

Luke 9:18~27

Upon hearing Simon Peter's answer, of Him being "*the Christ of God*," Jesus responds, in what at least on the surface seems strange, by telling them not to tell anyone who He was. ²¹*And he straightly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing.* He "*made it clear*" to them, that they were not to tell anyone, who He was! At first hearing, that seems strange, but Jesus goes on to express why they must keep this a secret...

²¹*And he straightly 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 declares that they must keep this to themselves, as to not disrupt or interfere with the things, which must shortly come to pass concerning Him. Here Jesus "*reveals*" to the disciples, another mystery of the kingdom, that no one else in the world, could have ever imagined would happen...the rejection and murder of Messiah, by His own people! This passage has always fascinated me, in that Jesus foretold of what all awaited Him, in such detail. Here he speaks of His impending death, burial and resurrection...

I'll never forget the first time I heard this passage taught... It was in a Sunday school class, and I was a new Christian. And I'll never forget the moment when the teacher taught how Jesus knew what was going to happen to Him. It was at that moment, that the "*Crucifixion*" of Jesus really hit me. It was in that moment that I really came to understand the sovereignty of God, and the will of God...and the mighty power of God. I realized that the death of Christ did not come by the hands of men, but by the will of God. This was God's doings... I realized that day, that before He ever sent His Son into the world, the cross was already in place! This child, born to Mary and Joseph, was destined for the Cross. He was born to DIE. Every step he took on this earth, was in the direction of the Cross...*His final destination.*

Here Jesus reveals to the disciples, something that no one else in the whole world knew...the "*Will of God*"... Here Jesus gives the disciples, **the divine revelation** of "*God's plan of redemption.*" Remember last time, we looked to Matthew's account of this event, concerning Simon Peter's knowledge of "*Who He Was.*" Upon Peter's identifying Him as the "*Son of God*," remember how Jesus responded?

¹⁷*And Jesus answered and said unto him, **Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven has revealed this to you...***

Peter's knowledge of who He was, was not something Peter had attained on his own, or something he was taught by men... This was a "*divine revelation*" from God. God had opened Peter's eyes, allowing him to see Jesus for who he was. Given that the Father had given Simon this *divine revelation* of who He was, Jesus in turn gives Simon the *divine revelation* of God's plan! Based on the fact that God had chosen Simon, and allowed him the privilege of knowing who He was, Jesus lets him in on the plans that God has in store for Him... Simon Peter, since you know who I am, there's something else you should know...

²² *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.*

Even though Jesus does not specifically mention the "*Cross*" here, we know that is what He's referring to. He even "*hints*" at this, in the very next verse, when He says... "*If any man come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*" Here we see what appears to be at least a subtle hint, that He will take up a cross, and that if they follow Him, they will be required to take one up as well...

But before we go any further with this thought, I want to look at something Matthew records, that Luke does not, that being *Peter's response to the divine revelation of Jesus' death*. Peter's response is vital in understanding this passage, for the remainder of the passage, is a response of Jesus to Peter's response.

(Mt. 16) ²¹*From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. (Peter's Response...)* ²²*Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.*

Peter's initial response to the *divine revelation* of Jesus' impending death, was one of un-acceptance. Out of good intentions, Peter vowed that he would not allow this to happen to Him. Peter's response could be stated this way...*"Not so Lord...not if I have anything to say about it!" "I won't let them do this to you...they'll have to go through me first!"* Basically Peter's response was out of love and loyalty for Him. There were no ill intentions; no ill will expressed here...but rather an expression of pure love for Jesus.

But notice how Jesus responded to Peter...²³*But he turned, and said unto Peter, **Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savor not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.***

Jesus sternly rebukes Peter, to the point that He refers to Peter, by the name of His archenemy Satan. Wow, what a turn of events. Think about it, just seconds earlier, He called him "*Peter*," likening him to a "*Rock*" in the faith...and now here, literally seconds later, He likens Peter to His archenemy.

What did Peter do, that was so bad, that Jesus would call him Satan, and rebuke him the way he did? The issue here has to do the "**Will**"... The term "**Will**" refers to "*Desires*" or "*Plans*." I need you to listen very closely, because the rest of the passage is based on Peter's response, to the *divine revealed will* of God. The Father had just divinely revealed to Peter, who Jesus was. Now here, Jesus reveals the *divine revelation* of **God's Will**, of His impending death. It was "*God's Will*" or "*God's Plan...or desire*" that Jesus suffer and be killed by the leaders of Israel! This is what God wanted to take place...therefore to oppose that, was to oppose God! Which puts one in, *positionally speaking*, as an enemy. All who oppose God, and His Will, are placed in the same category as God's chief enemy...Satan!

