

What Jesus Christ Desires In His Disciples

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It's pretty cool. Good evening everyone. Evening. Well, let's start off with going to the Lord in prayer with me.

Father, thank you for this opportunity to go before you and look at your word tonight. I pray father that you would be present with us and father fill us with your holy spirit. Guide my tongue lord that I may speak forth your word with power and utterance that father only your spirit can comprehend the weight of the matter that will be spoken of tonight on the call discipleship that I will be continuing on. Father, I pray that you would bless the hearers as well, that you would give them ears to hear that they may hear. And I pray, Father, that they would find the richness in your word and that you'll be glorified throughout this evening. For ask it in Jesus name. Amen.

Well, I'm going to be continuing on discipleship and tonight's title of the sermon is what Jesus Christ desires in his disciples. So, if you will please turn with me to Luke chapter 9 and we're going to be in verses 46 to 49 this evening. So, Luke 9, verse 46.

Well, last week we saw from the scriptures that losing all through suffering, which is what? Self-denial and daily crossbearing means that there is gaining of some sort, which is namely of Christ, of him, of having him. And that is the paradox of the disciples life, that as we deny ourselves, as we daily prosper that we are gaining more of Christ and following more in his footsteps. And some of the things that I mentioned from passage of Luke 9:23 was we saw the condition of the heart that those who came after Jesus that there was a recognition of that there was going to be an ongoing cost of discipleship that losing your life for Jesus' sake and the gospel you will actually save your life. But there were also warnings in the passage that I read from last week. Namely, the warnings of if you are left to your own desires of saving your life, which is the natural man's desire to save one's life, that you will in fact, as Jesus said, you will lose your life.

What we're going to see next is what Jesus Christ desires in his disciples. That if you got over that understanding of the paradox life of a true disciple, then you are going to follow desires of what Christ wants in your life and he wants to make a direct impact in the way you think about life. And so go with me now as we dive into this part of Luke's gospel where we're going to see what a true follower of Jesus Christ is. And if you've been a disciple for many years here, decades even, it's a humbling thing to revisit again and again what the Lord Jesus desires in discipleship. It's always a good reminder again and again of what Jesus desires in us. And for those who don't know the Lord Jesus Christ, it is for you to understand to listen humbly and know if you are following the Lord Jesus according to the scriptures. So verse 46 reads this.

Then there arose a reasoning among them which of them should be the greatest. One of the stark reminders is that **pride is a common sin**. That pride is one of the things that Jesus is going to deal with first and foremost with his disciples. And it comes in many forms. And we're going to see just one of the forms of pride. And that is the **pride of position**. The pride of position. You see, Jesus commands those who have a heart of humility. But he reproves those of a jealous heart. And what Jesus will do again and again in our walk with him as disciples is he's going to expose our sin. So let me ask you, has he exposed your pride of position? Your position maybe in all sorts of arenas. Could be in the church here at Calvary Road. It could be in your work place. It could be amongst your friends from high school that you grew up with and wanting to be the best out of them. I can go on and on and on. But there is this pride of position that we all have to deal with. And Jesus is the one that exposes that in our lives. And thank God for that. Amen. That he exposes the very thing that stumbles us in our walk with him.

So Jesus and the 12 disciples returned to Capernium. This is the setting from the mount of transfiguration. This is what happened prior to this verse. But they were in a very different frame of mind from what Jesus was doing and thinking. The transfiguration confirmed Jesus' divine identity. That what that's what we see in the transfiguration. And we're not going to go through it tonight, but I'm going to just take some of the things out from that portion of the scripture because it has an impact to what we're going to read here in verse 46. That event confirmed again his divine identity as a son of God. And we saw that or in this passage we see that his clothes was blazing white and radiant with divine light. And furthermore, God spoke from heaven and commanded the disciples that saw this and witnessed this to listen to the Lord Jesus. He emphasized Jesus authority as a true Lord to follow. We see this in Matthew 7:5. He says, "This is God's word. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them. And behold, a voice out of the cloud just said, 'This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him.'" I'm going to take that phrase, "Hear ye him." And I'm going to show that later on in my sermon, but I want you to remember that. Hear ye him.

You see, Jesus was focused on the cross while the attention of the disciples at the transfiguration was fixed on attaining positions of honor and an earthly kingdom and their anticipation that there would be one established soon. This contrast was obviously evident in each of them by what they were about to say after the transfiguration. You see, Jesus gave his predictions of his suffering of what he was going to endure on the cross. There was three accounts of it in the gospels. And leading up to transfiguration, there's two of those three. And I just want to show you where those predictions are of his suffering. We see the first one that is said by the Lord Jesus was immediately following Peter's recognition of him as the Messiah. Jesus began to instruct his disciples that the son of man was destined to suffer many things be killed and on the third day be raised. That's Matthew 16:21, Mark 8:31, Luke 9:22. And then following the transfiguration, Jesus made a second prediction of his death and resurrection to his disciples, he stated that the son of man will be delivered into the hands of men and they will kill him and he will be raised on the third day. That's found in Matthew 17:22-23, Mark 9:30-32, and Luke 9:43-45.

