

Put Christ First

Luke 9:23

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“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” (Luke 9:23).

One day Christ was alone praying. When He had finished He went to His disciples who were nearby and asked, “Whom say the people that I am?” They proceeded to inform Him of the various conjectures concerning Him that they had heard. Obviously he had been quite a topic of conversation among the people.

There is a point here that is easily missed, which leaders should note. Those who lead and teach could better suit their doctrine, reproofs, corrections, and instructions in righteousness and counsel to the lives of ordinary people if they would chat with them from time to time.

They could sense the real needs and be better able to share things that would scratch where people itch. The better acquainted a doctor is with the patient, the more he knows how to treat him.

Jesus then asked what they believed and Peter said it: “the Christ of God”. After Jesus had risen from the dead, Peter made the streets of Jerusalem ring with this same affirmation. “Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36).

Jesus then changed the course of the conversation and spoke clearly and forcefully about the great purpose for His visit to this small and troubled planet. “The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the leaders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day” (Luke 9:22). He had come to die. He was going to lay down His life.

Then followed this dramatic challenge to His men. If they would follow, they must be willing to give up all rights to themselves. What does it take to follow Christ? Everything!

It means to disregard one's own personal interests, to disown ones self. I'm sure you've heard of people who have become followers of Christ and were disowned by their families. They no longer belonged to that household, they were completely cut off. That's the idea behind Jesus' words.

We no longer belong to ourselves. We are no longer a part of the old life. The Bible says: “In which times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others” (Ephesians 2:2-3).

We are to bear with patience whatever cross the Lord lays on us. We must not indulge our desire for ease and appetite, for then it proves difficult to bear toil and weariness for Christ.

As we follow Christ, the precious promise becomes a reality. “For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it” (Luke 9:24).

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