

12.28.25

Luke

Chapter 9 - A Peculiar Kind of Calling
Drawn to Selfless Devotion (vs. 22-26)

Luke 9:22-26: saying, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised up on the third day.” 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. 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. For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? 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.

This is such a pivotal passage because it's causing you to understand who the Christ is. I mean, the Christ has been

looked for and longed for many centuries and nevertheless, clearly misunderstood. Who are you following? We call ourselves “Christians”. “Christian” actually is a Latin term that came out of a derision of the Romans in which they were criticizing people following this Christ that was dead. So, the name “Christian” means the follower of Christ. We are followers of Christ. Peter will say, “If you suffered for the sake of being called a Christian, in this you need to rejoice.” But what does it mean to follow Christ? What does it mean to have a relationship with Christ? What does it mean to receive Christ? Who are you receiving? Who are you following? What is it you believe in? Unfortunately, the Christ that oftentimes many people follow is misidentified. And we oftentimes identify Him according to conventional wisdom. Paul speaks of this in 1 Corinthians 1 and 2; in which he states that the wise have a hard time understanding this whole concept of who Christ is. It goes on and says in Chapter 2, if they had understood, they wouldn't have crucified the Lord of glory. So, there's clearly a confusion with conventional wisdom and the way that people think. When Jesus asks the question in

this particular passage as these multitudes are gathering around Him, He says, “Well, so who do the multitudes say that I am?” Of course, they come up with different ideas and different thoughts because as many as there are people, there are ideas about what the Christ is. So, not only are we misled oftentimes by conventional, and I would say, popular wisdom, but oftentimes by superficial standards. In other words, according to whose standards is the Christ. If you were to look at the Pharisees, if you were to look at the Sadducees and the scribes, according to Matthew 23, you would begin to see that if we're going to follow Christ, we're going to follow somebody that's superficial. Christ will oftentimes say, and we'll use the word over and over again, and in particular Matthew 23, as He talks about the religious leaders, “You hypocrites!” And what He's talking about, of course, is that they just wear a mask on their face. I mean, they look like they're righteous, but inside they're like dead men's bones. So, you're whitewashed tombs, but clearly you're not following the Christ. Well, what He's conveying is that it's a superficial faith. And oftentimes people, I think, get involved in Christianity thinking that's exactly what it is.

It's just this superficial thing. You go to church, you do your thing, you sing your songs, and you go home and you do whatever it says. And so, the way they view Christ, I would say, would be extremely superficial in that regard. And then I would say in many ways, I think people perceive Him according to the false religion as it is in the sense that "I'm going to make myself feel bad and that's going to make me feel better." So, we're going to beat ourselves up every time we sin. And of course, a lot of the monasteries actually arose out of this; the more you could suffer, the more you wouldn't eat, the more you deprived yourself of worldly things. Unfortunately, those places actually became bordellos and things like that, which proves that you can pull yourself away from the world, but it doesn't take the world out of you. But as Paul will say to the Colossians, he says, "This self-made religion has no effect." So, you could beat yourself up all day long, you can make yourself repeat things all day long, but that doesn't change your heart. And so, you begin to realize that people have a misperception about what their faith is about and who Christ is.

When we come to this passage, Jesus wants to make it clear to the disciples who He is. Now, He then turns to them, and He says, “But who do you say that I am?” And Peter gives this marvelous declaration as we read within the passage. He says in verse 20, “You're the Christ of God.” That's right on. Matthew will say, “Flesh and blood hasn't revealed this; My father told you this. You couldn't have come upon this on your own.” What baffles us a little bit is His response to the declaration, and that is, “Don't say anything about it.” And as we go on, we begin to see why He says this. Now, oftentimes within Scripture, you'll see the demons cry out, “You're the Christ, you're the Son of God,” or something like this. And He'll say, “Quiet.” And He'll quiet them down. Of course, that's clear misrepresentation. You don't want the KKK endorsing you. But beyond that, there will be times in which one individual, in particular, a leper that was cured, He says, “First go to the temple and go through what you know you need to do and demonstrate that you have truly been changed. Then you can go out.” Of course, he was a Jew and needed to demonstrate the cleansing process of the Law. In this particular case, when He says,

“Don't say anything,” there is a particular reason for that with the disciples. And that is that at this juncture, they don't fully comprehend who they're proclaiming. He is the Christ. What does Christ mean to you? Who is Christ? And how is He defined? In some respects, Christ is fundamentally saying, “If you're going to follow Me, you need to know who I am. And so, let's not declare My title until you understand what the title means.”

