

The unfolding of your words gives light.

To Seek and to Save

An Exposition of the Gospel of Luke

¹⁸And it happened that while He was praying alone, the disciples were with Him, and He questioned them, saying, “Who do the people say that I am^a?” ¹⁹They answered and said, “John the Baptist, and others say Elijah; but others, that one of the prophets of old has risen again^b.” ²⁰And He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” And Peter answered and said, “The Christ of God^c.” ²¹But He warned them and instructed *them* not to tell this to anyone^d, ²²saying, “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^e.”

²³And 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^f.” ²⁴For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but

^a 9:18 **while He was praying alone, the disciples were with Him, and He questioned them, saying, “Who do the people say that I am?”** Matthew tells us that this event happened at Caesarea Philippi (Paneas). This location of the headwaters of the Jordan River was the site where there was a shrine to Pan (the goat-footed Greek god of flocks). Herod the Great built a temple here to honor Caesar Augustus. Herod’s son Philip the tetrarch enlarged the city and named it Caesarea Philippi.

At this southern foot of Mt. Hermon was a sizeable cavern from which flowed a large spring. Here where men honored men, where men honored pagan gods and where men honored themselves Jesus chose to ask how men identified Him.

^b 9:19 **They answered and said, “John the Baptist, and others say Elijah; but others, that one of the prophets of old has risen again.”** Herod’s fears that John had come back must have caught on (9:7-8). Others knew Malachi’s prophecy about Elijah’s return (Malachi 4:5) and had not heard Jesus tell the people that John was the fulfillment of that prophecy (Matthew 17:10-13). Jesus may have looked like John because they were closely related. His miracles would have made people think of Elijah. Certainly His preaching demonstrated that He was no ordinary man, but a great prophet.

^c 9:20 **He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” And Peter answered and said, “The Christ of God.”** This question brought Peter and the others to consider more than what the majority believed. To answer this question differently than the general public would demonstrate that the disciples had absorbed what Jesus taught them about Himself. Peter was not the only one who believed this. He, as he so often did, spoke for the group.

^d 9:21 **He warned them and instructed them not to tell this to anyone.** This was not a permanent command. Soon they would be commissioned to shout this from the mountaintops. But the cross had to come before the crown. The cross was not the backup plan. It was the only plan, as the following words confirm.

^e 9:22 **“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.”** This is Jesus’ first plain statement about His death. He had to die and increasingly communicated this message as the day drew nearer. At this point Matthew records Peter rebuking Jesus for raising such a prospect, likely because he failed to see that Jesus’ kingdom could not advance without conquering sin and death.

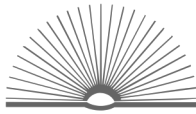
^f 9:23 **If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.** He had not yet revealed the precise manner of His own death, but the mention of a cross would have been meaningful to anyone living in that region. Those who were seen bearing a cross were not seen again. He was calling men to follow Him to the death if necessary.

The Gospel of Luke
Steven Svendsen, Sr.

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whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it^a. ²⁵For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself^b? ²⁶For 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^c. ²⁷But I say to you truthfully, there are some of those standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God^d.^e

^a 9:24 **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.** This a paradox that should serve as a comfort to those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake as well as a warning to those who follow Jesus for convenience and at a distance. The word "life" used twice here is the word meaning "soul."

^b 9:25 **what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?** Jesus was dashing any hopes the disciples had a getting in on the bottom floor of a new and powerful earthly kingdom. This was an apparent shift in emphasis and must have come as a real shock to the disciples (especially Judas). There would be no "world gaining" for these men.

^c 9:26 **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.** Perhaps this pushed Judas over the edge (Romans 1:16).

^d 9:27 **I say to you truthfully, there are some of those standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.** It is important to note that each instance in the gospels where Jesus says these word is immediately followed by a glimpse of Jesus on the mountain with Moses and Elijah (Matthew 16:28-17:3; Mark 9:1-4; Luke 9:27-39).

^e 9:18-27 The cost of following Jesus... The makeup of a true disciple:

1. A disciple knows the Master. You know what others say about Jesus. Who is He to you?
2. A disciple is an expert on the message. Jesus gave His people a message to carry. Even false prophets do this to successfully perpetuate their beliefs. The plan was always about the cross and now He begins to uncover that prospect.
3. A disciple is an expert at saying "no" to self and "yes" to Jesus. Jesus said His yoke was an easy one but it is still a yoke. Cross-bearing is the legitimate response to having a crucified Savior.

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