

### *Insights from Luke*

#### “The Earthly Consequences of Acknowledging Christ as Lord”

Luke 9:23-27

#### I. Introduction

##### A. Facing big decisions

1. Over the years I have observed a significant difference in the way people approach large decisions.

##### a. Examples.

1. Buying a house and needing a mortgage.

2. Getting married.

3. Deciding on a career.

2. I have noted two approaches.

##### a. Counting the cost.

1. – Tabulating the figures in buying a house.

-- Weighing qualities of the person to marry.

-- Weighing the financial reward against doing what I really want to do as a career.

2. Thoughtfulness marks this approach.

3. Sometimes too much thought and never making a decision.

##### b. No looking before leaping.

1. – Buying a home with a thirty year mortgage is no bigger a decision than deciding which movie you want to view on Friday night.

-- Marriage is entered into with very little thought of the real inner qualities of the prospective spouse.

-- College cost in time and money have no bearing upon a career decision.

2. No forethought marks these decisions.

B. These thoughts bear upon today's text.

1. The gospel message conveys a free offer of salvation with forgiveness of sins and life everlasting.

2. It also comes with a cost that means everything in my life is "on the table."

a. A loss of control.

b. The two thoughts are conveyed in this statement:

Knowing Christ as Savior and Lord.

c. Today we focus upon the latter.

3. Summarized in the following from Ryken, *Luke*, Vol. I, p. 456:



Frankly, most Christians wish there could be some other way to follow Jesus – an easier way. We had hoped that Jesus would refrain from making too many costly demands, that he would endorse the plans we already had for our lives, or at least that he would let us live for him with as little inconvenience as possible. We said we wanted to follow Jesus, but what we really meant was that we would follow him as long as he was going more or less the way we were planning to go. Instead of giving up the life that we had, we wanted to find a way to add Jesus to it. If that is what we had hoped for, we were badly mistaken. There is no easier way, no more convenient Christianity. Jesus calls us to make a comprehensive and costly sacrifice.

C. Today's text.

1. Luke 9:23-37

<sup>23</sup> And He was saying to them all, 'If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. <sup>24</sup> For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. <sup>25</sup> For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? <sup>26</sup> For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the

Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. <sup>27</sup> But I say to you truthfully, there are some of those standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.”

## II. Exposition



### A. Luke 9:23

“<sup>23</sup> And He was saying to them all, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.’”

#### 1. Keep in mind the context for these words.

##### a. Peter had just made his confession.



#### 1. Luke 9:20

“<sup>20</sup> And He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ And Peter answered and said, ‘The Christ of God.’”

##### a. The disciples recognized Jesus as the Anointed One.

b. Then Jesus taught them that in order for salvation to occur, he would not be overthrowing the Roman Empire. He would go to Jerusalem, be rejected, die on a cross, and later be raised from the dead.

1. Keep in mind that crucifixion and resurrection were completely foreign to them.

c. Then Jesus makes the point that his followers would do the same each day.

#### 2. A definition of what it means to be a follower of Christ.



##### a. Luke 9:23

“<sup>23</sup> And He was saying to them all, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.’”

b. Also stated in Matthew 16:24-27 and Mark 8:34-38.

3. Jesus’ remarks are a radical departure from the easy believism of today and the man-centered gospel.

4. “Deny himself.” – This is a strong term used to describe Peter’s vehement denials that he knew Jesus (Matthew 26:70,72).

a. Also used to describe reprobates who permanently deny Christ (Luke 12:9; Titus 1:16; I John 2:22-23).

b. MacArthur, *Luke*, Vol. II, p. 270:



To be a follower of Jesus Christ is to disown one’s natural, depraved, sinful self. It is to give up all dependence on and confidence in oneself and one’s works to save.

5. Consider Paul – Who had better credentials than Paul to be an apostle?

a. Philippians 3:5-6



“<sup>5</sup> ...circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup> as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.”

b. Acts 26:5



“<sup>5</sup> ...since they have known about me for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion.”

c. Galatians 1:14



“<sup>14</sup> ...and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.”

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6. After his conversion, listen how he spoke about himself:

a. Romans 7:18



“<sup>18</sup> For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.”



b. Philippians 3:7-8

“<sup>7</sup> But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup> More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ.”



c. I Timothy 1:15

“<sup>15</sup> It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.”

7. Of course, there must be a denial of ourselves.

8. “Take his cross daily.”

a. The call was crystal clear to the men. This was a graphic representation of what it means to follow Christ.

1. To endure hatred, hostility, rejection, reproach, and a horrible death.



B. Luke 9:24-25

“<sup>24</sup> For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. <sup>25</sup> For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?”

1. The quest of saving one’s soul was a frequent teaching theme and regularly a part of Jesus’ instruction.

a. Said later in Luke 17:33:

“<sup>33</sup> Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.”

b. Said earlier in Matthew 10:39:

“<sup>39</sup> He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.”





c. During the Passion week in John 12:25:

“<sup>25</sup> He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal.”

