

Who Do You Say That I Am?

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[0 : 0 0] Jesus and his mission. And here's a spoiler alert. We are the mission that Jesus came for. He came to seek and to save that which was lost. And he calls us through the same mission.

He calls us to follow him and to spread the gospel. And so that's kind of what we're walking through. And really, we've seen that Jesus is getting to the place where he's kind of taking the training wheels off the disciples.

And really, from this point forward in the gospel of Luke, Jesus' kind of earthly ministry, public ministry, is kind of coming to a close. And now his eyes are set on Jerusalem.

He is moving towards the cross. He always has been, by the way. That before the foundation of the world, there was a lamb that was slain. That's always been the plan. But really, at this moment now, he is going straightway towards Jerusalem.

And really, he's kind of setting his disciples up because he's called them to follow. They have been following. They've been participating in the ministry. And he's kind of recently sent them out to kind of do it on their own.

[1 : 0 0] But he's really going to show us what it looks like to follow Christ. Well, what does it look like in our everyday life? So if you found your place there in the gospel of Luke, chapter number 9, we're going to begin reading in verse number 18 where it says this.

And it came to pass as he was alone praying, his disciples with him. And he asked them, saying, whom say the people that I am? They answering said, John the Baptist.

But some say Elias or would it be Elijah? And others say one of the old prophets is risen again. They were really quick to answer that question. But then Jesus kind of turns the question to them personally.

In verse number 20, he said unto them, but whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, the Christ of God. And he straightly charged them and commanded them that they tell no man that thing, saying, the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected of the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be slain and be raised the third day.

As they're trying to process what Jesus said, he just goes right into this, to all that are gathered around in verse 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.

[2 : 2 2] For whosoever will save his life shall lose it. But whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man advantage to be gained the whole world and lose himself or be cast away?

For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed. And when he shall come in his own glory and in his father's and of the holy angels.

Verse 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. So I just want to preach a message entitled this, a simple question, the one that Jesus asked, who do you say that I am?

Who do you say that Jesus is? That's a question that every one of us must answer at some point. And today's the day to answer it. And Jesus is going to show and he's telling his disciples who he is and why he came and what it looks like to follow.

Because the reality is there's still a lot of opinions about who Jesus is. But he reminds us that he is the Christ, that he is the Son of God in the flesh, that he came for a specific reason and a mission and he's calling us to do the same.

[3 : 3 9] So let's have a word of prayer and then we're just going to jump right into it this morning. Father, thank you for this day. Thank you for the beautiful day you've given us and the sunshine and the great weather. And Lord, we don't know why maybe all the things didn't work like we

wanted them to this morning, but really none of that really matters.

Lord, what we need is you, Lord. We need you to show up now. We need you just to speak to our hearts. I don't know what everybody's brought with them. I don't know what kind of week they've had or what's upcoming.

Lord, I don't have all the answers for them, but you do. Lord, I pray you would just meet us where we are. Lord, you would draw those to yourself that need that, that maybe they're looking for answers.

They have questions about church and Jesus and what all this is about. Lord, I pray that you would be clear that their greatest need is you as their Savior. Or they're no doubt as people that have been in church their whole life.

But maybe the mission is kind of faded. Maybe it's not a daily taking of our cross. Lord, I pray you would just speak to our hearts and remind us that there is a great need in our world today, at our workplace, in our families.

[4 : 47] Lord, you would help us to carry that truth there. Lord, I pray you'd be with me now. You would empty me of self. You would cleanse me of sin. Fill me with your spirit, Lord. I want to be a help to your people as you've been a help to me even in the studying of this.

And we ask all these things in Christ's name. Amen. Thank you so much for standing. You may be seated. Have you ever signed up for something only to realize it was far more demanding than what you expected?

Yeah, you ever been in one of those? You're like, this sounds like a good idea. You know, maybe at the beginning of the year you're going to, these people talking into, into a workout group. Like, this is a great idea. Maybe Camp Gladiator.

Anybody ever do P90X? I was like, yeah, that sounds fun. It's not. Don't sign up for it. Especially at five in the morning. I'm not, I'm not for it. But sometimes we sign up and we think, man, it's really good.

