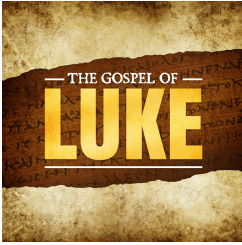


## The Gospel of Luke

### The Heart of Discipleship

## “The Heart to Follow Christ”

**Luke 9:57-58**



**Theme:** A disciple of Christ will follow Him despite the personal cost.

**Introduction:** When Jesus called people to follow Him, it was not a glib, casual, superficial life to which He called them. In our day, many evangelists are guilty of misrepresenting the Christian life as “your best life now,” one of easy church-going whereby you can be who you are and add the benefits of Christ to life as an enrichment. They not only fail to call sinners to repent, but they make it as easy as possible, even stating that all that is necessary is mental assent to the facts of the Gospel: sign this card, raise your hand, come to the altar, pray this prayer and you will have eternal life.

Jesus never attempted to “close the deal” by emotional experiences or praying a prayer. Jesus’ invitations were to a willingness to abandon everything for Him, making it difficult for superficial followers, denouncing them and ultimately driving them away. In our present text, we have an occasion where Jesus puts barriers up in front of people who were superficially willing to follow Him in order to gain temporal advantages, without a sense of eternal priorities. When a person is not willing to deal with sin, and seek the glory of Jesus Christ through their lives, they demonstrate that they are unsaved.

Over the next several verses, Luke presents three men who illustrate characteristics that are commonly among people who claim to follow Christ, but who are kept from doing so by selfish, temporal priorities. My desire as your pastor is to confront these if they exist among you and call you to abandon everything to truly follow Christ and to ***intentionally help others follow Christ*** more as well. Ultimately, the main idea here is that *“a disciple of Jesus Christ will follow Him despite the personal cost.”*

## **I. The Popular Profession of Discipleship – 9:57**

### **A. THE INFLUENCE OF THE CROWD**

1. We noted in our last study in Luke 9 that Jesus was committed to fulfilling the purpose of God for His life and was “determined to go to Jerusalem” – v. 51.
2. Ultimately we understand that the purpose of Christ for coming was to save men from the consequences of their sin, not to destroy them – cp. v. 56.

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3. Now, we see Luke maintaining the “motion” toward Jerusalem by his statement – *“As they were going along the road ...”*
4. At this point, there was a large crowd that had been attracted and were traveling along with Jesus and His Disciples – cp. *Matthew 8:18*.
  - a. The word used by Matthew for “crowds” refers to a milling rabble, a “throng” of people who were aimlessly milling around with no organization.
  - b. People had heard of Jesus’ power and were interested in personally benefitting from His compassion, benevolence, and power – cp. *Matthew 14:34-36*.
5. Jesus was interested in finding those who were willing to come to grips with their personal, spiritual need and not simply on those who were looking for some temporal benefit.
6. Yet, there seems to be a dynamic for being a part of the crowd – that is, to join others who are benefitting from Jesus – to take advantage of whatever is enabling others around you to be “better.”
7. For such people, the point of their faith is not the glory of Christ, but the alleviation of some deficiency in you that will enable you to be a better you.
8. There are those within the professing Christian church who are merely part of a *“crowd”* – participating in Christianity because it is a lifestyle that brings greater ease to life, marital harmony, parenting stability, financial confidence, physical protection, social respectability, community stature, and whatever gain one perceives is available by means of identifying with followers of Christ.
9. Christ is commonly popular indeed within the Church – but not for His glory’s sake, but for whatever benefit we are able to derive from it – cp. *Matthew 12:15; 14:13-14; 19:2; 20:29; 15:8; John 6:66*.

## B. THE IMPULSE TO A COMMITMENT

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1. Notice, that in the euphoria of the experience, having seen the popularity of Jesus, having seen the benefits to those around Him, having seen that authority demonstrated by Jesus, and the superiority of His teaching, we are told that *“someone said to Him, ‘I will follow You wherever You go.’”*
2. Most of us would jump up and down at the prospect of such a “clear” expression of faith – some would get a “decision card” for him to fill out.
3. Matthew gives an additional detail and tells us that this man was a “scribe” – cp. *Matthew 8:19*
4. This was a remarkable “profession of faith” by a significant “catch” – scribes were a highly educated and exclusive band of men who were self-appointed experts – not known for following, but for being followed.
5. He even uses the most intense word for *“follow”* [ἀκολουθέω] – a reference to a permanent, continuous, life-long commitment to moving along behind someone as an adherent or disciple.
6. It is exactly what Jesus had called upon people to do – cp. *Luke 9:59*
7. Nevertheless, we know from Jesus’ response to this man that his “decision” was hollow; that he was not sufficiently counting the cost for following Jesus – he had clearly failed to comprehend what following Jesus meant – cp. *Luke 9:23-24*.

### Application:

- What are the best ways you have found to discern the genuineness of your commitment to Christ?
- Have you experienced an “emotional high” spiritually that failed to result in genuine sanctification?
- In what ways are you hoping your relationship with Christ will benefit you? ... how can you tell if you are being selfish?

