

Leaving Behind Old Ways

Jesus tells us, “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few,” (Matthew 7:13-14).

What is this *narrow* way that Christ offers to us? Let’s take a look at Luke 9:18-26 to understand God’s plan for our lives.



18 Now it happened that as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him. And he asked them, “Who do the crowds say that I am?” 19 And they answered, “John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen.” 20 Then he said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” And Peter answered, “The **Christ** of God.”

21 And he strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, 22 saying, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”

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.” (Luke 9:18-26)

Observations

Peter identified Jesus as the “Christ” of God, or the Messiah. This is a term that means “anointed” of God. It was a highly politically charged word with the understanding that Jesus would take the Roman oppressors by force.

Jesus was going to set the captives free, but not in the way they assumed. The disciples misunderstood who their enemy was!

Why did Jesus have to suffer many things and be rejected by the leaders of Israel? Why did he have to die and be raised?

1) Because of our _____

2) Because of God’s _____

- Eph 2:4-5
- Psalm 103:17

What is our response to Christ’s great love?

Lose my _____ for his sake.

Life = _____

Deny yourself - Self-less attitude
Take up your cross - Persecution
Follow Jesus - “I want to go with you”

Verse for Memory: “If anyone would come after me, let them deny themselves, take up their cross every day and follow me.”



Your Notes *what God is saying to you:*

Application *for abundant living:*

Am I living for the approval of God? Do I feel like I have to earn God's love?
Or am I living out of response to God's great love toward me?

Take a few moments each morning to pray to God this prayer of, "Lord - I deny myself, I take up my cross today, and I follow Jesus. Whatever attitudes of my heart or thoughts of my mind that are not of Christ, may they be nailed to the cross."

Further Study *for a deeper understanding:*

Read Philippians 2:1-11.

Verses 5-11 are called the "Christ Hymn." It is believed that this was a hymn that first century Christians sang as part of their worship practice.

What does it mean that Jesus is in "the form of God?"

What can we learn from this passage about Christ's obedience to the Father?

How could this obedience of Christ be demonstrated in my life, my family, my marriage?

How might this Christ Hymn help a church that suffers from in-fighting and disunity?

Questions *from Small Group Leaders:*

What is one place you wouldn't want to go? Why?

Read verses 24 and 25 and restate them in your own words. How do these verses change how we approach our daily lives?

Why is it so difficult to completely surrender ourselves to Jesus? What can we do to be submissive to him?

What great reward do we experience as we completely surrender to Jesus - now and eternally? How does this reward make you feel?