And we, we kind of sign our name on the line and we, we write, sign the contract or whatever it is and we realize, what did I get myself into? Maybe some of you can remember buying your first car.

[5 : 45] I mean, you were so excited because you were certain when you got, turned 16 and you got a car, life was going to change. Just freedom everywhere. But then you realize there's car insurance, there's gas, all these lights keep popping on the dash that want you to fix it.

And this sweet deal that you worked all summer long for is now just a financial black hole on four wheels. You ever been there? I mean, it's just kind of what it is.

Maybe it was your first home and, and all you thought, I mean, you, you looked at your wife, you said, all we need is love and plastic furniture. But then you got in that house and you realize the water heater, Moses installed, the, the roof leaked and every weekend you have to mow all the time because your neighbors mow and if you don't mow, then you look bad.

You know, you know, one of those situations, like this is not as all, all it's cracked up to be. And that excitement of maybe home ownership kind of gives way to the weight of responsibility that you have to endure, so to speak.

What does that have to do with Luke chapter nine? I think sometimes when it comes to the Christian life and, and following Christ, it can kind of feel the same way. Then at the outset and the get go, maybe you sat in a service and you went to a VBS or in a children's church or a youth camp at some point in your life and you're like, this is awesome.

[7 : 02] I want to serve Jesus with my life and you should, by the way, and we are getting there. But the idea is following Christ. Yes, it's a, it's a glorious thing and it's a wonderful privilege, but it's not easy.

It's not. And Jesus lays the cost out. It's free to follow him, but it's not cheap. There is a cost when it comes to following Christ. And as we come to our text here in Luke chapter nine, Jesus turns to his disciples and ask the most important question they can answer.

Who do you say that I am? Who do you say that I am, disciples? And really, as we walk through the gospel of Luke, it's not a new question.

This is a question that's been coming up over and over and over. And we see Luke has really detailed in a wonderful way how extraordinary it was to be in the presence of Jesus.

I don't know about you, but when I read the gospels, I think, man, I want to be there. I want to see those things. I try to picture it and I try to imagine what it was like, but to be there and to actually

experience it.

[8 : 16] When he was there teaching in the temple, they said, is this not Joseph's son? Isn't this just a carpenter's boy? There was times when he would heal people and forgive them of their sins.

And they said, wait, wait, who can forgive sins but God alone? This is not possible. We see the disciples as they're about to go down in the middle of the Sea of Galilee.

The storm is raging. Water is coming in the boat. And he wakes up from a nap and he says, peace be still. And the disciples look around and they say, who is this? What kind of man is this that even the wind and the seas obey him?

We saw a couple weeks ago that even Herod, he beheaded John the Baptist. He said, I know this is not John. I cut his head off. But who's this?

Oh, who is this man? People are gathering to him. He's changing lives. He's feeding 5,000 people. Herod's thinking, he's going to take over my throne soon. And people are always asking the question, anytime they get near Jesus, who is he?

[9 : 25] The angels already knew the answer. We saw that in Luke chapter 2. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.

But the angels weren't the only ones. The demons knew it too. We've seen multiple interactions when Jesus comes to him and these people are possessed by these demons. And in Luke chapter 4, they said this.

The demons said, I know who thou art, the Holy One of God. But we've walked with the disciples. And we've seen them as they kind of, they're following the Lord, but they're still struggling.

Which I'm thankful that's recorded in Scripture, by the way. God didn't say, hey, you've got to be a Christian and got to have it all figured out. Thank goodness none of us would be here. But the disciples were really, they just really hadn't put all the pieces together.

They're kind of starting to see it. They're kind of, it's kind of getting a little bit clearer. But Jesus doesn't just leave the question hanging in the air for the crowds.

[10 : 26] Because he says, hey, who do people say that I am? No, he turns it directly to his followers. He turns it right to them. And friends, I just want to remind you that he still turns it to us today.

And the question is still out there. Because there's a lot of people who say, oh yeah, I'm a Christian. But what does it look like to follow Christ? What is some practical ways that it shows up in our life? And that's what Jesus wants us to see. And we're going to see the answer as we walk through this text. See, the first thing that we have to understand when it comes to following Jesus, we have to recognize who he is.

