

Luke 9: 18-27 (New International Version, ©2011)

¹⁸ Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, “Who do the crowds say I am?”

¹⁹ They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life.”

²⁰ “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

Peter answered, “God’s Messiah.”

²¹ Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone. ²² And he said, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.”

²³ Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. ²⁵ What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self? ²⁶ Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

²⁷ “Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God.”

OASIS: Radical Commitment, Luke 9:18-27

Preface: Welcome to our 1st Bible study in our eight sermon series “Answering the Radical Call of Christ.” Each study will explore aspects of Jesus’ call to radical living. These challenges are the keys to personal discipleship and to “living wide,” whether it be via influencing friends, launching campuses, revitalizing ministry or building strategic partnerships. The sermons will be complemented by three LIFE Community studies, which use one of the same biblical texts and will help your LC go deeper in personal understanding and application.

Possible starter question: Let’s identify a few people that we think are “radical Christians.” Who comes to mind? What is it about that person that strikes you as radical?

Transitional comment: Today’s passage is definitely one of the more “extreme” challenges that Jesus issues. It is for “whoever wants to be (his) disciple.” It has a “do or die” character. As we grapple with this passage, we may find that it causes us to reconsider whether we really want to be a Christian, or alternatively (hopefully) to redefine and radicalize our discipleship. We dare you!

(Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead your study, if you haven’t already prayed.)

Let’s listen while this passage is read aloud: Who would like to read this aloud for us?

Personal time to re-read: Take several minutes (2-3) to read this again on your own. What words and ideas are repeated or similar? What are some key contrasts that are explicit or implied? What is your sense for the flow of this passage?

Overview together: O What repeated or similar words and ideas that you noticed? Any key contrasts?

First Section (vv. 18-20):

O (v. 18) What does Luke, the writer, tell us about the context (for the discussion that follows)?

I (v. 18b) The question Jesus asks is pretty straight-forward. What is the question? Why do you think Jesus asks it?

O (v. 19) What are some of the answers to that question that the people/crowds have offered?

I What do we learn from their answers?

O (v. 20) Now Jesus changes the question. In what ways is Peter’s answer qualitatively different?

Second Section (vv. 21-22):

I (v. 21) In telling his disciples “not to tell this” to anyone, Jesus is basically acknowledging the true insight of Peter. But for what reasons, might you imagine, does Jesus not want that insight publicized? Any ideas?

O (v. 22) What does Jesus explain will happen to the “Son of Man”?

(n.b. *Son of Man*—this is the ambiguous phrase Jesus uses most often about himself—and it means either a typical human being or someone of great authority; also an OT phrase with Messianic connotations; see Daniel 7:13-14)

I If you had been a Jew at the time of Jesus, you likely would have been hoping for a Messiah who would be a political ruler or a military leader. How might you have felt about this radically different notion?

Third Section (vv. 23-27):

O (v. 23) What are the crucial ingredients to be a disciple of Jesus?

I Look at each of the 3 ingredients. For each one, take a couple minutes to talk about what each means and what it might “look like” in our modern lives/lifestyles.

A Maybe several people might mention the degree to which he/she effectively integrates these in her/his life. With which are you struggling? Or making some progress?

O What insight does v. 24 add?

I What does I mean or look like “to lose one’s life for Jesus”?

O What is the comparison and choice that Jesus wants us all to consider?

A What is your response to this “calculating question”: What good is it...?

O What does Jesus assert and imply in v. 26?

(n.b. Remember that in v. 21 Jesus explained that the Son of Man will be killed and then raised to life. Now Jesus adds that in the future the Son of Man will also come in his glory and in the glory of the Gather and of the holy angels, which is part of the Daniel 7 prophecy.)

O In v. 27, what assuring things does Jesus say to the listeners?

(n.b. It is unclear as to the timing of “before they see the kingdom of God.” It is unlikely it refers to the end of the world. More likely this refers to either the beginning of the church in Acts, or someone’s aligning her/his mission with Christ’s, or even the subsequent event of the transfiguration (Lk. 9:28-36).

Concluding conversation:

I How is this a sort of “life and death” passage?

A What are the biggest challenges for you?

A How can we encourage and assist one another in our deepest desire to be Jesus’ disciple?

Prayer together: Pray...for deepening commitment to be the kind of disciple who effectively denies, carries and follows; and for faith to wisely and radically deal with all compromises.

Text notes (you can access biblical texts via www.Biblegateway.com)

- a. BIG idea: Jesus dares us to follow him whole-heartedly.
- b. Key verse: Luke 9:23: “Whoever wants to be my disciples must deny...take up...and follow me.”
- c. KEY: O = Observation; I = Interpretation; A = Application (or C = Challenge)

Advice to study leaders:

- d. Complement OIA questions with “process questions” (what else? what more? what do others think?).
- e. Determine the core questions you’ll ask (know which ones to skip if pressed for time).
- f. Always reword questions in words that are comfortable for you (and, if the question doesn’t make sense to you, then discard it.) You want to “own” each question.
- g. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don’t rush people but encourage their participation. And avoid answering your own questions!
- h. Timing/pacing: allocate your time and move forward gently, with a steady pace.
- i. Application: Pace the study to conclude with “difference making” application.
- j. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into “teaching,” rather than facilitating. It can cause people to feel distracted or de-powered.
- k. I recommend the 1 vol. New Bible Commentary, Revised (21st Century ed, IVP). Well worth \$35.