## II. The Penetrating Perception in Discipleship – *9:58a*

### A. THE DISCERNMENT OF CHRIST

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1. Jesus clearly knows that this man had made an impulsive statement – that as a scribe, wealthy and powerful, following Christ would cost Him greatly.
2. Jesus has the ability to see through the professions of faith to what is actually in the heart – cp. *John 2:24-25*.
3. It is apparent that this scribe had discerned that Jesus was “something special,” perhaps even the Messiah; and, if he threw in with Jesus, when the Kingdom came, he would be at an incredible advantage over his companions – those who remained hostile toward Jesus.
4. What this man did not consider, is that Jesus knows what the thoughts of a man are – and that fickle, unstable, ego-centric, selfish maneuverings to gain personal advantage in this life are rejected by Jesus.
5. Those who are scrambling after “their best life now,” are people who will use Christ to their own advantage – not over sin, but over the circumstances of life.

### **B. THE DISINTEREST OF CHRIST**

1. Having discerned the real motive of this scribe, Jesus displays complete disinterest in the man’s maneuvering.
2. He realizes that the scribe was too eager, too self-absorbed to be truly interested in anything but his own advantage.
3. It is likely that as He saw the indisputable power of God, the inarguable authority with which Jesus taught, and the infallible wisdom that He displayed and decided that His was the better opportunity for personal & professional advancement.
4. However, Jesus Christ does not have an interest in serving as some administrator of our personal advantages.
5. Rather, He saves us in order that we might bring glory to Him and to the Father – for the sake of His Name!

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6. As a result, Jesus shatters the delusions of grandeur that this scribe possesses in seeking to attach Himself to Jesus and obstructs his presumed path to such greatness.

### Application:

- Why is Jesus not affirming of the scribe's profession of faith?
- What does that tell you about Jesus' responses to such professions?
- What is the difference between a confession of faith and a profession of faith?

## **III. The Personal Price of Discipleship – 9:58b**

### **A. THE ASSESSMENT OF HARDSHIP**

1. Jesus' response to the man, as we have noted, was non-affirming and discouraging.
8. *“And Jesus said to him, ‘The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.’”*
2. The seemingly random reference to *“foxes”* and *“birds”* is actually an ancient proverb that referenced God's faithfulness to the least of the animals – cp. *Matthew 6:26*
3. Although Jesus had regular accommodations because of the generosity of various hosts, He Himself had not place to call His own.
4. Additionally, He constantly knew the rejection of people who did not want Him to “ruin the neighborhood.”
  - a. It began at the Inn – where there was no room and He had to use the manger – *Luke 2:7*.
  - b. It continued as His hometown of Nazareth drove Him out of town, attempting to kill Him – *Luke 4:29*.
  - c. The people in Gadara asked Him to leave – *Luke 8:37*
  - d. The Samaritans wouldn't allow Him to stay in their city – *Luke 9:51-53*
  - e. It continued in His Galilean ministry center – even Capernaum

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rejected Him – [Luke 10:13-16](#)

- f. Ultimately, the entire nation of Israel rejected Him by calling for His crucifixion – [Luke 23:20-24](#)
  - g. It is ironic, but for an entirely different reason, Jesus head would not even rest in the tomb – *it would expel Him through the resurrection!*
5. Thus, Jesus is saying that foxes & birds have a more certain “home” than Jesus did – the *“Son of Man”*
- a. It is an affirmation of His deity – [Matthew 16:13-17](#)
  - b. It includes His ability to forgive sins – [Matthew 9:6](#)
  - c. It references His purpose – [Matthew 20:28](#)
  - d. It anticipates God’s favor – [Matthew 17:22-23; 20:18-19](#)
  - e. It certifies His return for judgment – [Matthew 24:27-31](#).

## **B. THE APPEAL FOR HUMILITY**

- 1. The point of this is the communicate the level of commitment that those who follow Him must possess.
- 2. The hardship and difficulty that those who follow Jesus Christ were being called upon to endure meant that only those who are in it for the glory of Christ would endure.
- 3. Those who were interested in self-promotion or ease of life would not survive – cp. [Luke 8:13](#)
- 4. Jesus refused to “sugarcoat” the Gospel – warning those who would follow Him that theirs would be a life of hardship – cp. [Matthew 10:16-22; 2 Timothy 3:12; Hebrews 11:35-38](#)
- 5. The scribe apparently was not willing to humble Himself in order to glorify Christ Jesus because he disappears from the story.
- 6. A disciple is not one who adds Christ to one’s life in order to make life better; he is one who decides to forfeit his life in

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order to bring glory to Jesus Christ at whatever cost it takes  
—.

**APPLICATION:**

- What would it mean for you to “deny yourself” and follow Christ?
- Should we expect to have it better than our Master? Why or Why not?
- Is self-denial a condition *for* or a condition *of* discipleship?