We have to understand exactly who we're following. You ever thought you were following somebody, but it was the wrong car? And you're thinking, where are they going? Because I don't remember where I'm at.

This does not feel like the restaurant that I thought we were going to. And you got behind somebody and you're following the wrong person. Listen, we've got to make sure we're following the right person. We've got to make sure we're following the right map, the right truth.

[11 : 27] He is the way and the truth and the life. But before we jump into the question, I want us to notice something real fast. Verse 18, and it came to pass as he was alone praying.

Sometimes we run past those things. I mean, because we're coming into some great verses, really some great verses in all of the Gospels. Verses we probably have maybe heard in the past.

But there's a lot of great truth in that little statement. That Luke has consistently shown us that Jesus, before any major event in his life, we find him praying.

We found him praying before his baptism. We found him praying before choosing the twelve. We're going to see him next week as he's about to be transfigured. And they're going to see that on the Mount of Transfiguration.

And now before leading his disciples to this great confession and this kind of moving forward in their life, you know what he does? He prays about it. Sometimes we treat prayer like a 911.

[12 : 31] Last ditch effort. Hey, Lord, I'm in trouble. You know what we see in Christ's life? He's constantly praying. He's not trying to find God when trouble hits.

He's not trying to find God. Hey, God, my life's a mess. I could really use you right now. And let me remind you, it's okay to pray those prayers. And you should pray those prayers. But listen, maybe you're facing decisions in your life right now.

And you've Googled it. And you've chat GPT'd it. You're like, that's good stuff. Have you prayed about it? Because decisions affect where we're going to end up.

They affect the direction of our life. And every time Jesus was going to make a major decision, and really even small decisions, Jesus was in constant communication with his Father. And he wanted to be on the same page.

And he's there, and he's praying. And really, this should just be a pattern of our life. A pattern that we follow when it comes to Christ. So he's praying, and he knows what's coming.

[13 : 31] And so his disciples are gathered around, and they're thinking, what are we doing? Where are we going? Verse number 18, his disciples were with him, and he asked them, saying, whom say the people that I am?

Now what we see is the disciples were really quick to give some answers. You know, you know when you're excited when, in class, when they actually ask a question that you know? And you just raise your hand up.

Ooh, I know. I love when you're little, and everybody just raises your hand. The teacher says, can anybody? You know, but I feel like the disciples were ready for this question.

And they were all jumping up like, oh, pick me, pick me. John the Baptist. Elijah. One of the great prophets. And Jesus kind of nodding his head, and he's thinking, okay, you know, I've heard those things.

And they're so proud of themselves. I think, yeah, I said that. Yeah, I did it. Hey, maybe they thought they were going to get candy. I'm not really sure what was going on. And these are all flattering answers.

[14 : 34] As somebody being likened to John the Baptist, I mean, John the Baptist was extremely popular. He had a great ministry. I mean, Elijah, you talk about a powerful prophet in the Old Testament.

I mean, everybody looked at, and they saw the power that Christ possessed. They said, this has got to be like Elijah. I mean, this guy was calling fire down from heaven. Maybe it's Elijah's comeback. Or one of the old prophets.

Or somebody like Moses. And then they're patting themselves on the back. And then he just turns right to them and says, but who do you say that I am? I would imagine the answer to that first question came off their lips real fast.

I mean, they were just blurting them out. I mean, left and right. Jesus was like, okay, okay, okay, okay. But what about you? Who do you say that I am? I would imagine there was kind of a silence in the disciple group.

Why don't you answer? You know, you know when you don't want to answer because you don't want to be called out? Because the teacher says there's no wrong answer? That's dumb. There's a lot of wrong answers.

[15 : 41] But they're looking around like, Peter, say something. You always say something. And what do you know?

Peter does say something. He speaks up and he says, Peter answering said, the Christ of God. In the other gospels, Matthew says, thou art the Christ.

What does that mean? Because I think we look at that and we say, okay, yeah, good job, Peter. But Peter wasn't just tossing around a religious phrase.

He wasn't saying, well, I heard this once. I'm going to throw that out there. Because sometimes we're really good at the religious lingo. And sometimes you're new to church. You're thinking, what are they saying? But this is more than just some religious catchphrase and some little thing they said within the group.

