

deny self, if by doing so you destroy your opportunity to live for Christ and then suffer the loss of God's eternal rewards.

- 3) Trading eternal reward for temporary pleasures is a very foolish trade. The Apostle Paul said, (1 Corinthians 9:25) **"And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible."**

The third way that self-sacrifice will benefit you is that ...

c. It will eliminate shame when you see Christ (v.26).

- 1) If in this life, we are ashamed or embarrassed to live for Christ, He assures us that when He comes and takes us to heaven, He will also be ashamed of us. This is not the Lord's desire. Thus, He challenges us to self-sacrifice.
- 2) God wants to praise, honour and glorify us when Christ comes. (1 Peter 1:7) **"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:"**
- 3) The Apostle John recorded these words of Christ in Revelation 22:12. **"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."** [God will reward your self-sacrifice.](#)

Conclusion: The Lord is calling each of us to a life of self-sacrifice. He urges us to deny self, take up our cross, and follow Him. If we choose to save our lives for ourselves, we will lose our opportunity to live for Christ. Gaining this fleeting world is a cheap substitute. Being ashamed to live for Christ will result in shame at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

If God has convicted you that you need to deny yourself, stop clutching the cheap trinkets of this life. You need to take up your cross, be willing to face the hardships that will come. Choose to follow the footsteps of Jesus.

The Lord is looking for preachers, missionaries, witnesses, and godly servants. Will you be one? Will you count the cost and surrender?

If you have not yet trusted Christ to save your soul, that is the first step to the challenge we have looked at this morning.

Song: I Surrender All - 394

The Call to Self-Sacrifice

13 November 2022 AM - Luke 9:23-26 - Sacrifice - Scott Childs

Introduction: The Bible makes it clear that we cannot work to earn salvation. God's requirements for becoming a Christian are simply repentance and faith. When the Apostle James wrote, "faith without works is dead", he was saying that works are the **fruit** of faith not the **root** of faith. All who have true faith in Christ will bear the fruit of good works. However, do you ever feel like you are just not the Christian that you ought to be? Do you sense that you truly need a revival? I do! I believe Jesus gave us the answer in Luke 9:23-26 (read it).

Transition: In essence, Jesus was saying, "If you are resolving to walk close to me, it is going to require self-sacrifice on your part." He then explained this self-sacrifice we will need.

1. Jesus said, self-sacrifice will require discipline.

a. Self-sacrifice is the denial of selfish desires.

- 1) A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin, 5, and Ryan, 3. The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake. Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson. She said, "If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, 'Let my brother have the first pancake; I can wait.'" Kevin turned to his younger brother and said, "Ryan, you be Jesus!" (Source unknown)
- 2) It is part of our sin nature to be selfish. We were all born with a natural desire to seek our own interests. Our sinful motto is "Me first!" One of the first words we learned was "Mine!" Unfortunately, we did not outgrow selfishness. Our culture cultivates it. Advertisements promotes it. Sports heroes strive for glory. The philosophy of our day is to look out for number one.
- 3) Jesus said that if we are intending to come after Him, we **must** deny ourselves. In our hearts, we desire to walk more closely with the Lord Jesus, but to do so He said we must deny ourselves. **The Lord wants no competition.**
 - a) In Ephesians 5, God tells us that marriage is a picture of our relationship with Christ. Just as a husband

must deny himself to love his wife exclusively, and a wife must deny herself to follow her husband's leadership and loyally respect him, so we must deny self to walk in harmony with the Lord.

- b) Selfishness will tempt you to yield to sinful habits, addictions, and passions. Self will choose parties, pleasures, games and saving face over self-denial. Selfish desires will keep you from reading the Bible and spending quality time in prayer. Selfish desires will hinder you from sacrificing to attend church Sunday night and Wednesday night. Selfish pride inhibit our witness for the Lord. Selfishness is what prevents Christians from answering God's call to go to the mission field or becoming preachers.
- 4) Jesus is calling us to deny self. The Lord wants first place in our lives. He is calling us to full surrender. Denying self is the first step in a close walk with the Lord.

b. **Self-sacrifice is taking up your cross daily.**

- 1) Today, a cross is a religious symbol. Many even treat it as a good luck charm. However, in Jesus' day, a cross was an instrument of cruel, painful execution. It represented a slow death by bleeding, thirst, and suffocation.
- 2) When Jesus said, "**take up your cross**", He was not necessarily speaking of preparing for execution, but to the willingness to suffer whatever might result from walking with Him. In this god-hating world, walking with Christ, living godly, and dressing modestly may bring burdens, shame, discomfort, reproaches, persecution, or death.
- 3) Your cross may be the mockery of old friends, the loss of former friends, the scoff of an unsaved relative, or withdrawal pains of giving up a sinful habit. Your cross is any pain or discomfort experienced because of your choice to deny self and walk with Christ.
- 4) Jesus commanded that we **take up our cross**. We must accept it willingly and cheerfully.
- 5) Jesus said we must take up our cross **daily**. This is not a once-for-all event. It is a daily battle.

c. **Self-sacrifice is following Christ's steps.**

- 1) Following Christ is travelling the same road He travels and letting Him take the lead. He wants to lead you though the Bible. He desires that you read it daily and meditate on what you learned. (Psalms 119:105) "**Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.**" (Psalms 119:130) "**The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.**" Christ wants you to sift all that you do through the Bible grid. (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22) "**Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil.**"
- 2) Following Christ is obeying **all** that He says. If we are going to deny self, take up our cross and follow Christ, we must follow His instructions. **If there is a Scripture that you know you are not fully obeying, you are not following Christ.**

2. **Jesus said, self-sacrifice for Him is beneficial**

The first way that self-sacrifice will benefit you is that ...

a. **It will save you from a wasted life (v.24).**

- 1) Let me paraphrase this verse. "**For whoever may resolve to keep his life safe** [refusing to obey Lu 9:23], **shall destroy it. But whoever may destroy his life** [in obedience to Lu 9:23], **on account of Me, he shall keep it safe.**"
- 2) The devil wants us to think that self-sacrifice for Christ will ruin our lives. He urges us to keep our life safe by refusing self-sacrifice. Jesus turned this around and assured us that destroying our life through self-sacrifice for Christ will actually keep it safe.
- 3) Since this life is the dressing room for eternity, a life of self-sacrifice for Christ is our wisest choice.

The second way that self-sacrifice will benefit you is that ...

b. **It will keep your priorities right (v.25).**

- 1) Jesus asked a rhetorical question, expecting an obvious negative answer.
- 2) He asked what advantage is there in gaining the whole world of temporal pleasures and success by refusing to