

Now Chapter 9 has several different scenes going on and not just one continuous story ... We see Jesus calling the 12 together and empowering them to cast out demons and to heal diseases ...

Then we see that Herod is confused by all that he is hearing about Jesus ... some people are thinking that John the Baptist, whom Herod had beheaded, had been raised from the dead, or that Elijah had returned, or something strange ... and Herod didn't know *what* was going on! Then some time went by because the 12 return after being sent out and report to Jesus what had happened ... then Jesus works miracles and teaches some more and then feeds the 5000. Then we see Jesus praying alone, but the disciples were with Him (just not praying with Him), and Jesus asks them who people think He is ... and Peter makes his bold statement: You are the Christ of GOD! And IMMEDIATELY Jesus tells them about how much He is going to suffer, even death, but that He would be raised again!

Then He turns to everyone around Him and says this:

Luke 9:23-27 "23 And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. 25 For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? 26 For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. 27 But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."

One of the things that is SO INTERESTING is that we don't hear preaching and invitations like this anymore ... it's not palatable.

I was talking with Will earlier this week and then later with Gavin about this very thing ... where Jesus says things that would cause MOST people to walk out of churches. Things like:

Matthew 5:11 "God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers."

- Wait Jesus! People are going to do *W H A T* to us because we follow you?

Matthew 10:22 "and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved."

- What!?! Hated??? I thought that if I became a good person by following you; If I treated people right and I did the right things then people would LIKE ME ... I mean, I'm being GOOD and doing RIGHT ... but you say, they will hate me!?! Why?

John 15:18 "If the world hates you, understand that it hated Me first."

Matthew 10:25 "It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household."

- Oh, I see. People called you names and lied about you ... so I should know up front that people will call *ME* names and lie about *ME* if I'm following after you.

- If you were betrayed by people close to you ... then I should know that “I” could be betrayed by people close to me!
- If people misunderstood You ... then people will misunderstand me.
- Wow ... No wonder so many people walked away Jesus even when He was speaking and doing right. They counted the cost and thought that it was too much.

See, one of the mistakes that we have made in America is that we have tried to make the door and the road so wide that everyone can feel comfortable on it. And because of that we have people who are claiming to be followers of Jesus and they make the rest of us look bad.

Later in this chapter we meet 3 people who say they want to follow Jesus ... look at what He says to them:

Luke 9:57-62 *“57 As they were going along the road, someone said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” 58 And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” 59 To another he said, “Follow me.” But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” 60 And Jesus said to him, “Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.” 61 Yet another said, “I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home.” 62 Jesus said to him, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”*

- Do you notice how Jesus doesn't make this simple and easy??

I want you guys to understand ... Jesus does not CALL YOU to an easy and comfortable life. He DOES NOT promise you that things will go well with you and that everything will work out ... He actually promises the opposite.

Let's continue in this verse:

- **What does it mean to “come after” Jesus?**
 - It means “to follow behind”. It means to follow His lead.
 - Here is how different translations translate this verse:
 - *“Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.” **NIV***
 - *“Then he said to the crowd, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily, and follow me.” **NLT***
 - *“Then he said to them all, “If anyone wants to follow after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me.” **CSB***
 - *“Then Jesus said to all the people: If any of you want to be my followers, you must forget about yourself. You must take up your cross every day and follow me.” **CEB Contemporary English Version***
 - It seems pretty clear what Jesus is saying ...

Now look at what He says:

Luke 9:23 *“And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”*

Now there are 3 statements here that I want us to talk about.

1. *“Let him deny himself...”*

a. What is Jesus talking about here?

- i. In context we can see clearly from vs. 24-26 He is talking about losing the pursuit of our “own” life ... and trading it for the sacrificial life that He calls us to!
- ii. We have to deny ourselves and embrace Christ’s life and Words
- iii. No one can come after Jesus if they are unwilling to deny themselves

2. *“...take up his cross daily...”*

a. What do you think He means here?

- i. We’ve kind of glamorized cross this side of the crucifixion.
- ii. But when Jesus said this it meant a willingness to die. A willingness to be humiliated in front of others. A willingness to suffer.
- iii. And anyone who does not willingly embrace whatever cost that brings is not His disciple.
- iv. They can go to plenty of churches that will make them feel good about themselves ... but Jesus’ standard could not be any clearer and they will come like we see in

1. **Matthew 7:21-23** *“21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ 23 And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’”*

- b. As followers of Jesus, GOD has given us INCREDIBLE promises and assurances! But He also has a high price. It costs our life.

3. *“...follow Me.”*

a. If I asked you what it means to be a follower of Jesus, what would you tell me?

- i. We do things His way; We seek to imitate Him and learn from Him.
- ii. If you were to follow Adam and Mary in their health and fitness lifestyle then you would count calories like they did; you would prioritize exercise like they did; you would restrict yourself with many foods to reach your goal. Why? Because it worked for them and you are following after them

...