So, it is for that purpose that we come to verse 21,

(Luke 9:21) “But He warned them and instructed them not to tell this to anyone,

(Luke 9:22) saying, “The Son of Man must suffer...”

Well, of all the ways to identify the Christ, this is not the one that we would perceive to be the mark of identification.

You can read some of the Old Testament, in particular, the different prophets, and some of them show Him coming in all of His glory. Whether you read in Daniel or Ezekiel, what magnificent pictures you're drawing from the passage. As even in Ezekiel 1, you see one like the Son

of Man sitting on this glorious chariot of God. And nevertheless, how are we to identify Him? If He were to come walk among us, would He come in the clouds and would they part? And as in Isaiah, the crowds are crying out, “Oh, that he would rend the heavens and just come down.” And I can just see God going, “You don't want that yet. What you need is a Savior before that happens.” But nevertheless, man is looking for different things. And you know, when you consider all of the different kinds of reasoning that were actually going around that day, it kind of defines people coming to church today. I mean, why do people come to church? And different books, even different gospels, seem to relate more to certain groups of people. I personally believe that the Gospel of John is relating more specifically to the Stoics, because their perception was that there was an entity, or a force that created the universe. And the reason why they believed that there was a force that created the universe was, is that it was so orderly. So, that's where we get the word “cosmos,” which cosmos means orderly; where the women get the name “cosmetics,” because they put their face in order. But to them, it was all about a sense of

copacetic order, “We want everything to be in place.” And so, John says, “There is a God, His name is *Logos*.” And that's where we get the word “logic”. And so, what he conveys to them is that the *Logos*, that is to say the God of order, created order. But would you ever guess, and a stoic would never guess this in a million years, that the God of order would love you, and would want to have a personal relationship with you? So, he goes to the extreme, “The God of creation in the beginning was the Word,” the word *Logos*, “And He would come and abide with you.” An amazing truth, that is. Well, the Stoics are looking for something. And they're looking for that sense of order. And what makes people different? I don't know. But we tend to define God according to the way that we feel and the way we see things, rather than defining God for who He is. Why don't you just let God tell you who He is, instead of you trying to figure out who He is? But everybody tries, and that's why you oftentimes have so many different kinds of churches and even faiths, it is because people are looking for what they're feeling.

When you look at Acts 17, Paul is there in Athens, and he's teaching at, well, in literally the mall in Athens. And they would stand in these particular places, they were called the Bema places, and as they would begin to proclaim certain things; of course, in that particular text, it says the Stoics and the Epicureans were there, and they were listening for something new. They're probably trying to affirm their own kind of beliefs. So, you have literally opposites that are there in Athens when Paul is proclaiming the gospel. And of course, there are so many gods that are worshipped in Athens. He goes, "I perceive you're a very religious people." But of course, religion isn't going to get you anywhere. It's not true. Not all roads lead to God. But maybe to Rome, but not to God. But there he is in Athens in proclaiming the message. Well, as he proclaims the resurrection, they both begin to laugh at that, because it doesn't fit into their way of thinking. Of course, an Epicurean is thinking, in many respects, "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die. So, what are you talking about resurrection?" And a Stoic is thinking, "That's not logical." So, you have both groups of people that are rejecting the truth by virtue of the way that they

think, the way they've been trained to think, rather than, as Scripture will say, you have to “repent,” you have to think differently, and stop thinking your way in order to accept the message of the gospel. Because it's like nothing that we've ever thought of, right? Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, not entered into my mind, the things of God. And so, it says that fundamentally, we're not able to think it. Then on top of that, you have mystics that are clearly in the realm of Ephesus. And so, all the way through, you have these groups of people that are looking for something, and they're being hampered by virtue of the fact that they're looking for the wrong thing. And I see this in churches all the time, that I think some people like the Epicureans are looking for some sort of euphoric experience. So, they go to church and they go, “I just want to feel good today.” And so, they're looking for that feel-good moment in order to, “I think I got in touch with God today.” Really? Do you think that's what it was? And I think they would say, “Yeah, the Spirit of God was working on me.” Okay, but let's see what God says. See? Don't you think that's kind of more important? I mean, if God is here and He's defining Himself, why don't we just

listen to Him and find out what He says? Because so many people are thinking differently.

