**Radical Teaching for Radical Times!** **Text: Luke 9:23-27 Date: 8/15/21 Sunday AM**

Jesus said and did some unique things during His short ministry!

Being a master teacher, His teachings were practical and provocative.

Jesus was not a showman! Nor was He simply a miracle worker!

He was much more than a last day’s prophet!

Jesus was likely to close His teaching sessions with the words, “He that hath an ear to hear let him hear.”

On many occasions, Jesus spoke directly to the Jews.

On other occasions, Jesus spoke intimately to His disciples!

At other times, Jesus addressed the masses!

Jesus was also known to challenge religious leaders with statements like, “You must be born again.”

Jesus also rebuked the religious leaders with sayings like, “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance!”

Jesus spoke openly and compassionately to sinners. He told one sinner to “go and sin no more.”

At times, Jesus would say and do some radical things!

Early on in Jesus’ ministry massive multitudes gathered to see Jesus and to hear what He had to say.

**John 6** records one such experience. Just listening to Jesus was not an option. His words were hard at times. The responses were varied as well!

In **John 6** for example, the multitudes departed while Jesus’ disciples took a graduate level course in discipleship!

Dr. Luke records for us one of Jesus’ hard sayings.

The hard sayings of Jesus were very difficult to grasp, and even more difficult to live out!

Maybe you’ve heard the story of the pig and the chicken walking down the road together when they come upon a sign advertising a breakfast to benefit the poor. The chicken said to the pig: “We should donate to that worthy cause. How about if I give an egg and you provide the ham?” To which the pig replied, “*Not so fast. For you that would be a contribution, but for me it would be a total commitment*.”

**Here in Luke 9:23-27 Jesus is calling for a total commitment! [Not just for a contribution, but for a total commitment.]**

I. First, we see **A Radical Declaration** – 9:23

* **Luke 9:23 (KJV)** 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.
* **Look back at 9:18-22** ~ Here we see the SOURCE of the Declaration is Jesus Himself. What moved Jesus to make such demanding statements… such hard sayings to His fledgling group of young followers? Were they ready for this? Could they withstand His demand?
* **Luke 9:18-22 (KJV)** And it came to pass, as He was alone praying, His disciples were with Him: and He asked them, saying, **Whom say the people that I am?** 19 They answering said, John the Baptist; but some *say*, Elias; and others *say*, that one of the old prophets is risen again. 20 **He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am?** Peter answering said, The Christ of God. **21 And HE straitly charged them, and commanded *them* to tell no man that thing;** 22 Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.
* Jesus injects two very penetrating questions into this conversation! “Whom say the *people* that I am?” **and** “Who say *you* that I am?”
* Their answer prompts Jesus to make this radical declaration. It is radical indeed!
* **9:22** ~ Now that they had some understanding of Who He was Jesus thought they were ready in a simple way to hear what He had to say.
* Keep in mind that Jesus had a very brief window of time to teach and train the Twelve. His words here are meant to move them forward as His disciples!
* **Here’s another example with similar wording found in Luke 18:31-34 (KJV)** Then He took *unto Him* the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. 32 For He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: 33 And they shall scourge *Him*, and put Him to death: and the third day He shall rise again. 34 And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.
* First, we see **A Radical Declaration** – 9:23

