

RESTORE
CALL TO SURRENDER

Friday, May 22

Reading: Luke 9:18-26

Luke 9:23 *Then He said to them all: "Whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow Me.*

The night before His crucifixion, Jesus gave us an example of surrendering to the Father's will when He prayed, "Not My will, but Yours be done" (Luke 22:42). Despite the pain that lay before Him and the agony of bearing the sins of the world, Jesus willingly submitted Himself to the Father's will. And He calls us to do the same.

Too many Christians treat salvation as merely a "Get out of Hell Free" card. They think they can live any way they please and still be "right with God." This attitude is an indication that someone does not really understand what salvation is all about. As Vince Antonucci put it: "Becoming a Christian is not about just believing in God. It's about surrendering your life to God...God isn't looking for you to add Him to your life. That will never work. God is looking for you to surrender your life to Him. That's the only way life will ever work."¹

In Luke 9:23, Jesus tells us that His followers must deny themselves. This is the opposite of what our culture teaches us. They say it is all about you! Have it your way! You deserve a break today! This is the opposite of Jesus' command. In his book *Not a Fan*, Pastor Kyle Idleman describes the differences between a true follower of Jesus and what he calls a 'fan.'

"One way fans try to follow Jesus without denying themselves is by compartmentalizing the areas of their lives they don't want Him to have access to. They try and negotiate the terms of the deal. 'I'll follow Jesus, but I'm not going to sell my possessions. Don't ask me to forgive the people who hurt me; they don't deserve it. Don't ask me to save sex for marriage; I can't help my desire. Don't ask me to give a percentage of my money; I worked hard for that cash' ...They follow Jesus, just not with every area of their lives."²

There are no exception clauses to following Jesus. He wants every part of us – body, soul, spirit, and mind. You can't follow Jesus and still have it your way in certain areas. This is not a one-time decision. It is a daily commitment. Jesus said to "take up [your] cross daily and follow Me." Jesus had just informed His disciples for the first time that He was going to be rejected and killed. And He calls us to follow in His steps.

"My cross to bear" has come to refer to "a challenging situation or responsibility [that] has been put on us against our will."³ But for a child of God to "take up our cross" is a daily choice to die to our wants and desires and live for Christ. The Apostle Paul put it this way: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

The world says that happiness comes from indulging ourselves; by getting OUR wants and desires fulfilled. But as Pastor Idleman reminds us: "...when we die to ourselves and completely surrender to Him...we discover true life. In a twist of irony, we find that giving up our lives gives us the life we so desperately wanted all along."⁴

¹ Vince Antonucci. *Restore*, p 137

² Kyle Idleman. *Not a Fan*, p. 146

³ Idleman, 168

⁴ Idleman, 171