- iii. To follow someone means “to go their way” in whatever capacity you are following them. And with Jesus we are called to follow Him in His life; to follow Him in His death ... and promised that we will follow Him in His resurrection!

Let's look at this verse one last time before we move on:

Luke 9:23 "And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."

We also see some of this over in Luke 14

Luke 14:25-33 "25 Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, 26 "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. 27 Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. 28 For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30 saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' 31 Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. 33 So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple."

Ok so let's talk about this ... because there are sincere people who get caught up in this passage because Jesus used the word "hate".

Now we know that the Bible, Old and New Testament, calls for the honoring of one's parents, the love towards a spouse, and the care of their children.

We know that Jesus says that we are going to BE KNOWN by our love and even calls us to love our enemies ... and yet He says this here.

So what are we to think of this, because Jesus says it matters so much that without doing this, you and I, and everyone else, CANNOT be His disciple? So this matters greatly ...

1. Many Jewish teachers spoke with hyperbolic speech. Exaggerated speech that grabbed the attention of those listening. It was very popular in this time ... so that's 1 thing to understand!
2. Part of learning to interpret your Bibles correctly is learning to let Scripture interpret Scripture.
 - a. In other words ... if there is a question about a passage, then you look for other passages that speak of the same thing to see if they make anything more clear.
 - b. Besides all the commands in scripture for us to love and honor our family and even our enemies, there is another passage that is almost identical to this one ... and it's found in **Matthew 10:34-39** "34 "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. 36 And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. 37 Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy

of me. 38 And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”

- i. Jesus was making it clear that when these divisions came about, that we were to choose Him. Our allegiance, devotion, and love for Him was to BE MORE THAN our allegiance, devotion, and love for our sisters, parents, our children ... He was to be first or we weren't worthy.
3. So here we see Matthew recalling this teaching as an issue of who you were more devoted to and loved ... Luke records it in the hyperbolic speech that Jesus probably used at times to gain the attention of His hearers.

So that's that ... so when you see this passage don't let it hang you up. It's important that you understand what He meant AND THAT YOU SEE the cost involved in following Him!

He says if we love anyone more than Him ... we cannot be His disciples. Think about that for a moment...

Discipleship demands sacrifice, and Jesus never hid that cost...

Consider these questions:

- Are you willing to follow Jesus if it means losing some of your closest friends?
- Are you willing to follow Jesus if it means separation from your family?
- Are you willing to follow Jesus if it means losing your reputation?
- Are you willing to follow Jesus if it means losing your job?
- Are you willing to follow Jesus if it means losing your life?

If we can't say yes to these things, then we cannot be His disciple.

Think about how SAD that made the rich young ruler ... he knew Jesus could save him, but he was unwilling to make that kind of sacrifice and Jesus let him walk away SAD even though it says He loved him. (Matt.19, Luke 18, **Mark 10**)

If we love others more than Him we CANNOT be His disciples ...

If we don't bear our own cross and follow after Him we CANNOT be His disciples ...

- What if I just want to keep it simple and just be a good person without all of that?
- That sounds like the rich young ruler and others ... we must count the cost and be willing to sacrifice ALL for His sake!

In some places of the world, these consequences are reality. Following Jesus doesn't necessarily mean all these things will happen to you, but are you willing to follow Him if it does ... to take up your cross every day and follow Him? If there comes a point in your life where you are faced with a choice—Jesus or the comforts of this life—what's easy and what you want - which will you choose?

You see, commitment to Christ means taking up our cross daily, giving up our hopes, dreams, possessions, even our very life if need be for the cause of Christ. Only if we willingly take up our cross are we His disciples (Luke 14:27).

Luke at the end of His statement in **Luke 14:28-33** *“28 For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30 saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ 31 Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. 33 So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.”*

- Count the cost
- Sit down first and figure out if you are willing to suffer for His sake ... because as He says in vs.33
 - *“So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.”*

Luke 14:15-21 *“15 When one of those who reclined at table with him heard these things, he said to him, ‘Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!’ 16 But he said to him, ‘A man once gave a great banquet and invited many. 17 And at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’ 18 But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.’ 19 And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.’ 20 And another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’ 21 So the servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.’ “*

See, we wonder why the life and love of the early church was so different than ours! Maybe it has something to do with this ... they were truly committed to Christ and His Kingdom ... and we have been committed more to ourselves and Christ and His Kingdom when it's convenient and what we want.

Tonight, maybe this is the first that passages like this has been brought to your attention. Whether it is or not, I want to invite each of you to lose yourselves in order to find Christ. To embrace suffering and sacrifice for Christ's sake ... **Talk about how worth it He is!**