It wasn't an inside kind of a line. No, he's making the greatest confession of faith that we see so far in the gospel of Luke. See, Christ means this. It either means Messiah or anointed one.

[16 : 47] It was something that the Jews were looking for. In the Old Testament, the prophets and the priests and the kings, they were anointed with oil as a sign from God. To do a job they were called to do.

When they were anointed, everybody said, hey, this is the man for the job. This is the priest. This is the king. This is who he is. And to declare Jesus as the Christ is to say that he is the fulfillment of all those offices.

That he is anointed as a prophet to give us the truth. He is the truth. You shall know the truth, he says, and the truth shall set you free. That that's who Jesus is.

He's anointed as a priest. He brings us to God through his sacrifice. Sometimes you read the Old Testament and you think, what's the deal with all these sacrifices and all these animals? Well, why does a priest have to bring these and do all that?

Because it was a picture. It was a foreshadowing of what was to come. And what was to come was Jesus Christ. That he was anointed as the priest to bring the sacrifice. But he wasn't bringing a lamb.

[17 : 52] He was bringing himself. And he was willing to lay down his life. But he's not just a prophet and he's not just a priest. He's anointed as the king of kings.

And the lord of lords. That he rules over God's people with justice and authority. And Peter didn't say, hey, you're just some anointed one.

No, you're the Christ of God. That Jesus' position was not man-made. His identity is not wrapped up in the popular opinion of the day.

And let me remind you, whether it's the first century or it's 2025, Jesus is not the Christ because the crowds vote him that way. Because popular opinion sways and we're going to see that here in the Gospel of Luke.

No, Jesus is the Christ because the Father had anointed him from eternity to do so. That's the simple truth of it. That Jesus is God.

[18 : 53] People say, well, I don't believe that. It doesn't change the fact. See, Christ is a title. Sometimes we think, well, Jesus Christ, that may be his last name. No, he's Jesus the Christ.

The Messiah. The Deliverer. The Anointed One. And so Peter's confession is a loaded confession. He is telling Jesus. He is announcing to the crowds and announcing to the disciples that are there. You are the long-awaited Messiah. The promised Savior. The one sent by God himself. That he's beginning to put it together. Well, how does that apply to me today?

Let me just remind you, it's not enough to say that Jesus is a good teacher. He's a fantastic teacher. It's not just good enough to say that Jesus is a good moral example.

Because you're going to find people all over this world, people that are atheists, and they'll say, listen, he was a great teacher. He's a good moral example. And we should follow some truths from him. Listen, that's what the crowds say both then and now.

[19 : 59] They have all these opinions about who Jesus is. But the real question is this. Who is he to you?

Is he your prophet? The one that gives you the truth? That's what he came to do. Is he your priest that was willing to give the sacrifice? Is he your king? Listen, who's ruling your life?

You are him. I know this. When I'm in control of my life, it's a mess. But Jesus came into that mess. He came into that sin. When I was lost, and he said, listen, I love you. You say, how do you know Jesus loves you? Look at the cross. Because that's where he's marching towards right now. Because here's the truth, and here's what happens when we recognize Jesus. That when we recognize him as the Christ, then he has the right to define truth for you.

[20 : 55] Listen, we live in a world where truth, it just doesn't seem to exist anymore. We say things like this. You hear it all the time. Well, that's your truth. I have, you know, I have my truth, and I'm glad it works for me.

No, it doesn't. There's only one truth, and it's Jesus. Jesus, and if he's your king, then he has the right to define truth. He has the right to lead your life and to rule your life, to intercede for you. And sometimes we get in our head thinking, well, I just want to do what I want to do. Anybody ever thought that? Yeah, we all do. I mean, it starts when we're real little. We want to dress ourselves. We want to do what we want to do. We don't really grow out of that, but we realize this when we realize who Jesus is. He loves me more than I love myself. He knows what I need more than I need. We think we know what we need. No, we need Jesus. But here's the part the disciples really weren't expecting. I mean, Peter had to be super proud of himself for this one.

[21 : 57] He's like, man, I nailed that one. But to confess Jesus as the Christ is not just to recognize his identity. That's a great start.

