

# LUKE I THE WAY OF THE CROSS

Text: Luke 9:23–27

*Losing Your Life to Save It*

—Bill Turner

## 1. Jesus Knew What Crucifixion Meant—And what the Way of the Cross Would Cost

- Around the time Jesus was a young boy of about eleven years of age, there was a rebellion against Rome led by a rebel leader called Judas the Galilaean.
- He had raided the royal Roman armoury at Sepphoris, which was only four miles from Nazareth. The Roman vengeance was swift and sudden.
- Sepphoris was burned to the ground; its inhabitants were sold into slavery; and 2,000 of the rebels were crucified on crosses which were set in lines along the roadside as a dreadful warning to anyone who dared to defy Rome<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Jesus knows what awaits Him—>The way to Heaven Goes Through Golgotha

The Way to Glory Goes Through Agony > The Crown of Life requires the Cross of Christ

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## I. THE WAY OF THE CROSS

### A. SELF-DENIAL...

*‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself...’*

#### 1. He Did NOT Say Hate Yourself: To ‘Deny Yourself’—Doesn’t Mean Hate Yourself

- But in our Self-Centered Culture—Denying yourself is Equated w/ Hating Yourself!
- Self-Denial sounds so foreign because We live in a Culture of self-worship, Self-importance, Self-Promotion, Self-Righteousness...

#### 2. He Did Not Say to Deny this or that Luxury—but Deny YOUR SELF

- **SELF-WILL:** The Desire to Be Above Obedience
- **SELF-INTEREST:** The Desire to be Above Responsibility
- **SELF-SUFFICIENCY:** The Desire to be Above Need for God
- **SELF-IMPORTANCE:** The Desire to Be Above Others

“Sin has four characteristics: self-sufficiency instead of faith; self-will instead of submission; self-seeking instead of benevolence; self-righteousness instead of humility” (E. Paul Hovey).

#### 3. **Agape is Self-Sacrificing Love— therefore impossible without Self-Denial**

- Self-Denial Means: Set Aside Your Obsession with SELF
- Your Inflated Self-importance / Self-Gratification / Self-Absorption / Selfish Ambition

#### 4. **In Fact—True Self-Denial is actually UNCONSCIOUS of SELF.**

- When Moses came down from Mt Sinai after being with God, he didn’t know that his face was glowing...
- Later the Hebrew definition for humility: “does not know that it’s face shines”

**"Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself less." – C.S. Lewis**

“Look for Christ and you will get Him and with Him everything else, look for your ‘self’ and you will only get hatred, loneliness, despair, ruin.” –C.S Lewis

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<sup>1</sup> William Barclay, The Gospel of Luke

## **B. CARRYING YOUR CROSS...**

***'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily'***

### **1. What Does This Mean?**

- a) When a man from one of the local villages took up a cross and went off with a small band of Roman soldiers, he was on a one-way journey—He would not be back.

### **2. Taking up Your cross is not only complete self-denial...**

**But Also TOTAL COMMITMENT TO CHRIST**

### **3. We Usually Refer to This as Hardships: 'Well, This is My Cross to Bear'**

### **4. This isn't Just Hardship—This is CRUCIFIXION!**

### **5. This is DYING to SELF and to SIN (Galatians 2:20)**

### **6. He Died for Us—So Now We Live For Him**

### **7. But not just one time at Baptism—We Take Up Our Cross Daily**

## **C. FOLLOWING JESUS**

***'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.'***

### **1. To Follow Jesus—is to Be a Disciple of Christ—a Christian**

- a) The word Disciple means: learner and follower.
- b) It Means to Obey Him, Learn From Him and Walk with Him

### **2. To Deny Yourself—rather than Avenging Yourself**

**To Honor God—instead of Honoring Yourself**

**—Salvation is God's gift to us because Jesus died for us on the cross.**

**Following Jesus is our gift to Him as we take up our cross,  
die to self, and follow Him even unto the end of the world.**

## **D. LOSING YOUR LIFE TO SAVE IT**

***THIS IS A PARADOX: To Save Your Life—You Must Lose it?***

***For whoever desires to save his life will lose it,  
but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.***

### **1. JESUS WAS EXPLAINING THE ESSENCE OF SELF-DENIAL**

- a) **The Least will be the Greatest...**
- b) **The First will be Last — and the Last Will Be First**
- c) **If You Humble Yourself You'll Be Exalted—Exalt Yourself You'll Be Humbled**

### **2. TRANSCENDENT TRUTH IS BEYOND YOU—IT DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM YOU—THEREFORE YOU MUST LOOK BEYOND YOU TO SEE IT!**

- a) **TRUTH Not a Social Construct / not a Psychological Construct**
- b) **Truth is From God—NOT From Your Inner Self**
- c) **Therefore You Must Get OVER Yourself—to See it and Accept it**

### **3. So If Our Focus Can Reach NO HIGHER Than Our Own SELF—**

**—How Can We Receive the Wisdom that is From ABOVE!**

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## II. THE INCREDIBLE WORTH OF YOUR SOUL

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### A. WHAT WOULD IT PROFIT A MAN TO GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD, BUT LOOSE HIS OWN SOUL?

