary president was talking to one of the professors when a fellow walked out of the classroom passing before them. The President said to the professor, "He is one of your students, isn't he?" The professor replied, dejectedly, "He attends my lectures, but he is not one of my students. There is a world of difference between attending lectures and being a student!"

That is the same problem that the church faces. There are many who listen to sermons but not all listeners are students of Jesus Christ; not all attendees are adherents. They are Fans of Jesus but not followers.

Are you a fan or a follower?