Beloved, it's important that we understand the point Jesus is making here, and that being, that "*Man's Will*" is in opposition to "*God's Will*." The reason for this, is because "*Man's Will* or *Man's desires*" stems from a "**Sinful nature**" that is within man. *God's Will* is perfect because God is Holy. That is in contrast to the "*Will of Man*," which must not be trusted, because it stems from a sinful nature! Given that man is sinful, and God is Holy, the two wills naturally oppose each other...

It is this truth, speaking of man's need to turn from his own will and desires, that Jesus is speaking to, in the remainder of this chapter. Jesus teaches, that if anyone wants to follow Him, it will require them to lay aside their own will, their own ambitions in this life. You cannot follow your own desires, your own ambitions, your own will, and the Lords, at the same time! One must be sacrificed, to serve the other.

(Vs 24~26) Having rebuked Peter in the presence of the other disciples, Jesus turns to them, and uses the situation to teach the heart/soul of the faith...the requirement of man's complete surrender, of *his will* to the *Lord's Will*... ²⁴*Then said Jesus unto his disciples, **If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*** ²⁵*For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.* ²⁶*For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

To understand the truth that Jesus is proclaiming here, is to understand that in order to follow Jesus Christ, the requirement is that you must give up "*your life*!" **Literally!** According to Jesus, the only people who will be granted the privilege of being His disciple, and the benefit of that, being spared from the

wrath that is to come, are those who give up their “Life” in this world, to live their lives unto Him! It is only those, who trade “*their Wills*” for “*His Will*,” who will receive the gift of eternal life! According to the clear teachings of this passage, all those who do not, will perish along with the rest of this world.

I want us to look closely at what Jesus says here... ²⁴*Then said Jesus unto his disciples, **If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*** ²⁵*For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.*

He begins by saying, that for anyone thinking about following Him, there is a three-fold requirement, that they must keep, in order to be His disciple. When understood properly, the three are really one, it is just that this one requirement, involves three aspects to be complete. The requirement simply being, he must be willing to turn from his own will (his own life) to live his life to the will of God! The manner in which Jesus describes, that this is actually carried out in a man’s life, is very interesting...

...If any man will come after me...let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

First, is “*Self-Denial*”... Jesus says unto the man who is thinking about following Him, unless you are willing to live a life of “*Self-Denial*” for the rest of your time in this world...then you need not come. If you are not willing to lay aside your own ambitions, your own desires, (speaking of a man’s “*WILL*”) if a man is not willing to give that up...he need not come to Jesus. For the first requirement of following Jesus, is the “*Surrender of one’s Will.*” You cannot serve *your will* and *God’s will*...you must choose. And given that Jesus made it clear here, that to serve one’s own will, is to walk in opposition to the Lord, thus walking in the ways of Satan! There’s no wonder as to why this one is first!

Beloved...men need to “*hear*” what Jesus is saying here! For I am telling you, that the “*religious system of our day*,” is little or no different than the “*religious system*” that Jesus walked into in His day! The Pharisees and Scribes of Jesus’ day, are symbolic of many in our day! They were men who went to church, they participated in the activities of the church. They gave their tithes to the church, they adhered to the Laws of God, in the aspect that they lived, “*good moral lives.*” They were not outwardly evil men, who did evil things. But nonetheless...*they were men who continued to walk in their own wills!* Even though they didn’t do anything, that was per say, “*Evil or Bad,*” they were still “*In Sin*” in that they continued to walk in their own WILLS...*the sinful will of the fallen nature within every man!* The first step of “*Genuine Faith*” is to recognize this...and “*Turn from it!*” Beloved, that’s what Paul is referring to when he says, “*If anyone be in Christ, he is a new creature...*” The man who is “*In Christ,*”(or you could say “*Christ in him*”) is a completely different man, because he no longer serves the “*Old nature,*” that of the flesh, *his own will*...but now serves the “*Will of God.*”

Beloved, I’m telling you, our churches are full of men and women, who have the sense that they are ok with God, based on some decision they made years ago, the fact they have been baptized, and that they attend church occasionally. While the truth is, they still serve their own wills! Beloved, there’s not enough religious activity, that a man can do, that will save him...outside of coming to the knowledge, by divine revelation of God, of his sinful nature (his WILL) inside him, causing him to turn from it!

