

Message #40

Luke 9:18-26

At this point in the life of Jesus Christ, these Apostles had been with Him well over a year. What is somewhat shocking is that even though these disciples had seen Him do some amazing things, and even though they themselves had been out doing some amazing things (9:1-6), they were still doubting and struggling and still lacking in their faith (9:40-41).

We saw last time that when they were asked to feed 5,000 men plus women and children, they didn't think they could do it. Obviously they had not truly grasped who Jesus Christ was.

You would think by now these guys would be rock solid, but they aren't. So Jesus decided it was time to challenge His disciples to come to terms with this. It was time for them to face themselves and face the truth. Jesus says:

ONE WHO WISHES TO BECOME AN UNASHAMED FOLLOWER OF JESUS CHRIST MUST KNOW MY IDENTITY, KNOW THE VALUE OF MY SACRIFICE AND KNOW THE VALUE AND CRITERIA OF A LIFE COMMITTED TO ME.

What kicks this all off is prayer. We learn from **verse 18** that Jesus was alone praying. Apparently, He was finally able to get away with His apostles for a while and take a break. He is away from the crowds alone.

He is obviously thinking about the sufferings He will endure and He also is thinking about these disciples with Him who were still somewhat fickle and unstable. **Jesus is going to lay down His own life to save sinners and these disciples of His are still not sure who He even is.**

So Christ decides to address this straight up. As near as I can determine, there are three key mandates that Christ sets forth here to these disciples:

MANDATE #1 – A disciple must know the true identity of Jesus Christ. **9:18-21**

The noun “disciple” (μαθηται) was a term that referred to one following Jesus Christ and learning from Jesus Christ (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, 275). **This is a term that refers to one who is in the process of learning rather than teaching.**

This title was specifically used in regard to the twelve and then in the early days of the church it was used in regard to Christians generally. By far, the greatest number of uses of the word “disciple” is in the four gospels and often it referred to those who were literally and physically following Jesus Christ when He was here on earth.

The Apostle Paul does not use the term for the Grace Age believer in His Epistles. The reason is that Paul stresses the union that a believer has with Jesus Christ via the work of the Holy Spirit. We are so linked with Jesus Christ that we are already seated in the heavenlies with Him.

But certainly these mandates are critical for us to meet as well. Although there are some differences, which we will point out, there are certainly some applications.

Now to help the believer come to terms with the identity of Jesus Christ, He asked His disciples two questions:

Question#1 - Who do the people say that I am? **9:18-19**

The word “people” actually means multitude or crowd that is a large throng (*Ibid.*, p. 331). There is an article “the” before the noun “crowd of people” that would seem to indicate specifically the people of Israel.

The disciples had been out and about and they had heard what the Jews were saying about Jesus Christ, so He asks them to give Him a report. In **verse 19** the disciples said well the vast majority of people say you are a great prophet. Some say you are John the Baptist who has come back to life, some say Elijah who is the predicted future prophet to come and some say you are some other prophet from the O.T. who has been raised up. We know from Matthew 16:14 that some were saying He was Jeremiah.

Now it is clear from this that the people respected Christ and had a high view of Him. But their view was wrong. **What is absolutely clear is that the vast majority of people were not saying this is our God, this is our Savior, this is our Messiah and this is our King who can deliver us and save us from our sins.**

Even though many of these people were following Christ, the vast majority of people have no clue as to the true identity of Jesus Christ and they have no sense of their need to be saved from their sins.

They respected Jesus Christ, but they had no idea as to His real identity. This is so said because had they examined the Word of God, even concerning the place where He was born (Bethlehem), they should have immediately known this is the God/man who was predicted to come.

Question#2 - Who do you apostles say that I am? **9:20-21**

Now Jesus wants these apostles to answer the same question. The pronoun “them” and “you” indicate that Christ is emphatically asking these apostles the very same question.

There comes a time when things need to be addressed straight up and head on and that is what Jesus does here. Well as soon as Christ asked the question, Peter, who is known for a quick temper and quick mouth, said, “The Christ of the God” (τον χριστον του θεου).

Peter says you are the Messiah of God. You are God’s Messiah, God’s Anointed One, The Promised One out of the O.T.. You are the One who will set up the Kingdom and rule the world.

Disciples need to understand who Jesus Christ is and they cannot be fickle in their position.

Suppose Jesus Christ fired that question at us. Who do you say I am to you? What would your answer be?

1. You are my God.
2. Savior of my soul.
3. Lord of my life.
4. My best friend.
5. My first love.

Now Jesus warned them and instructed them not to tell anyone. The context tells us why. Christ did not want the disciples telling people because of His mission, which was to go to Jerusalem and to die.

Had they started to publically broadcast and confess this is our Messiah, they would have expected Him to go to Jerusalem and set up a kingdom and they would have led a political revolt to do it. The disciples needed to keep this quiet so Christ could go to the cross. These apostles at this point did not grasp the whole program of God, and Jesus did not want some partial communication of truth given at this point.