II. Secondly, we see **A Radical Definition** – 9:23-24

* **QUESTION:** What does it mean to follow Jesus? To be a disciple of Jesus? Jesus answers these questions in our text!
* **Luke 9:23-24 (KJV)** 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. 24 For *whosoever* will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it.
* As Jesus is speaking here He’s drawing a line in blood… in His own blood!!!
* THERE IS NOTHING STATUS QUO ABOUT FOLLOWING JESUS!
* **Let me go ahead and say it…** It will cost you everything to follow Jesus! Living for Christ in a world bent on self destruction through the possession of things is not easy.
* **Honestly**, it’s not going to get any easier. *Standing up for Jesus required the strength of faith in the first century, and it requires the strength of faith in the 21st century*!
* **Sanctification** is the ongoing process of dying to self; while at the same time being made alive unto God through Jesus Christ!
* **Romans 6:11 (KJV)** Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be *dead* indeed unto sin, but *alive* unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.
* **Notice the Specifics of Jesus’ declaration**.
* Jesus made it clear what the conditions were for *anyone* who wanted to follow Him!
* Being Jewish, these men knew what it meant to follow a Rabbi. *At this level* they knew what it meant to be a disciple.
* ***On the other hand***, they didn’t know/understand what it meant to be a disciple of **ONE** who was bound to die within the coming months.
* They would ultimately come to see Jesus as their Messiah based upon their Jewish upbringing. Hebrew history taught them that much!
* They were also aware of what it meant to carry a Roman cross. Here in Luke, and at other places in the NT, Jesus teaches them what it meant for Him to carry His cross. *Each and every time it was a shocking revelation for the Twelve*!
* They would also learn what it meant **for them** to bear their own cross!
* In **Luke 9:23,** Jesus unveils the true cost of following Him. They would soon realize the high price of following the Galilean rabbi from Nazareth. The word on the street was that “nothing good came out of Nazareth.” Their love for Jesus would help them get over the abyss of caring what others thought about Him or them.
* Within a few months they would be faced with this again! What would they do when Jesus was condemned to die on a Roman cross? Would they meet the standard that Jesus sets forth here in Luke 9 and other places in the Gospels?
* Jesus calls them to a willful, voluntary death to self. This voluntary death to self would be their pathway to victory over death, hell and the grave! They would need to choose the path their Master chose! It would be marked by these simple, yet profound words of surrender, “Not My will, but Thine be done.”
* You’ve probably noticed no similarities here to what many are proclaiming in pulpits all over America and the world. In many churches today the benefits of following Jesus far outweigh the costs of following Jesus! That is simply not true.
* **TRUTH:** You will never have your best life now!!! **FOR EVERY TRUE CHILD OF GOD** **the Best is yet to come**!!!
* I have no doubt that some believe the Devil’s lies. Sadly, they plant one foot in the world while reaching out for a toehold in heaven! Needless to say, that does not impress the Lord in the least!
* **Decades ago Pastor A.W. Tozer wrote**, *The old cross slew men; the new cross entertains them. The old cross condemned; the new cross amuses. The old cross destroyed confidence in the flesh; the new cross encourages it*.
* A brief look at what Jesus said reveals that His words all go together! Taken together they simply mean “death to self.”
* At some level every true child of God experiences what Jesus teaches here. His words here are not meant for “special saints.” They are not just for professional ministers! They are for every child of God. Living for Jesus boils down to self-denial.
* **Adrian Rogers** said while preaching on this passage, “If you don't deny yourself, you're going to deny Jesus. Put it down big, plain, and straight. *If you don't deny yourself, you're going to deny Jesus*.”
* First, we see **A Radical Declaration** – 9:23
* Secondly, we see **A Radical Definition** – 9:23

III. Thirdly, we see **A Radical Direction** – 9:24-27

* **Luke 9:24-27 (KJV)** For *whosoever* will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life ***for My sake***, the same shall save it. 25 For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? 26 For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He shall come in His own glory, and *in His* Father's, and of the holy angels. 27 But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.
* Jesus is in no way requiring that we live a perfect life. Only Jesus lived a perfect life. His perfection means that our sin debt was paid in full!
* Death to self means that we pursue Christ and His will for our lives.
* DTS means that we submit our will to His will.
* DTS means that Jesus has first place in our lives.
* DTS means that He is LORD over everything in our lives.
* Our elevated notions about personal freedom and individual rights *stand in opposition* to everything that Jesus teaches here in this passage.
* The rich young ruler chose his possessions over Jesus. He said so! **Matthew 19:22 (KJV)***But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions*.
* **Romans 12:1-2 (KJV)** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.
* **Matthew 10:32-33 (KJV)** Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. 33 But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven.
* **Proverbs 14:12 (KJV)** There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death.
* **John 6:66-71 (KJV)** From that *time* many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him. 67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, *Will ye also go away*? 68 Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? *Thou hast the words of eternal life. 69 And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God*.70 Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? 71 He spake of Judas Iscariot *the son* of Simon: for he it was that should betray Him, being one of the twelve.
* Would it not be wonderful if each and every Christian here today took this seriously, and took up their cross and followed Jesus? Lord, may it be so here today!
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