

# **Follow ME!**

**2-24-19**

Luke 9:23 (ESV)

And Jesus said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”

The disciples have just acknowledged Jesus as the Christ! Now Jesus has a profound message to those coming to hear HIM, “Deny yourself and take up your cross and follow ME!” Jesus is saying that if you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world, then your committed response must be to deny our own self-interests and live for the sake of Christ. The words, **take up our cross daily**, explain and intensify this principle. In those days everyone knew that a condemned criminal was forced to carry his own cross to the place of execution. To take up the cross daily is to live each day, not for self, but to die to self-interest and follow Christ. Paul explains:

Galatians 2:20 (ESV)

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.

What Paul understood; we must understand. Jesus is saying that following HIM requires devotion and has temporal and eternal ramifications.

Luke 9:24 (ESV)

For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

Jesus is giving us an eternal view, an eternal reality! The person who lives solely to the goals and pleasures of this life will ultimately prove spiritually unproductive and even self-destructive. The life given fully to Christ will prove not only to be productive here on earth but will have eternal rewards.

There is an even greater warning to those who seem to have achieved all the successes and pleasures of this life.

Luke 9:25 (ESV)

For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?

The warning is frightening because Jesus tells us that greater condemnation awaits those who set their heart on all the things of this world has to offer. They gain the world and are doomed to HELL for all eternity.

Thus we see the importance of denying yourself taking up your cross and following Jesus. **But what does it actually mean to deny yourself and take up your cross?** Do you have to prepare a list of list of good things and bad things; clothes, cars, food, house, etc. and make the most meager austere choices? **The Bible actually speaks against this calling it powerless.** Colossians 2:23 (ESV) These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and self-denial and severity to the body, but **they are of no value** in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

## **Therefore, pay close attention to what Jesus says!**

Luke 9:26 (ESV)

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.

The issue is being “ashamed” of Jesus and HIS Words! **To deny yourself and take up your cross simply means not to be “ashamed” of Jesus and HIS Words.** We don’t have to continually ponder what things we have and don’t have; the places we go or shouldn’t go, etc. etc. etc. **The concise message Jesus is telling us is “Don’t be ashamed of ME!”** This next event recorded is to give us a glimpse of heaven and to encourage us so we will not be ashamed of Jesus.

Luke 9:28–36 (ESV)

<sup>28</sup> Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. <sup>29</sup> And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white. <sup>30</sup> And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, <sup>31</sup> who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. <sup>32</sup> Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, but when they became fully awake they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him.

<sup>33</sup> And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah”—not knowing what he said. <sup>34</sup> As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. <sup>35</sup> And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!” <sup>36</sup> And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone.

The message is Listen to Jesus and follow no one but Jesus! I like how Matthew closes this section:

**God said, “Listen to HIM!”**

Matthew 17:8 (ESV)

And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

We are left with Jesus only. Therefore, without shame we follow Jesus and proclaim our message to the world:

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, Jesus, that whoever believes in Jesus should not perish but have eternal life.

**Prophetic Team**

***Hear from the Holy Spirit to change the current situation or impact the future.***