**What Are You Prepared to Do?**

**Luke 9:18-27**

The **four-fold progressive stages** in the life of a man who chooses to follow Jesus.

1. **Stage 1:** If you want to follow Jesus, then you must be willing **to confess him publicly**. **Verses 18-20**.
2. The first truth Jesus conveying to the Twelve: The people really didn’t understand who He is. So, who is Jesus?
3. He is the long-awaited Messiah prophesied all throughout the OT, **The Anointed One,** who would be sent by God to save His people from their sins.
4. The OT foretold of a **Suffering Servant** who would die a sinner’s death and bear the wrath and punishment of God for us—in our place—as the Lamb of God.
5. The cross was God’s plan from the very beginning.

**1 Peter 1:18-20** *For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake*.

1. Jesus then turns to the Twelve and explains the Gospel: **Verses 21-22**.
* The reason he warned them NOT to tell anyone at this point, was simply because Jesus was on **a divine time schedule**.
* Why did he refer to himself as The Son of Man? Because as a man he had to live a perfect life in order to qualify as the **perfect Lamb**. As the perfect Lamb, he would be an **acceptable sacrifice** to God, the Father. Then he could bear our condemnation, our guilt and our shame and receive God’s just punishment instead of you and me having to receive it.
* Before he endured the cross, the Messiah had to, according to Scripture, be truly humiliated, bearing public shame, that included nakedness, mocking, ridicule and brutality at the hands of wicked brutal soldiers.
* At this point in Jesus’ ministry, he begins to turn his face toward the cross, as break the news slowly to his disciples that pain, suffering and death all await him.
1. **Stage 2:** Following Jesus is a **total commitment** which entails **three aspects**: **Verse 23**.
2. **Deny!** You must be willing to **turn away** from your old way of life.
3. **Take up!** Take up **your cross!**

Commentator and theologian **William Hendriksen** says,

*The underlying figure is that of a condemned man who is forced to take up and carry his own cross to the place of execution. However, what the convict does under duress,* ***the disciple of Jesus does willingly****. He voluntarily and decisively accepts the pain, shame, and persecution that is going to be his particular—note: his, not someone else’s—lot because of his loyalty to Christ and his cause. Luke even retained Jesus’ insistence on making the taking up of one’s cross a daily assignment.*

1. **Follow!** You must **follow Jesus all the way to the end of your life**. This means to **trust** and **obey** no matter the cost.

**Jim Elliott’s** journal from the 1950’s:

“God, I pray Thee, light these idle sticks of my life and may I burn for Thee. **Consume my life**, my God, for it is Thine. I seek not a long life, but a full one, like you, Lord Jesus.”

1. What we see in America today is a watered-down version of biblical Christianity. In fact, it is not really Christianity at all.

**J.C. Ryle** was an evangelical Anglican bishop in Liverpool England. He lived from 1816 to 1900. That was over 120 years ago. Here is how he described the Christianity of his day:

“*There is a common worldly kind of Christianity in this day, which many have, and think have enough—a cheap Christianity which offends nobody, and requires no sacrifice—and which costs nothing, and is worth nothing*.”

1. **What are you prepared to do?**
2. Following Jesus is **costl**y; however, as the late **Darlene Rose** said, “*The* ***compensations*** *far outweigh the costs*!” So, what are the **compensations?**
3. **Stage 3:** The **compensations** **far outweigh** the costs!Verses 24-25.
4. What are the compensations? Living for Christ by worshiping him in all that you do, actually **feeds your soul**. Every time you die to self, and live for Christ, your soul is both **satisfied** and **strengthened**.
5. Gradually, over the course of time, by trusting and obeying God’s Word…
6. You become like that stationary lighthouse out in the rough ocean that can withstand the battering of the wind and waves.
7. You become like a wise man who built his house on the rock. When the rain comes and the streams rise and the winds blow and beat upon you, you are still standing.
8. You become like a tree planted by a stream of living water. (**Psalm 1** is the picture of this man!)
9. **Stage 4:** Those who choose to follow Christ in this life **will share in the coming glory!** Verse 25.

**\*\*** A final word from Paul found in **Philippians 3:10-11:**

*I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain the resurrection from the dead*.

**What are you prepared to do?**