A follower of Christ has to realize who he really is, who you're really following. But here's where the rubber meets the road. To recognize who he is is also to embrace his mission.

That's what he wanted them to see. And his mission isn't all thrones and triumphs. It's a cross. And the disciples had a hard time wrapping their minds around this.

And we give them a hard time. But you know what? I think we still have a hard time with that too. You know, we may come to the Lord as our Savior. And we trust him. And we know that we placed our faith in what he did on the cross for us.

But then guess what? A problem comes in our life. And we're thinking, Lord, what's going on? I'm not sure if you know this, but I got some problems I need you to take care of. Listen, Jesus is not some great genie that's just going to make your life perfect.

[23 : 01] In fact, he promises life's going to be hard. Anybody ever find that out? Life's hard? It's hard either way. But I'd rather walk with somebody that already knows what's coming tomorrow.

Somebody that loves me and takes care of me and wants to be there for me. And the moment that we confess who he is, Jesus says, it's going to cost you. It's going to cost you, Peter.

That's what we see in verse number 21. He said this, and he straightly charged them and commanded them that they tell no man. Before we jump into the next verses, that seems weird, doesn't it? Peter makes this great confession.

He makes this great thing. And he says, listen, you're the Christ. And Jesus says, shh, don't tell anybody. Anybody ever read that verse and think, what in the world? Well, why would that, why would he say that?

I think there's a couple reasons. Number one, because the time wasn't yet. When you read the gospels, Jesus says this over and over and over and over. My time's not come. My time's not come. My time's not come.

[24 : 01] You know what he understood? The people would have misunderstood that. Because when Jesus said, hey, I am the Messiah, you know what they were thinking? Thrones. You know what they were thinking? Crowns on their head.

How do you know that? Because they argued about it all the way up to the cross. James and John got their mama involved. And mama came and said, hey, listen, James and John, they're good boys.

You know what they should do? Sit on your right hand and left hand. They want to rule everybody with you. And Jesus is like, oh, man. They're missing it. We saw, you see him and he comes in the triumphant entry to Jerusalem.

You know what they're singing? Hosanna, save us now. Hey, overthrow Rome. Jesus knew that. He knew the disciples would have misrepresented. They'd have been telling everybody. They'd have posted on Facebook, hey, Jesus is the king.

I'm second in command. That's how they think. That's where they were. And here's what would have happened as well. The religious leaders would have pounced too soon. Because we see already they're going to kill him.

[25 : 01] Well, that's what they think they're going to do. Jesus actually just laid his life down. No man took his life. Jesus wasn't swept up in some political wheels of the day and just kind of got mixed up and said some wrong things at the wrong time.

No, at the right time, at the perfect time, Jesus went to the cross of Calvary. Just as the Father had planned it. And yes, the title Christ was correct, but it needed a cross to really give it meaning.

And let me just remind you, without the cross, you can't really understand who Jesus is. Because without the cross, he is just a teacher. He is just a moral example. He's just some Jewish man that lived 2,000 years ago.

But with the cross, everything changes. And that's what Jesus wanted them to understand. See, but that statement didn't really shock them compared to what he said in verse number 22.

They kind of just said, okay, well, whatever he means by that. But then he said, the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected of the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, which really would make up a big group called the Sanhedrin.

[26 : 07] Basically, the religious establishment was coming after him. Why? And be slain. And be raised again the third day. And we see that word in there, must.

He must do these things. It just reminds us that Jesus' suffering was not accidental. Jesus didn't accidentally die on the cross for your sins.

No, he must. It's something he planned. Something he made sure happened. It was necessary. And then when he says all of these things, and they're kind of trying to process all these things that are

coming right at him, he turns to them and says, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

I mean, talk about a lot to process. I'll just be honest, there's a lot to process even here this morning. But imagine the disciples there. And they're thinking, what is he talking about?

Because they had just seen all kinds of things. They had been involved in the feeding of the 5,000 miracle. He had sent them out and they had preached and people had responded and lives were being changed.

[27 : 17] They were there when he calmed the storms and he did all these things. They're thinking, what is he? This is not what I signed up for. This is not when he said, follow me, what I thought I was getting into.