We oftentimes make mention of, and if you were to read the end of 1 Timothy 6, Paul makes mention of those that profess their grandiosity by virtue of knowledge. And he actually uses the word “Gnostics”. He says there is something falsely declared as Gnosticism. And he ends with that. And he actually is warning Timothy about this. Well, that's infiltrated the church too, because, I mean, everybody's wanting to show themselves closer to God than everybody else, or superior to everybody else. And it's just a form of Gnosticism. Knowledge makes arrogant. Love edifies. See? So, it's always building up somebody else. And you hear people wrangling about words and trying to say that they're smarter than somebody else by virtue of that they know something that nobody else knows. And my question is, how did that bring you closer to Jesus? But it's the simplicity of the faith, it's the simplicity of the gospel that we declare. And so, as people will go to different churches looking for different things, and some will go just to please mom, but some are

looking for babysitters for their kids; all kinds of reasons that people are going to church. But unfortunately, what are they following? Who are they following? Do they understand what the Christ is?

So, it's in this passage that Jesus turns to them, and He says, "You can proclaim My name. The day's going to come, literally, you're going to proclaim My name." We know the Spirit of God is going to come upon them, in Acts 2, and we see the Spirit of God coming upon the church, and they began to proclaim the name of Christ, but probably very different than they had thought it before. Remember, Jesus will sit down with them, and of course, the brothers will come together, and one will begin to argue with the other, and then the other disciples become indignant over the fact that they're trying to vie for a position. And Jesus goes, "You know, that's the way the world sees leadership, but that's not the way it is in the kingdom of God." So, it's very clear that they're not perceiving the Christ the way they should be. Ultimately, Peter will forbid Jesus from going to the

cross. Why? Because he misconstrued and misunderstood who the Christ was. So, Christ is saying, “Hold off. Let Me tell you who I am.” And it's in this passage that He literally puts into the thing, “It is My obligation, I must do this for you to understand who I am. Suffering is what defines Me.” Now, that's hard for us to believe. But the very One that we're following is the suffering Christ, the One that will die for sins.

If you look with me in Hebrews 2, you'll see this fundamental point being brought out. I love the way that it's put in Hebrews 2:9.

It says,

(Hebrews 2:9) “But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor...”

Did you get the word “because”? Why was He crowned with glory and honor? Because of the suffering of death. Did you get that?

Paul will make mention of this in Philippians 2, and he'll talk about the fact that He took on the form of a bond

servant, even though He existed in the form of God, didn't regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but He emptied Himself, took on the form of a bond servant, became obedient even to the death of the cross.

Therefore, God highly exalted Him, gave Him a name above every name. Why? Because He took on the form of a bondservant, suffered even to the point of death. The suffering is a key point in our faith.

And if you look at the passage,

“... so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.

(Hebrews 2:10) For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.”

Drop on down to verse 15,

(Hebrews 2:15) “and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.”

Do you remember as we read in Luke 4, Jesus begins to proclaim His mission, and He quotes out of Isaiah 61,

probably remember the text, that He came to free those who were in bondage. What are people really in bondage of? They're scared to death, of death.

Look at the passage,

“And might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.”

You know, if you're afraid of death, it will limit where you go, who you see, who you help, what you do, how you look at the future. It'll put you in bondage. And we have recently seen people; they're petrified of death. Well, we're not afraid of death. I even hear of pastors that have bodyguards. I'm going, really? If you get shot while you're preaching, isn't that the greatest way to go? I couldn't think of a better way to go. What are you afraid of? That you might see Jesus? Oh, God forbid. Whether by life or by death, we be pleasing to God. Why are so many Christians walking around in fear? I mean, if in fact we've been freed from this, that's what He did; He freed you from all of that fear that kept us in bondage from doing the things that we really should be doing. We're worried about what people think. “How will they see us?” Jesus

will say, “Don't be afraid of those who take the body. Be afraid of the one that actually has guard over your soul.” Well, He surely does not give help to the angels, but He does to the seed of Abraham, and He begins to give that wonderful proclamation of the release of captives.

Paul will say in Romans 8:15,

“For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!””

Dad's got me. I'm not afraid. The Creator of the world has got me. Why would I be afraid of anything? So, that if it came to the cross, and Jesus goes, “No, no, no, I'm not going there,” then how confident would you feel about death? If it was a suffering that He was trying to avoid? I mean, there's nowhere in Scripture, and I just want to emphasize this, God's not elevating pain and suffering. He's elevating love and devotion. And what we're seeing within the passage is that the Son of Man is going to suffer for you. And I'm not afraid if I'm walking in the will of God. Why would you be afraid? Because God is using whatever happens in your life, He's causing it all to work

together for good, to those who love Him and walk according to His purpose. So, as you begin to walk in the same walk of the Christ, if you're actually following Christ, there's nothing you have to be afraid of. Nothing. It is that marvelous point that we begin to see.

