

The Gospel of Luke

The Cost of Following Jesus

Luke 9:23-26

1. **An Open Invitation to Follow Jesus** (v.23a)

Jesus extends the invitation to His disciples (v.18) as well as to the larger crowd that had been following Him (cf. Mark 8:34; cf. Luke 14:25-27). This is the same invitation that Jesus makes to all who hear His message.

2. **A Sobering Description of Following Jesus** (v.23)

Jesus now describes, with a vivid picture, what a saving faith looks like.

A. **Deny Yourself.**

In order to follow Jesus, you must deny yourself. Self-denial the intentional disparaging of all achievements, relationships, ideas and attitudes which have self as the primary object for satisfaction or which contribute to the positive assessment of your own personal righteousness and goodness before God (Phil 3:7-8). If one truly believes in Jesus and His message, the result will be a catastrophic reorientation of life that is no longer focused on fulfilling one's self-interest but in one's focus upon Christ's desires (Matt 13:44-46).

B. **Take Up Your Cross Daily.**

Up to this point, Jesus had not indicated the way in which He was to die. To bear one's cross was to endure public humiliation, scorn, and shame. Jesus tells any would-be followers that they must do this willingly each day (cf. Acts 5:41; Phil 1:15-18; Heb 11:24-26; 1 Pet 4:12-19).

C. **Follow Jesus.**

Following Jesus is not merely a mental confession or an agreement with specific facts or doctrines; to follow Jesus is to continually obey His commands (John 14:15; 1 John 5:3), love what He loves (1 John 2:15-17; 4:20), believe what He teaches (1 John 2:23; 4:2-3, and live as He lived (1 John 2:6, 29).

3. **A Clear Accounting of the Cost of Following Jesus** (vs.24-25)

A focus upon preserving your own life apart from Christ will ultimately result in the absolute loss of your life (Matt 23:13; 27:18). Forsaking one's own life in favor of Christ and His gospel will result in eternal life (John 3:16; cf. Matt 19:16ff; Luke 19:8-10; 2 Tim 4:10).

4. **A Warning of the Terrifying Reality of Forsaking Jesus** (v.26)

It is impossible to follow Jesus without obeying His commands and believing His words (cf. John 17:17; 2 Tim 3:16-17). While non-Christians will, for a variety of reasons, disbelieve what God has revealed in His Word, Christians will believe His Word because it is what God has said (cf. John 6:68).