**Follow Me**

**The Word**

Read together Luke 9:18-27

**The Big Picture**

Jesus calls people to follow him, and he acknowledges that following him comes with significant costs, but not following him also comes with significant costs. In the end, his call is a gracious invitation to life that is truly life.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. On Sunday we talked about two core human desires: 1) the desire to save and secure our lives (physically, relationally, financially, etc.) and 2) the desire to gain the world (it’s treasures, pleasures, approval, comforts, etc.) Where have you been feeling the pull of one of those core desires recently?

2. Read slowly v. 23-26 together. What verse or phrase stands out most to you and why? What questions or comments do you have about that phrase?

3. On Sunday, we talked about the cost of following Jesus. Obviously, the cost will be different for each person depending on their context and circumstances. Take a few moments to silently consider what it has cost you to follow Jesus in your life. Then share with each other: what have been the costs?

4. On Sunday we ended with the word “daily” in v. 23. Following Jesus isn’t simply about a one-time dramatic decision, but rather it plays out in hundreds of small and daily decisions we make for Jesus. As you consider your life right now, what are one or two small decisions you want to make for Jesus? How can the group be praying for you in that?

**Going Deeper: Sermon Outline**

I. Luke’s Travel Narrative

A. Luke 3-9 deal with Jesus’ public ministry up north in the Galilee region

B. Luke 10-19 narrate his journey down to Jerusalem and to the cross (see 9:51)

1. During this time he takes his disciples on a literal and spiritual journey in which they are learning to follow him and journey with him

2. Likewise, we are taking this journey with Jesus over the next few months

II. Jesus reveals his way of being the Messiah (v. 20-22)

A. The disciples (via Peter) accurately identify Jesus as the Messiah (v. 20)

B. Jesus goes on to reveal how he’ll be Messiah in ways that are totally surprising and unexpected to the disciples: the Messiah will be rejected, suffer, and die (v. 21-22 and see also Luke 18:31-34)

III. Jesus reveals what the journey with the him is all about (v. 23-27)

A. The cost of following Jesus

1. Deny the self: Jesus acknowledges this universal human desire to save the self: to keep safe, preserve, safeguard our lives (physically, relationally, financially, etc.), and he says we need to let go of all the ways we cling to safety and security so that we can cling to him.

2. Take up your cross: The cross was a Roman tool of execution, and convicted criminals would be forced to carry their cross to the place of execution. So, in effect, Jesus is saying, “consider yourself as good as dead. You must die to all the ways you try to secure and keep your life, and all the ways you try to gain the world. Die to it all so that you can follow me. Don’t wait until the end of your life to die. Die first, get it out of the way and come follow me.”

3. There are other passages like this where Jesus doesn’t sugar coat it but reveals the real costs of following him (consider Luke 9:57-62)

B. The cost of not following Jesus

1. A Preview (v. 26): There is a new world that is coming and it is full of “glory,” and our response to Jesus in this world will shape his response to us in that new world

2. A Pointed question (v. 25): would you rather temporarily gain this world and lose yourself forever, or let go of this world and gain your truest self for all eternity?

3. A Paradox of the spiritual life (v. 24): If you try to save and cling to your life, ironically, you’ll end up losing the very thing you’re trying to save. If you lose your life and give it away for Jesus, you’ll save the very thing you’re losing, and you’ll save it for all eternity.

C. Jesus plainly lays out our two options

1) try to save yourself and gain the world or 2) let go of all of that and follow Jesus. Both have costs, but all things considered, following Jesus is by far the better option. So, Jesus’ call sounds severe, but it’s actually a gracious invitation: he’s not trying to rob us of ourselves and this world; he’s trying to give us true life, life to the full.

IV. Conclusion

A. It would be great to be able to interview people who have made either of the two decisions to discover what the cost and the benefit has been (e.g. the 4 fishermen vs. the rich young ruler)

B. We’re all tempted to try to save ourselves, gain the world, AND follow Jesus, but Jesus says you can’t do all of those at once.

C. Notice the word “daily” in v. 23

1. This is not about some dramatic once-for-all decision. This is about the daily decisions we make moment by moment to say yes to Jesus and his values and priorities.

2. Consider this daily prayer: “Relieve me of the bondage of self that I can better do Your will.”