So the disciples with their internal disagreement over which of them should be the greatest was a humiliating disclosure of where their heart was and where their spiritual state was. It clearly demonstrates that they were distant from fulfilling the commandment **hear ye him** from God which had so recently been given to the three of them namely Peter, James and John on the holy

mount. The disciples did not comprehend the nature of the cross Jesus spoke of. Instead they dismissed it from their minds completely. Their focus was fixed on the anticipated honors and rewards that would surely follow when their master established his kingdom. But that was not in his first coming. And so consequently, it was absolutely necessary for Jesus to eliminate right away the self-centered ambition of his disciples from having this kind of attitude going in early on in their walk and following his footsteps. Because if this was not dealt with, they would not be effective ministers of the gospel. They would be stumbling people left and right.

So Jesus teaches a **lesson on humility**. He chooses a small child. He sets him before the disciples. And this child was meant to represent those that they were going to witness to. Humble people, feeble people, people that were of lower class, of the poor, some of them ignorant, and the people that the disciples were in danger of looking down on and pushing away and acting all superior that he Jesus wanted to tackle that right away. And so **ambition**, another way of putting it, another way of putting not being a humble spirit, not being a heart of humility is ambition. Ambition naturally makes people harsh. It makes people look down upon and especially those who aren't strong enough to compete, right? Ambition is I want to be first in competition with people that this is how they were thinking. And Jesus exposes this the sin in their heart. The disciples were required to rid their minds of this selfish plot that they had. They were devising this their own promotion of themselves. Notice they were just talking among themselves. They didn't even bring Jesus in. It was just amongst their little group. Who's going to be the greatest? Who's going to be promoted to the highest position of the kingdom? But only by doing so could they not be loving and gracious and kind in their interactions and serving. If this is all on their mind, forget about the right kind of heart attitude that Jesus was calling them to. And it's a big deal that Christ didn't stop all the arguments. You you'll notice that Jesus didn't say, "Well, stop thinking like that." He didn't say that. You'll see. Instead, instead he goes on actually he states that there are different levels of standing in the kingdom but as it is by the way as it is in the world. But but he rules out that it's not like the world but rather it's it's an **upside down paradigm**. Luke 9:48 getting ahead of myself. "Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me and then here it is for he that is least among you all the same shall be great." You see the paradigm not a high position but the least.

So what is a child defined by Jesus? Not by us but by Jesus. It's the idea of **simple trust**, of love, pure love, and a lack of pretense, giving this false display of of love. Jesus wants them to imitate a child. And so, whoever gets closest to this kind of character, this child we're going to see, is the one that earns the highest place in the kingdom of heaven. So look down with me in this verse in verse 46. Look at the last part of the clause. Which of them should be greatest? So here we're going to see in this text the disciples were guilty of two faults. Let's look at them. Number one, they started arguing amongst themselves of the rewards of victory. Notice this, a victory before they even won a battle. They haven't done anything yet. And yet, they're already talking about rewards, about being victorious, who's going to be the the highest in the kingdom. The second one is they were acting out of **self-interest and rivalry**. They were they were comparing themselves with each other. Disciples were focused on the anticipation of glory, but they failed to fully grasp Jesus often again two times regarding his sufferings. And their master, however, maintain his focus on the cross. And yet, there were a disconnect. They were not thinking about

the cross. They were not thinking about suffering. They immediately went to victory and self-interest.

You see Jesus is not so much concerned about external forces. They were they were fixated on external things. But Jesus is not fixated on external forces. His concern is the **internal conflict**. He's concerned about the heart. Another way of putting it, the selfish part of us, the heart, which is the flesh, that is manifold in three ways that hinders us from following the Lord Jesus in his footsteps. The first of many is personal self, **personal selfishness**, which involves self-importance and comparing oneself again position. And so we see that in verse 46. Now look at verse 47 says, "And Jesus perceiving the thought of their heart took a child and set him by him." So I want you to look at the end of that clause of verse 47, set him by him. The apostles were understood that true greatness in the kingdom of heaven meant closeness to Christ. They they at least knew that that need to be close to Christ. Yet they argued over which of them deserve again the highest rank in the kingdom. And this dispute likely arose from the **envy** of other apostles toward those who had been in Christ on the mount. That's why I brought up the whole part of the transfiguration because it might have just started there with all the other apostles.