And let me just say this too. How much you're willing to suffer for something or someone defines how much you value them or that thing. For instance, you take an athlete, you see some athletes, they're willing to really to work out all day long, and you're going, "You're killing yourself," and they're going, "No. I'm going to win." And what they're telling you fundamentally is that it's really valuable to them, see, because they're willing to suffer. Because suffering defines value. It's a strange thing, isn't it, when you think of it.

And I want you to underline the word here, as it says in verse 22,

"... The Son of Man..."

If you look at the phrase,

"... must suffer many things..."

Now, underline the word “suffer” because that's a key word. “*Paschō*” is the word that is used within the passage. That word is not only talking about perhaps a physical suffering, although that is clearly a part of it, but it's talking about any kind of emotional suffering, any kind of strain. It actually defines passion, strangely enough. So, “*paschō*” could be a synonym for “passion”. But what it's talking about is that you feel intensely about something to the point of sensation, i.e. you would feel so intensely about something that you'd be willing to suffer pain, to suffer loss.

I hear of some of these young ladies overseas in Africa have been called upon to deny Christ. And if they don't, they just start chopping off limbs. And these young girls are allowing them to chop off their limbs because they can't deny Christ. One mother watched five of her children massacred in front of her because she would not deny Christ. What would cause that? And what is that pain saying? The pain is saying, “Christ is worth it.” And so, as Christ goes to the cross, what is He saying to you? You're worth it. That's why 1 Peter 1 says, “You were not

purchased with superficial things like silver or gold. You were purchased with the precious blood of Christ.” How much are you worth? He must demonstrate to you how much you're worth. That's part of the must.

So, the passage reads this way,

(Luke 9:22) “saying, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected...”

Of course, the despise and rejected is that definition that's given to us in Isaiah 53, right? That great prophecy that is given that the Messiah would come.

“... and be rejected by the elders...”

That would be, I would say, those that are experiential leaders. An elder is somebody that's been there, done that. So, that's where we get the word “Presbyteries,” by the way.

“... and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes...”

Scribes would be the experts. Of course, chief priests would be those in authority over people and probably would represent, I would say, the elite.

What is Jesus saying within the passage? He's saying, "I must be rejected by these people." Why? Because it's these people that have been actually leading people astray. So, God doesn't want us to trust in the elite. He doesn't want you to trust in those that have experienced things. You know how people will actually devise whole philosophies of life by virtue of their own experience? "I don't want you listening to them, and I don't want you listening to the experts." That would be the scribes and the Pharisees. Those are the experts. "I want you listening to Me." And the world is full of that cacophonistic noise that comes into our ears that after a while we begin to believe we need to listen to these people. I say, stop listening to them. Who are you following? You've got to follow the One that they killed. How do you define the one that they follow? The One they reject, that's the guy. That's the One you follow.

So, He turns to them and literally defines Himself in that way.

“... “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed...”

“And to demonstrate that I'm the One in authority, I'll conquer death. That's how you'll know.” He was saying to them, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, now, you want to call yourself a follower of Christ? Come on.” As He'll later say, “Take up your cross. Follow Me.” That means that sometimes you're going to be hated by family, sometimes you're going to be ostracized, sometimes you're going to suffer. And look, we're all going to suffer in different ways. God has called us to do that. And here again, I want to go back to the fundamentals. God's not elevating suffering. God's not saying, “Wow, I'm calling you to suffer just for the sake of suffering.” He's calling you to suffer for the sake of righteousness and for the sake of others and for caring and for love of God. And so, the reason why we follow Him in suffering is because we say to Him every time we suffer for proclaiming His name, He's worth it to us. He said that to us, we say that back to Him. And so, He turns to His disciples, and He says, “So, if

you want to come after Me, you've got to deny yourself.” That is, literally take yourself off of the thought list. You've got to stop thinking about yourself. That's probably one of the hardest things that we're going to have to do, stop thinking about ourselves. I mean, we live in a very narcissistic nation, in which not only are we taking selfies, but we're writing things about ourselves, and we're letting everybody else know, and we're just shocked that everybody doesn't enjoy how wonderful we are. But nevertheless, here it is. And He says, “Come after Me, and you must follow Me. If you wish to come after Me, you need to deny yourself. Take up your cross,” and only Luke will throw this word in, “daily.” Every single day. Wow, man. I'll tell you, it seems like just as the day goes on, I stop losing sight of my whole denial thing. And somewhere along the line, I'll go, “What about me?” And then God goes, “Okay, you forgot your calling.” I forgot who I was following. See, how you define Christ will define who you're following. And though you might call whatever you're following “Christ,” it's not *the* Christ. Because *the* Christ, if you're following Him, will mean that you're denying yourself, the things that you want.