2. The point is that those who choose to focus upon self-esteem and the fulfilling of all their desires and ambitions in this life with superficial interest in Christ – lose their souls.



a. Matthew 7:21-23 (Here is more proof.)

“<sup>21</sup> Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. <sup>22</sup> Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ <sup>23</sup> And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.’”

3. What would it profit if he gains the whole world and loses his soul?

a. The “ultimate hyperbole,” MacArthur, *Luke*, Vol. II, p. 276.

b. The obvious answer is absolutely nothing.



C. Luke 9:26

“<sup>26</sup> For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.”

1. “Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of when He comes...”, verse 26.

2. Note it is a shame over Christ and His words.

a. You can’t have Christ without His words.

b. “Did He really say that?”

3. Secondly, also note that Jesus is the judge. The emphatic statement places the losing and saving of our souls in the context of the final judgment of the world.

a. A verdict is coming.

b. J.C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels, Luke*, Vol. I, p. 311:



To lose one's soul is to lose God, and Christ, and heaven, and glory, and happiness, to all eternity. It is to be cast away for ever, helpless and hopeless in hell.



D. Luke 9:27

“<sup>27</sup> But I say to you truthfully, there are some of those standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.”

1. “Not taste death until they see the kingdom of God,” verse 27.

a. Some say this statement relates to the resurrection or the ascension.

b. Perhaps referring to the day of Pentecost when the apostles received power of his kingdom to establish his church.

c. Perhaps the transfiguration which is the next event in Luke's gospel.

d. I take the position that this did happen at AD 70 with the destruction of the temple.

### III. Points for Reflection



A. The man-centered gospel of today cannot save anyone.

1. If it's all about you, your life, your feelings, and your comfort, then you know it's the way to hell.

2. Note the difference between today's man-centered gospel and a life built on saving faith.

a. From Arthur Bennett, *The Valley of Vision* [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1977],

xv):



Lord, high and holy, meek and lowly ...  
Let me learn by paradox  
that the way down is the way up,  
that to be low is to be high,  
that the broken heart is the healed heart,  
that the contrite spirit is the rejoicing spirit,  
that the repenting soul is the victorious soul,  
that to have nothing is to possess all,  
that to bear the cross is to wear the crown,  
that to give is to receive ...



Let me find thy light in my darkness,  
thy life in my death,  
thy joy in my sorrow,  
thy grace in my sin,  
thy riches in my poverty,  
thy glory in my [humiliation].

### 3. Matthew 10:34-39

“<sup>34</sup> Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. <sup>35</sup> For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW; <sup>36</sup> and A MAN’S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD. <sup>37</sup> He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. <sup>38</sup> And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. <sup>39</sup> He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.”



B. Taking up your cross daily is another expression of Jesus' words at the end of the Sermon on the Mount.



1. Matthew 7:13-14

“<sup>13</sup> Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. <sup>14</sup> For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

2. One way is wide, easy, and broad.

3. The other way is narrow, small, difficult.



4. **We are not saved by denying ourselves daily, but if we are saved, we will be dying to ourselves daily.**



C. Because of God's perfect standard of righteousness, the enlightened sinner is driven to repentance. This is the heart of the gospel message.

1. There are three New Testament Greek words that describe repentance.



a. METANOEO

1. Matthew 3:2

“<sup>2</sup> Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

2. Luke 10:13

“<sup>13</sup> Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had been performed in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.”

3. This is the mental aspect of repentance. It involves a reversal of thinking or a change of mind. (Noetic – having to do with the mind and intellect.)



b. METAMELOMAI

1. Matthew 21:29 (Contained in a parable of Jesus)

“<sup>29</sup> And he answered, ‘I will not’; but afterward he regretted it and went.”

2. This is the emotional side of repentance. There should be regret and sorrow which is a result of a person's changed mind.



c. EPISTREPHO

1. Luke 17:4

“<sup>4</sup> And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ forgive him.”

2. This is the act of the will operating to change one's direction in life.

Turning from sin to God.

2. Never forget repentance is not a human work. It is granted by God.

- a. Acts 11:18

“<sup>18</sup> When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, ‘Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life.’”

- b. II Timothy 2:25-26

“<sup>25</sup> ...with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,<sup>26</sup> and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.”



D. Where is the profit?

1. Illustration – The plumber who asked this question.

- a. If our lives are built upon the striving after things of this world, then there is no profit.

2. Note the challenge of owning particular stocks.

- a. One is purchased.

- b. Its value descends.

- c. Some say hold; some say sell. (Apple computer had a rough time in the '90s.)

1. How do you really know the future value?

2. The Bible has foretold the future. Cut your losses now. Confess Christ and repent because at the end of time, a life built on your values has zero value.
3. Stock pickers would love to have future information, but we're talking about something far greater than Apple. The earthly consequences of making Christ Lord is a change in this life and final reward in the next.