And the Lord is aware of this innermost thought that they have in their heart. And he tends to instruct them through a child, a simple child who stands close to him, set him by him. That's that part of the phrase. He set him right next to him, not pointing at him, not not at a distance, but he brought this child right next to him. That's what this phrase is illustrating. So the Lord took this child and stood next to him and identified this child and then he reveals the child's values. Says don't don't just simply look at this child just look about his identity. Look at his value. And you know, one of the things that as adults we are often prone to do is we often dismiss children as insignificant, don't we? Namely, in this way that we we are we see them irrelevant in life's major concerns. A child cannot do any real life major concerns. Isn't that what we typically do as adults? In fact, children are sometimes perceived as hindrances to many people, especially in the world, namely in the world, by focusing on their advancing of their careers before having a family. That that's a a hindrance in many people's lives.

And so this is to set the stage as it were. Jesus sets the stage. We don't. He tells us what he desires again, what his thoughts are, what his intentions are as disciples of Christ. And so look down with me in verse 48. And said unto them, disciples, "Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me, and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me. For he that is least among you all, the same shall be great." So this child, look at that phrase, this child, that's the central point of comparison is this child's **humility** compared to their pride. See, you have pride, but this child has humility. I want you to take notice of him. And what is that humility? I've already kind of gave a little bit of that in verse 47, but here in verse 48, one of the things about children is they don't have **vain imaginations**. They're not thinking of empty thoughts. They just need what they need, what's in front of them. They don't they don't they don't do these kind of things that we as adults do all the time. Just have imaginations, vain imaginations. Another thing, so that's in the mind. Child is very simple in mind. Secondly is the way of a child's heart. What is a child's heart? **No rivalry**. You ever see children just children like small children and just putting them side by side? They're just little cute, right? They're not fighting over each other, right? That's later on in adulthood. We see that. But children, they don't have a sense of rivalry. Number three is the will of a child. A will of a child is you don't see

stubbornness. When they want milk, they want it. They don't they don't talk their way into it. They go right into it. Their will is connected to the very thing that they need.

So it's very simple, no gap. So we look at the mind, the heart, and the will of a child. And he and the Lord Jesus wants disciples to see that. That's that illustration of humility. So the Lord presents the child standing beside him connecting his name to the act of receiving this child and to see him in the child and to see him in the child. By the way, it's not like, oh, you disciples look at him, but he's puts him to the side, this child, to also show him in this picture. Like I said, he wasn't pointing to this child. He was putting him side by side even for a further illustration. And what do we see is that if you **receive this child, you are receiving me**. Think about that. Receiving this child, you're receiving me. That's what he's illustrating as well. And that's the that's the unique thing about Jesus. We would not naturally think about a child being so significant, would we? But yet Jesus holds the significance of this child so important to their situation that he uses this as their for their benefit.

And so he says he who shares this with him receives all those. He's pointing that those that are out there that you're going to receive are going to have this kind of significance. So you don't look down upon those that are like children, but you go after them because they're the ones that Jesus is going after and he sees them. And do we have that conformity? It's a thought to ask yourself. Do you have that same conformity as a child? Because Jesus wants you to know that. He wants you to have that kind of humility. And that's what removes all the pride. And that's how God can work in your lives.

So instead of getting ahead of ourselves like the disciples in the future, what are we doing right now? How are we receiving people today? Are we so concerned about our position in the future kingdom? Or are we more concerned about what it is that God has called us today right now? That's what Jesus wants us to think about. Yes, the glory, but we also have to know what are we doing now and today. That is the mark of what Jesus actually considers as **true greatness** is when you see yourself as the **least**, not as the great. Again an upside down paradigm of this world. And the more we stay connected to the least place, the more God can show us those things that we do not know of where he would take us further in our walk with the Lord in discipleship. It is by looking at the least.

The disciples were far away at this stage. But thank God we can read on and we can know that Peter, James, and John did see themselves at the end as the least. And they even died as martyrs except for John of course, but two of the three died as martyrs and one was in exile. But they saw truly at the end. And it just is a reminder for ourselves that yes, some of us early on in our discipleship may be still stumbling with pride or maybe it's it keeps coming up in your walk with the Lord Jesus Christ discipleship even still years and decades in your discipleship. Just know that that's God wanting to expose or Jesus wants to expose that in your life because that might be the stumbling block that is for your spiritual growth that you're hindered in your growth because you are still dealing with this ongoing sin in your life that God wants to expose and wants you to deal with. And it's namely to remind yourself of a child. Remind yourself of a child. I hope this helps in understanding one of many lessons on discipleship and how God sees what it is true of every follower of Christ and not to be followers of this world, to be different, different for the

cause of Christ and to live for him and to witness for him. May God bless this sermon and may it be applied to your hearts. Amen.

All right. Well,