And the passage goes on, and I want you to underline another word here in the passage; it says in verse 24,

(Luke 9:24) “For whoever wishes to save his life...”

See the word “life” there within the passage? That is not only dealing with life and breath, “*psychē*” within the passage, but it's dealing with your feelings; it's dealing with your desires; it's dealing with your affections; it's dealing with your aspirations, “*psychē*”. In other words, you need to crucify your affections, your aspirations, your desires, your very breath for Him. Paul will say, “The things that I count as gain for myself is a loss for Him.” It goes back to, if you want to follow him. I mean, as Peter proclaims this, it's no wonder He says, “Wait, don't say anything yet. I want you to understand who you're following.” Because like we said, Peter's still going to have trouble with this. He's going to try to cut off a guy's ear, “You can't take him.” And Christ goes, “This is what you need to understand. This is My life. This is why I came. This is what we're about.” That really, if you think about it, we're not following a miracle worker. We're following One who suffers. He's literally defined Himself that way. I

don't want you to follow the miracle worker. I want you to follow the sufferer. Can you imagine if people would come into church, and they were to fundamentally to sign something, "Okay, what we're signing, as we come into the church, is that we're devoted to selflessness." And they just sign and walk into the church. And that's how we want to live our life, following Christ, living it just the way He did. Boy, I bet the light of the church would be bright, don't you? People would go, "Why are you willing," as Peter would talk about, "in the midst of your suffering, why are you keeping your behavior excellent? Why, when being reviled, don't you revile in return? And why, when you're suffering, you rejoice? Why is that?" And we would say, "It's the moment we get to be more like Christ than ever before. And we rejoice in it." Imagine how bright the church would shine. Whoever wishes to save his life, to save his desires, his feelings, his affections, his aspirations, "I have plans. I got plans." Good for you. Now, turn to God and go, "Is that what You want? Not my will, but Yours be done."

(Luke 9:24) “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.”

(Luke 9:25) For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?

(Luke 9:26) 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.”

In many respects, Luke 12 makes reference to this, if you look there with me.

Jesus will say in verse 8,

(Luke 12:8) “And I say to you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man will confess him also before the angels of God;

(Luke 12:9) but he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.”

Jesus will later on talk to the disciples, and He'll say, “What you need to do is you need to count the cost before you volunteer for this.” And I think in many

respects, when we give the invitation to receive Christ, that should be a tag on. Think about it before you do this, because it's going to cost something. Now, the cost is worth it. But you need to know. Jesus will say to His disciples in John 15, "The world hates Me." He'll turn to them, and He'll say, "So, what do you think they're going to do to you? They're not going to like you." You're going to take a stand; you're going to say something; you're going to proclaim His name. You know, we talk about suffering for Jesus and the fact that, of course, many have done that, many martyrs through the years. Most of us can't even handle somebody shunning us. You know, we just fall apart, and go, "Somebody shunned us. Oh, it's a horrible thing." Peter would say, "In this, you need to glory, because the glory of God rests upon you." And at that point, God is happier with us, because at that moment we look more like His Son than we've ever looked in our lives. Because we were actually willing. And I say this all the time, but the world is willing to suffer for sin. They have no problem doing that. The thing that makes us different is we're willing to suffer for relationships and for love and for the love of God and for

righteousness. And that's what actually makes us so different and stand out. I trust that we would not shun those wonderful experiences that God gives us. And it may be in the years to follow; we may be more fortunate than we think. Because I'm starting to see the world get pretty hostile towards us. Praise the Lord.

Closing Prayer:

Father, thank You for the opportunities that You give us and the calling that You give us. When You tell us that You are the Christ, we have a picture in our mind, but it's usually our picture. You have defined Yourself in this particular passage. And we look at You, and we go, "This is the One who loves me enough to die for me." And You are so different than those that are in authority in this world. You have revealed that in the very way that You died, at their hands. And so, You call us. As you sit in your seat, do you feel His calling? Understand what it means to follow the Christ. Before you start proclaiming Him, why don't you start living Him?