The ministry of Jesus Christ was multifaceted. **First**, He needed to die on that cross to save Israel and save sinners; **Second**, He was the Messiah and He was the God King who would reign over the world. There was a chronology to this and first He must suffer and die so He told His disciples to be quiet.

This is a critical matter of dispensationalism and unless we understand this, the Bible is not properly understood. **Our job today is not to keep quiet about who Jesus Christ is. Our responsibility is to tell everyone we can at all times.** When Christ was here on earth, just prior to going to the cross, it was imperative that they not promote something that could prevent that.

MANDATE #2- A disciple must know the specific program of Jesus Christ. **9:22**

There are five specific facts that Christ presents to His disciples that He expected them to know:

Fact #1 - He is the Son of Man. **9:22a**

This is a Daniel term, meaning Jesus Christ is Almighty God, the Ancient of Days, the God/Savior/Messiah/King (Daniel 7:13-14). Daniel said this is the One who will one day rule over the entire world and all people in it.

Now what He is about to tell them is that My suffering and death will not stop the mission; it is the mission. The suffering and death of Jesus Christ is the thing that can give people the righteousness they need to share in the Kingdom over which He will eventually reign.

Fact #2- He must suffer many things. **9:22b**

No specific things are given or listed, but Jesus wanted His disciples to know He would go through a lot of suffering and persecution. He was not going to be treated as royalty at the present time. He is Divine Royalty, but He will not be treated like it at the present time.

Fact #3- He must be rejected by the religious leaders. **9:22c**

Religious leaders must reject Christ because they have to sanction His execution. His rejection will not stop His mission; it is part of His mission. The Elders will reject Him; the Chief Priests will reject Him and the Scribes will reject Him. These three formed the Sanhedrin leadership that was the ruling religious hierarchy of Judaism.

Fact #4- He must be killed. **9:22d**

Jesus Christ had to die. This is the only way sinners may be saved. No one would suspect that the Messiah would die. But as one commentator said, “the road of glory runs through the cross.”

Fact #5- He must be raised up the third day. **9:22e**

This of course would set Him apart from all others. He would be killed, but He would be raised three days later.

No other religious person can save us from sins. There is only one and that one is Jesus Christ.

MANDATE #3- A disciple must know the specific cost to follow Jesus Christ. **9:23-26**

We invite people today to believe in Jesus Christ and after that to take in the Word of God and apply it. This is the key to joy and peace and fulfillment and happiness.

When Jesus Christ was here on earth, to invite people to follow Him was an invitation to trouble, not tranquility.

There are certainly some Grace Age applications we may make from this, but the full intensity of this invitation was when Jesus was here on earth:

Prerequisite #1 - If anyone wishes to come after Christ, he must deny himself. **9:23a**

The first key to following Christ is self-denial. In the Grace Age, this starts by admitting you cannot save yourself by your works or merit. One must deny that self can save from sin and totally rely on Jesus Christ to save from sin.

William VanDoren, who wrote a thorough commentary on Luke in the 1800's said that a disciple must be willing to: 1) Ignore his own wisdom; 2) Renounce his own self-righteousness; 3) Crucify his own sinful desires; 4) Sacrifice his own earthly joys.

A disciple must be willing to give up anything and go any place for Jesus Christ. There is no question that when it comes to a close relationship with Jesus Christ, there is self-denial.

Prerequisite#2- If anyone wishes to come after Christ, he must take up his cross daily. **9:23b**

Here is the first mention of the cross in Luke. Cross-bearing in the first century was humiliating. Cross-bearing was a visible public spectacle in which one condemned walked on a road to his own crucifixion, bearing his own cross.

It seems the point is that every day will be a new day to be a public spectacle and even be humiliated if you truly follow Jesus Christ.

Prerequisite#3- If anyone wishes to come after Christ, he must follow Christ. **9:23c**

The third prerequisite is that one must be willing to follow Christ continually. Whatever route he picks or takes, one must follow Him.

In **verses 24-26** Jesus stresses the importance of having a relationship with Him. He makes a series of critical points:

(Point#1)- Whoever wants to save his life will lose it. **9:24a**

You cannot save yourself from your sins and if you want to be saved, you must come to terms with that and give your life to Christ. This is the key to salvation; you lose your life by giving it to Jesus Christ.

(Point#2)- Whoever loses his life for Christ's sake will save it. **9:24b**

This is the essence of saving faith, you stop relying on anything yourself and rely only on Jesus Christ to save you. When one looks at the world and then looks at difficulties that come from following Jesus Christ, one might be tempted to back away from Christ. But the one who doesn't will discover he will be saved.

(Point#3)- There is no profit in gaining the whole world if you lose your own soul. **9:25**

One could really make a big name for himself/herself in this world for a while, but what profit is that if one loses their own soul for all eternity?

(Point#4)- Whoever is ashamed of Jesus Christ and His words will be ashamed when Christ comes in all of His glory. **9:26**

Again notice that Jesus uses the title "Son of Man" in regard to Himself. Commitment to Christ will bring honor from Christ, but if you are too ashamed to commit yourself to Christ, a day will come when He will be ashamed of you.