This is turning out to be a lot more costly than I thought. So what does he mean? If any man will come after me, let him deny himself.

Listen, denying yourself doesn't mean that you hate yourself. It doesn't mean that you have to be like Eeyore. You know what I'm talking about? A little cloud falling all over you.

All day just rains on you. Everybody's like, how are you? Just over here denying myself. Nobody loves me. At least I love the Lord. Listen, that's not what he's talking about.

He's not saying that we have to go through life miserable. In fact, Christian people, followers of Christ, should be the happiest people on the planet. Why? Because they know Jesus loves them and they have a hope that's steadfast and sure and anchored in his truth.

[28 : 13] We don't have to walk around like, poor pitiful me. No, here's what denying yourself means. It means surrendering your right to run your life. I don't know about you. I like to be in control.

Okay. I'm the only one. Almost every man in here gets home and says, who's got the remote? Dad's home. Dad, all we watch is football.

What else are we going to watch? Yeah, that's what I'm talking about. I like to be in control. I want to run my life because I think to myself, you know what? I'm pretty smart. Don't respond to that. And I think to myself, I know what I'm doing.

I know how to handle this. But the reality is, is I don't. And when I live for myself, it's not good for anybody else but myself.

And it's not even good for me. No, Jesus says, if you really want to follow me, here's what you have to do. You have to surrender that right. Let me lead. Because he's the one that's saying, follow.

[29 : 12] We can't follow somebody and then do what we want to do. That's not how it works. Notice what else he says. He says, a follower of Christ denies themselves. And take up his cross daily.

Now, this idea of taking up your cross is one of the most wrenched out of context phrases in all the Bible. I'm going to be nice as I can.

Your cross to bear is not your neighbor's barking dog. It's not that coworker that just annoys the living daylight out of you.

It's not even your mother-in-law. We're going to throw all the things I've heard. You know, that's my cross to bear. No, that's not what a cross to bear is.

It's suffering for the sake of the gospel. It's for taking a stand for Christ and living how he wants you to live.

[30 : 13] That's what it is. Jesus is reminding us that a cross was an instrument of death. And he's calling his followers to die to self.

To die to pride. To die to comfort. To the world's approval. Every single day. You know what the Apostle Paul said? I die daily. He wasn't talking about physical death.

He was saying, listen, when I wake up in the morning, I have a choice. Do I live for the Lord or do I live for myself? Do I do what God wants me to do or do I want to do what I want to do?

See, to follow Christ, here's what it is. Continual obedience. Not occasional convenience. You know what Jesus is saying?

I'm not looking for fans. He's not. He can draw a crowd. He had a lot of fans. I mean, Jesus would show up and they say, hey, it's the guy that feeds us.

[31 : 08] Yes! Don't act like you wouldn't do that. You're thinking right now, what are we going to have for lunch? I mean, that's what they were. He fed him and they said, you know what? He's got my vote. I'm voting him king.

Read John 6. I mean, he fed him and everybody's like, hey, I'll be the campaign manager. Let's vote this guy in. Because they were just looking, hey, he's making life easier for us. Listen, following Jesus, take up your cross daily.

He didn't say Wednesdays and Sundays. No, daily. It's not when it's convenient to you, when you don't have anything else on your schedule, when it just seems like, well, I guess I can go to church today.

No, it's not even about coming to church. Yeah, we should gather together as a family. But it's not about religion. It's about a relationship with Christ and continually following him. And being sensitive to his leading.

I used the illustration on Wednesday night about a marathon. Yes, I ran one because I'm weird and weird. You know what the easiest part about the marathon was? Signing up.

[32 : 10] I mean, think about it. How many of you have signed up for a 5K, 10K for you? You're like, yeah, I can do that. I mean, you just click your name in. You put your information in. You're good. That's the easiest thing you'll do.

Guess what comes after that? Training. You've got to work. You've got to put the effort. Because if you're going to run the race, you've got to be ready for it. Some of you didn't. You signed up for the 5K and just showed up.

How'd that work for you? I've seen you laying on the side of the road like. See, discipleship is not a one-time decision.