1. Here is another Paradox—If You Didn't Look Beyond Your SELF...  
You Would NOT See the ETERNAL Value of Your Soul!
2. NEWSPAPERS Called Him the Unluckiest Man in the World
  - a) Ronald Wayne was the 3rd partner who started a computer in a garage in Palo Alto with two young electronic nerds named Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak
  - b) But the Stress and Risk and worry caused him to sell his shares back for \$800
  - c) If He Had Kept that Stock, He Would be worth \$950 BILLION Dollars!  
making him one of the richest men in the world!
  - d) He ended up working for an electronics company until he retired in 1999
  - e) But his house was broken into and his entire life savings was stolen from a safe.
  - f) He's been Asked if he had any regrets over it—he said NO, if he had  
NOT left APPLE, "he probably would've been the richest man in the cemetery."
  - g) The sad Irony is that Steve Jobs became the richest man in the cemetery

### B. WHAT WILL A PERSON GIVE IN EXCHANGE FOR THEIR SOUL?

1. Have you ever went to an estate sale or moving sale where they are selling everything because the owner died?
2. It's kind of weird walking through tables and piles of possessions collected over a lifetime of someone who died and left it all behind
3. Even if a person lived a Good life and then suffered for the last 20 yrs...
  - a) We might think that's not fair—why did I have to suffer 20 yrs?!
  - b) But lets re-calibrate that in terms of eternity...
  - c) Whatever suffering you endure in this life will be a speck in eternity...
  - d) And the longer eternity lasts the smaller the speck will be,
  - e) until whatever your complaining about now will eventually be engulfed in eternity—  
—it will be forgotten!
4. What is 20 years of suffering compared to an eternity of suffering?

### C. YOUR SOUL IS SO INCREDIBLY VALUABLE THAT ALL THE MONEY IN WORLD COULD NOT REDEEM IT

1. All the Diamond mines of Africa... all the Gold of S. America...
2. all the gems and rare earth metals and oil and \$ of all the banks in world
3. All the Wealth of the World Cannot Redeem One Soul—  
—only the blood of Jesus can do that.
4. You were not redeemed with gold and silver or traditions of men
5. You were redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus (1 Peter 1:18–19)

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### III. THE ETERNAL DANGER OF BEING ASHAMED OF CHRIST

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#### A. THE TRAGEDY OF BEING ASHAMED OF CHRIST

##### 1. Do We Care More About the Praise of Men than the Word of God?

- a) To be ashamed of His WORD—is to be ashamed of CHRIST HIMSELF
- b) To Be Ashamed of the Church of Christ—is to be Ashamed of Christ Who Died for it
- c) To Be Ashamed of the Cross of Christ—is to be Ashamed of the Sacrifice of Christ

##### 2. The Shame of the cross can cause some to change the gospel...

- a) into something softer and easier...
- b) Something Different than Self-Denial or Carrying a Cross!
- c) This FAKE Gospel can be summarized as:

*“A God without wrath, brought men without sin, into a kingdom without judgement, through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross.”*  
—H. Richard Niebuhr

##### 3. Paul: I am NOT Ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God for salvation...for in IT the righteousness of God is revealed! (Rom 1:18)

#### B. JESUS ENDURED THE SHAME OF THE CROSS

##### 1. Crucifixion was a horrible form of execution...

But it was also a shameful way to die—

- 2. Death is a complete Humiliation—but death by Crucifixion was so inhumane and so excruciating that it was the most shameful way to die
- 3. Jesus endured that SHAME for us (Hebrews 12:2)

**EX: There was a woman who had been burned and disfigured from a fire.**

- a) Her arm had been burned and scar tissue that was ugly and embarrassing
- b) One day her daughter asked her why she had those scars and the mother said I got those scars from saving you from a fire when you were young
- c) From that day forward, those scars were not ugly anymore. They were scars of love that saved her life.

#### C. WILL WE DENY OURSELF — OR WILL WE DENY CHRIST?

##### 1. (Matthew 10:32–33) If We Confess Him—He Will Confess our name

- a) But if We Deny Him—He Will Deny Us

##### 2. Will We DENY OURSELF? – Or Will We DENY CHRIST?

**CONCLUSION:** —> (2 Tim 2:11-14) <—

##### 1. The Way to Heaven Goes Through the Golgatha

–The Way to Glory Goes Through Agony

–The Crown of Life Requires the Cross of Christ.

##### 2. There is Pain Either Way—Either the Pain of...

Self-Discipline & Self-Denial — or Pain of Regret

##### 3. This is How We Lose Our Life in order to Save it > (Galatians 2:20)