

“Life’s Most Important Questions”

Luke 9:18-26

Introduction- Jesus asked life’s most important question, “*Whom say ye that I am?*” (vs. 20). It is impossible to be wrong about Jesus and be right about God. Jesus is the greatest revelation of God, because He is God.

I John 2:23, “*Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the father.*”

I. Who is Jesus Christ? (vv. 18-20)

A. The setting and the big question. (vs. 18)

B. The popular opinion of the day. (vs. 19)

John; Elisha; a prophet, see 9:7-9

Today there is much confusion about who Jesus was or is:

- He didn’t even exist.
- A great moral teacher.
- A religious leader.
- A good man.

C. What did the Apostles believe about Jesus?

Peter- “The Christ of God.”

Thomas- “My Lord and my God.”

John- 1:1, 14, 18

The Roman Centurion at the Cross....

Even the Demons!

Jesus said, “I and the Father are one” John 10:30.

Jesus claimed to be divine, so true or false?

II. Why Did Jesus Come? (vv. 21-22)

Christianity is not merely a system of ethics, it’s a person, Jesus Christ who came into human history to redeem sinful man.

Jesus came to die. Why?

1. To ransom us- slaves
2. To reconcile us- enemies, new friends
3. To substitute- for us
4. To satisfy- propitiation

God is holy, we are unholy. Don't forget Jesus rose, so He lives!

III. What Does Jesus Ask of Me? (vv. 23-26)

Jesus lays down His demands for discipleship. Note: not salvation (and they are not some fine print at the bottom of a contract.)

Note- a great lack of teaching and preaching today on the cost of discipleship.

Illus.: General William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, wrote of the dangers he saw facing the message of the gospel in the twentieth century. Among other things he saw a "gospel" that would present Christianity without regeneration, and heaven without hell.

Why? It's not because Jesus said little about it.

Matt. 10:38- *"Anyone who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me."*

Luke 14:27- *"Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."*

We like having our sins forgiven. We like the idea of going to heaven. But not dying to self, taking up a cross, NO!

Look at what Jesus says is true discipleship (vs. 23).

- **Saying no to self** (vs. 23). II Tim. 3:1, last days, "love of self." It's saying no to your self-seeking desires. Marriage, job, play, etc., etc. Contrast with Satan, "I will" and Jesus, "thy will." We should humble ourselves (Phil. 2).
- **Saying yes to God** (vs. 23). It's taking up your cross. Many have the wrong idea of cross bearing. It's not a physical handicap. Real cross bearing involves the will. It means saying yes to something for Jesus sake. Suffering, sacrifice, service, fellowship. Like prayer and Bible study, these take time and must be chosen. Also, serving, people say, "I don't have time." Witnessing and living holy. It's giving back to God what He has given to us.

It's personal. It's painful. It's perpetual. But it's also joyful! Heb. 12:2
"I like Samuel Rutherford said about bearing the cross. He said, "The cross of Christ is the sweetest burden that I ever bore. It is a burden to me such as wings are to a bird or sails are to a ship to carry me forward to my harbor." Rutherford discovered what you , too can know- that when you really die to yourself, your really find yourself. When you lay aside personal goals, desires and ambitions, that is when God will reveal the desires, ambitions, and goals that He has for you. That is what the apostle Paul meant when he said, "I have been crucified with Christ: it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." (Galatians 2:20)."

• **It's following Jesus** (vs. 23). Where's He going (vs. 51).

Florence Nightingale at thirty wrote in her diary, "I am thirty years of age, the age at which Christ began His mission. Now no more childish things, no more vain things. Now, Lord, let me think only Thy will." Years later, near the end of her illustrious, heroic life she was asked for her life's secret, and she replied, "Well, I can only give one explanation. That is, I have kept nothing back from God."

-Paul Rees

Take All The Keys, Lord

Dr. F.B. Meyer came to the crucial, transitional time in his ministry. He sat dejectedly in his study. "My ministry is unfruitful, and I lack spiritual power," he said to himself. Suddenly Christ seemed to stand beside him. "Let me have the keys to your life," Christ said. The experience was so realistic that he reached into his pocket and took out a bunch of keys! "Are all the keys here?" "Yes, Lord, all except the key to one small room in my life." Christ said: "If you cannot trust me in all rooms of your life, I cannot accept any of the keys." Dr. Meyer was so overwhelmed with the feeling that Christ was moving out of his life because he was excluding Him from one interest in his life that he cried out, "Come back, Lord, and take the keys to all the room in my life!" - Walter B. Knight

Salvation End.

- Curious? Convinced? Committed?
- The requirements of discipleship are different than the requirement of salvation.
- You say it's too hard! Phil. 2:13