It's a daily commitment. You've got to take up that cross. And sometimes people aren't going to understand it. Sometimes it's people even closest to you. You may have a spouse that doesn't understand it.

But instead of trying to just live for yourself, here's what you do. You serve in that marriage. Both ways, by the way. It's not a wife or a husband thing. We're to serve our spouse. At work, we choose integrity even when it might cost you that promotion or that approval or that inclusion with the group.

[33 : 14] You have to say, hey, I'm going to follow Christ. I can't do that. I can't fudge those numbers a little bit. I can't do that because I'm not going to live that way because Christ has called me to a much higher living. People don't understand that.

You know what it's going to look like, young people? I'm not going to go there. I'm not going to say that. I'm not going to look at that. I'm not going to be involved in that. Why? Because we're better than them? No, because we're following Christ. And we're not living for ourselves.

We're not living for approval of the masses. We're living for the approval of one. And we want to serve him with everything that we have. I think, why would you endure such a cost?

Because this does not seem like a glowing thing like, everybody sign up for this. But Jesus just doesn't sugarcoat it. He lets us know there is a purpose for it.

But he gives us, in verse 24 and verse 25, he gives us this paradox of saving and losing. Verse 24 says this, For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

[34 : 17] For what is a man advantaged if he gained the whole world and lose himself or be a castaway? Jesus says in these verses something that just doesn't make sense to us.

If we hold tightly to our life as it is without Christ, here's what's going to happen. You're going to lose it. But if you open your hands and you give it to the Lord, you're going to gain it.

That doesn't make sense in our mind. You know, everything in our life, we protect it. We hold on to it. We don't want anybody else to do it. You know, when you've got kids, I hear all the time, they touch my stuff.

I'm like, that's my stuff anyways. Stop fighting about it. I'll put this roof over your head. Don't act like you don't parent that way sometimes. But what Jesus is wanting his disciples, a true follower of Christ, to really look in their life and see, are we living for the temporary or the eternal?

He says, for where your heart is, there will your treasure be also. And even Christian people, you know where their heart is many times?

[35 : 26] In that job. In that truck. In that boat. In this. In that. In all of these things, that that's where our happiness is found. And we're living for that.

And Jesus is just simply reminding us, worldly success is fleeting. It's going to be gone. Remember that new car you had? Now you're like, eh, it's a deer. It's not a big deal.

But before, you wouldn't even take it out of it range. Like, we've got to leave it in the garage. You know, as parents, we're not eating in this car. Nice one.

Let me know how that works. Worldly success is fleeting. Eternal life is forever. Jesus says, listen, it's not worth clinging to comfort and approval and control.

Because all that leads to is loss. I know it's corny, but we've heard it. I've never seen a hearse pulling a U-Haul. Maybe for you history buffs, you watch all the pharaohs when they raid their tombs.

[36 : 26] Guess what? All that stuff's still in there. It's all full of the gold and the jewels. All the things they were taking to the afterlife with them. Guess what? It's here and people pillage it and rob it. Because what does it profit a man if he gains everything this world has?

Because it's not really worth anything. It's all going to be gone at some point. But he says, surrendering to Christ is how you truly find life. The great martyred missionary Jim Elliott said this, He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.

Jesus reminds us, what are we living for? Even people that know Jesus as their Savior can find ourselves living for the here and now. But maybe you don't know Christ as your Savior and he's reminding us today, listen, if you're trying to hold on to everything that you have, it's not worth it. Because it's going to be gone. It's just going to go up and smoke one day. Listen, he's saying stop building your identity and your wealth and your success and your approval. It can vanish overnight. But when you invest in Christ, it will change your eternity. And I think we all feel that tension. See, clinging to life as we want it only leaves us empty.

[37 : 47] There's things we just try to hold so tight on. We want that control of. But God says just give it to him. Here's the encouragement. That the surrender will never be in vain.

It won't. Every sacrifice, every time you take up your cross and you live for Christ and you speak his name and you share the gospel and you may not receive the approval. In fact, you might have to deal with some harsh realities and you might lose that job and you might lose that friendship.

It might be some real difficult times in your life. But every moment of obedience is moving us toward that eternal reward. And Jesus lifts his disciples' eyes from the cost to the crown.

