



Let's start with these questions this week -

What is the most difficult physical feat you have attempted?

Why did you do it?

How did it turn out?

Did you have to train for it or was it a circumstance that presented itself and you just had to figure it out?

Read this week's text - 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."*

The conditions of being a disciple - v. 23

In this verse Jesus uses an if, then statement which is common in math problems. So this is an equation that Jesus proposes. If anyone would come after Christ, then deny self, take up cross daily, and follow Him.

Ask, Why would Jesus start with denying self? (Our first and most difficult

The "this doesn't make sense" statement of Jesus - v. 24

For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

This is when conventional wisdom is out, counterintuitive is in - lose your life for His sake.

What do you think this means? Does Jesus require us to die in order to live?

This is crazy talk by the world's standard. Who does this kind of stuff? Fellow disciples do not think this is crazy however. We have to remember to encourage one another to stay "crazy".

This is not just a noble cause but it begins to look like Brandt Jean to Amber Guyger - the video that has gone viral of the Dallas police officer and the man she killed brother. If you have not seen this you can find it here - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NkoE\\_GQsbNA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NkoE_GQsbNA) - here he is demonstrating that which only comes through Christ.

The profits and gains and losses and forfeiture v. 25

There are costs to us as we choose to be a disciple of Christ. It will cost us more than we can ever imagine.

The reality of choosing the world over being a disciple v. 26

If we choose to be ashamed of Christ then we will not receive His ultimate grace and forgiveness. Gaining the whole world and losing your own soul is a losing proposition.

The "what does that mean Jesus?" statement - v. 27 - there are many differing views about this verse. Some think he may have been referring to Judas and v. 25 deals with the profits and gains/ losses and forfeiture. There are others who say He is referring to Jerusalem and things to happen there related to

His death and resurrection and Others tend to lean towards Jesus doing a little foreshadowing of what is to come next in the text - the transfiguration. Michael will preach on that this next Sunday.

So, How do you follow Jesus? Deny yourself and pick up your cross daily and then follow. (These are intentional decisions followed by actions.)

1. Deny yourself - This is the macro decision. Who really denies him/herself of what they want? People will think you are crazy. People will call you crazy.

What is the craziest thing you have ever done that you can actually talk about? Did it involve you indulging or denying yourself?

2. Pick up your cross daily - These are the micro decisions

Crosses are never devoid of suffering. The plan and the course are seldom what you think. Spending time in His Word to discover Who He is and as a result, who we are in Him. Joining in with others - community groups for encouragement. Spending time in prayer to discover more about Him. These are just some of the spiritual disciplines we participate in to discover more of Christ.

**This is important** - You and I are able to do this because He did it for us. It does not make us the Savior. He did it alone for us so we don't have to do it alone. Christ denied Himself in the Garden, He intentionally submitted to the will of the Father, took a literal cross and died. Everything that Jesus demands of His disciples is something He has already done.

3. Follow Christ

There really are no short cuts. He determines the course we take. Our role is to choose to trust Him. This being a disciple is not for the faint of heart. Running the race of faith on the course that Jesus has run before us feels like death at times. The goal is to bring Him glory because of His great love and because He is worthy. "Well done, good and faithful servant".

Be sensitive to those who may need to reengage the "race". Encourage one another to continually deny our own selfish, sinful pride. Remind one another that taking up the cross daily will involve hardship and suffering and that we do not have to endure this alone. Choose to follow Him. It is the way of a disciple.

Encourage your group to pray for one another this week.