The first step, requires a man to turn from his own will...“*let him deny himself...*” The next step, still pertains to man’s will. *...If any man will come after me...let him deny himself, and take up his cross...* To “*take up the cross*” is only understood, by understanding the “*cross.*” Not in the sense of Jesus’ death on the cross...for when he said this, he had yet to go to the cross. His reference to taking up the cross was one readily understood by the disciples. It was something they knew all too well. Time and time again, these men had watched men, crucified, put to death on “*Roman Crosses.*” Crucifixion was Rome’s form of execution. There were thousands upon thousands of men who died by crucifixion. The point Jesus was making here, by calling for men to “*take up his cross,*” was a reference to living a life of death! To follow

Christ meant, not only to turn from one's own will, but a day-to-day lifestyle of putting it to death! Paul said, "*I die daily...*" What did he mean by that? He meant, that each new day the Lord blessed him with, he would live for Him. And to do that, required him to put his will to death. Beloved, the life of following Jesus is not only a life of *self-denial*, but also *self-sacrifice*. Not only must we turn from our own WILLS, but we must be ever constantly seeking to put it to death...so that we may live our lives unto Him! For that's exactly what Jesus says here...

...If any man will come after me...let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

Unless "*Self-Will*" is put to death...it is impossible to serve God... I told you there were three aspects, but they were really one. The point is, we must turn from our own will, and begin putting it to death, daily, and yield our bodies in service to the will of God, in the Lord Jesus Christ.

To stress the importance of their heeding His words, Jesus adds...

²⁵*For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.*

That is to say, that those who do this, those who turn from their own wills, to live to the will of God, will find life! They are the saved! And the opposite of that is, those who do not, will perish! Listen, anyone who continues to live to their own wills...(save their life)...will lose it! Brother, you can hold on to your life, and continue to live it for your self...but I'm warning you, by the word of God, you needn't expect that you will receive anything of God in the end! Regardless of how many times you attended church, regardless of the church activities you participated in...if you continue to live your life to your own will, none of that will mean anything in the end! If you "*save your life*"...you will "*lose it!*"

But for those of you...who have "*lost your life,*" those of you who have believed the gospel of Jesus Christ...and have "*given up your life here on this earth, to serve HIM*"...you, my friend, stand to inherit the kingdom of God! Praise God!

After declaring that statement...²⁵*For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it...* Jesus follows with a couple of questions...

²⁶*For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?
...or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

Those questions are aimed at giving those considering the "*High cost*" of following Him, something to think about. Hearing the "*requirements*" of following Him, no doubt, they were some who were taken back, at His demand for them to give up their lives here on earth, to live for Him. **(Something that is all but gone in our modern day gospel...the gospel in our day is basically, little more than trying to get people to confess Jesus with their mouth, and get baptized, requiring no real devotion or obedience)** But according to Jesus himself, to follow Him meant to give up your life...*literally!* And to not do so, automatically puts you in the position of an enemy of God, by walking in our own sinful will. Given what He has said here, no doubt, they began to consider the cost, contemplating in their minds whether or not it was worth it. Knowing that, Jesus gave them something else to think about, while they were thinking about it...

²⁶*For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?
...or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

The questions are aimed at those who are leaning towards the idea, that the demands are too much. Deep down, they want to follow Him, but to give up their life here on earth...is something they're not sure they are willing to do. "*That's a high price*"...in their mind. Basically Jesus is saying... "*Hypothetically, lets say you choose to "keep your life," and live it for yourself... And lets say, in doing so, you were able to make it to the top, having everything you wanted, achieving your highest goals, living out your greatest*

desires and dreams...” **Let’s say you do that...let me ask you, will it be worth your soul?** If you choose to live out your life, in your own will...at the end of the road, when it comes time to die, **what will you give God, in exchange for salvation?** (*When He has required your life...which you have just spent!*)

Beloved...I don’t know what you are living for...but all I can say is this...

You better make sure that what you are living for...is worth dying for!

If you are living to this world, and the things of this world...living your life to your own will, rather than heeding the gospel, and repenting, to yield your life in submission to Jesus Christ as Lord...you are standing in the path of Judgment! You need to understand, that if you continue to live your life, to your own will and desires...you will be the object of God’s Judgment and Wrath. No amount of religion, no amount of Church attendance, no amount of money you may have given to the church, will help you! The call of the gospel is for men to repent! To turn from their own will and desires, to yield their lives unto Jesus Christ as Lord!

Now given the fact, that we are all gathered here in the house of the Lord this morning, gives at least the impression, that we are doing that. But only God knows the truth, of whether we are or not. And according to this passage, Jesus will base His judgment, on the lives we live!

²⁷*For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.*

...he shall reward every man according to his works...

The “works” here is not a reference to “His goodness” in terms of “moral living.” Many have the mistaken idea, that because they are religious, and live “clean lives,” that they will be rewarded with heaven. Not so. Here Jesus is saying, that when he comes back, he will base his judgment on the “LIFE” the man has lived. If he has lived to his own will...he will die in his sin! If he has turned from living to “Self-will” to live his life to the “Will of God,” he will be given life eternal with Jesus in glory!

I have a very simple question, that I want each one of you to answer honestly within yourselves...

To WHOM and to WHAT are you living your life too?

Is it yourself, and your will...or...is it God, and His will? Be careful how you answer that, for your life depends on it!