Look what he says in verse 26 and will be done. For whosoever shall be ashamed of me, in 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.

He's simply saying, listen, I'm coming again. Jesus, hey listen, Jesus is coming again. Okay, just making sure we're on the same page. He reminds us of that. And he said, I want to be ready when he comes.

[38 : 56] I want my life to be pleasing to him. See, Jesus warns about shame but promises reward. See, the approval of Christ outweighs the temporary shame and suffering that we might face in this life.

When you study the New Testament, you're going to meet a man named the Apostle Paul. I mean, talk about a man that went through the ringer. I mean, he was beaten. He was shipwrecked. He was prisoned. They stoned him with stones unto death.

He went through all these horrible things. Snakebitten. I mean, you name it, Paul experienced it.

And Paul said this, this light affliction. I get bit of my mosquito and I'm complaining about it.

But Paul went through some things that none of us can even maybe comprehend in our mind. And he says, it's not a big deal. How can he say that light affliction? Because he was looking for something far greater. He knew his life wasn't wrapped up in the things of life.

In all the things this world has to offer. See, a soldier endures grueling training and goes to battle. Why? For the joy of victory.

[40 : 04] In the honor of standing free. Sacrifice is hard, but the glory that follows it makes it worthwhile. That's what Jesus reminds us. So we need to be bold in our confessing Christ publicly.

Jesus didn't call us to gather on Sunday and nod in agreement with the message. He called us to go live it out loud. To let others know that Jesus is real. And that Jesus does love them. That he is the Christ.

And he's worthy. And he has the right to rule your life. And he's going to actually just make your life better. Doesn't mean it's going to be perfect. But you can walk through the most difficult time of your life and say this, God is good.

Because I've heard testimony by many in this room. I mean, walking through the darkest times. Loss of a loved one. Cancer battles. All these things. And you say this, no life's not great. But God loves me.

And I think we saw it even in our country. And some of the things that have gone on in the past few weeks. And just the response. Because I've been at funerals. And kind of the world got to see it. There's a difference when people know Christ.

[41 : 05] And how they respond to death. Doesn't mean we're not sorrowful. But our hope wasn't anchored in this world. And we're looking for a city whose builder and maker was God. And that's what we're pushing towards.

And as we've walked through one of the most defining moments here in Luke's gospel. Jesus looked his disciples in the eye and asked the question that we must answer today.

Who do you say that Jesus is? The crowds have their opinion. Your co-workers have their opinion. Your classmates have their opinion.

We saw in the gospel of Luke the demons had their suspicion. The angels knew it. But the only answer that really matters is your answer. And that's what you have to answer today.

Not to me. But to him. Because Jesus is saying. Who do you say that I am? Well. Because it's going to make a difference. Everything eternal hinges on who you believe Jesus is.

[42 : 07] And what you do with him. It's going to change your life. To say that he is the Christ is not only to acknowledge his identity. But to embrace his mission. And his mission was a cross.

And at first the cross looked like defeat. But standing here today you know what we see when we see a cross? Victory. God is victorious. His suffering was necessary.

But what are you going to do? If you don't know him here this morning. I just want to remind you. You cannot remain neutral. You can't ride the fence.

To reject him or delay is to answer the question wrongly. The Bible says that all have sinned and come toward the glory of God. But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

You say well how do you get that? That you call out to him. You place your faith and your trust in his life. And what he did on the cross of Calvary for you.

[43 : 08] That whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. If you're here this morning and you know him as your savior. Maybe it's time to renew your commitment to him.

Because this call of discipleship is still the same call today. It hasn't changed. Deny yourself. Lay down your rights so to speak. And let him lead.

Take up your cross daily. Live. Speak boldly for Christ. Don't settle for convenient Christianity that cost you nothing. I don't want to stand before the Lord one day and say.

Well I didn't do a whole lot but thanks for letting me be here. No if we know him as our savior we're going to be there. But I want to stand before the Lord one day and hear him say this. Well done.

Thou good and faithful servant. Every sacrifice. Every moment of obedience is seen by Christ. And one day he will reward it.

[44 : 08] Would you stand with your heads bowed and with your eyes closed.