

Luke 9:23-36
Demands and Delights of Discipleship

Intro: When Christ saved me in the mid-90's, WWJD bracelets were exploding in popularity.
WWJD=What Would Jesus Do.

As a very new Christian, I took notice of who wore a WWJD bracelet. Did they live differently?
Could I tell the Spirit was at work? Would they actually talk about Jesus?
I wasn't being cynical but using the WWJD bracelet to *identify disciples*.

That leads to a great question: how do we identify disciples?

This passage is about disciple identification.

How do we know who is a true disciple of Jesus? How do we examine if we are authentic disciples?

Main Point: Disciples embrace the demands of Jesus and find great delight in Jesus.

1. The demands of discipleship (v23-27)

- First, it is helpful and necessary for us to see this is another section of *response*. Like the parable of the Sower— we should come away asking: what are we going to do with this?

****In light of who Jesus is as Messiah, what will my life look like?**
Specifically, how will following Jesus shape my habits, heart, and hope.

1) Demands on our habits (v23)

- (v23) The call to discipleship is issued with 3 commands: deny self, take up (cross), follow
- Broken down looks like this:
 - Self denial—we abandon our own ambitions and goals; we give up every attempt to control of our life. **Self-denial is a call to self-dethronement.*
 - Take up cross=Imitate Jesus by submitting to the Father's will in full obedience.
- The picture of cross-bearing: When the Romans crucified criminals, they required them to carry their cross to the place of execution.

It was a portrait of humility and submission. The message sent to onlookers: This person has come under the rule and reign of the sovereign state of Rome.

Cross-bearing was really a Kingdom statement; Jesus transforms it.

****By answering the call in v23, we are saying:**

We are under the rule, reign, and authority of Sovereign King Jesus the Messiah.

- Note this call to self-denying is a *daily mindset*.

In other words, submitting to Jesus happens *each day*. Not just when I've had enough sleep or caffeine and my kids are behaving well.

- Next, Jesus gives two examples of those not ready for the demands.

2) Demands on our heart (v24-25)

- What Jesus seems to stress here is building our lives around comforts and protections; tied to that can be the attachment to wealth (gain/profit).
- At the end of the chapter, we see some concrete examples of men who were not ready for the demand. {vss57-62.}
- These men offered up lip-service to Jesus but were not ready for the demand. Note in both they say something similar: "Let me first___" (v59, 61)

Apply:

When we say, "Let me first {fill in the blank}", something or someone has priority over following Jesus.

The motto of the pioneer missionary-martyr Jim Elliot catches this idea (v25).

"He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep in order to gain what he cannot lose"

3) Demands on our hope (v26-27)

- The picture of cross-bearing is public. No one carries a cross in private.
- Disciples are meant to display their hope before the world.
- Jesus zeros in on *shame*.

The only time I can think of when we feel shame is before other persons, or more seriously, before God. Shame has to do with acceptance and rejection. That only happens in the context of relationships.

- What Jesus exposes in essence is what we call people-pleasing, or the fear of man.
- *Sadly, some people never cross over to following Christ b/c their primary fear of what others may think of them.*
- (v26) = eternity is at stake.

Apply:

Disciples follow Jesus—and are identified with him—even if means walking a road of rejection.

We are now in a post-Christian culture, there will be shame/pressure from the outside. There may even be someone here today who has not embraced Jesus because you fear shame. You may hesitate to publicly display your commitment to Jesus Christ in baptism because you fear being in front of others.

The reality is you are enslaved to the fear of man.

Being a disciple means unashamedly being identified with Jesus Christ.

- Article at the thefederalist.com “How Making People Comfortable Makes Them Less Likely to Succeed”

Jesus was already speaking that language when he called people to the demands of discipleship. If you aim at comfort, you will fail in being a disciple.

Discipleship is demanding, no doubt about it. But it has another side: delight

2. The delights of discipleship (v28-36)

- The Lord Jesus takes his inner-ring of disciples to a mountain for a preview of future glory.
- As he is praying, suddenly Jesus’s physical appearance is transformed (v29).

This section is full of *delight*.

1) Delight in Beholding (v30-32)

- V30 begins with “behold” —an archaic word meaning notice, look!
 - Moses and Elijah have shown up.
 - I want us to focus on two particular things
1. (v32) The wake-up call. The disciples were asleep, but “became fully awake when they saw his glory.”
- We can’t repeat this experience but we become fully awake spiritually *only* when we see the glory of Christ.

(2 Cor 4:3-4,6)

⁴In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.... ⁶For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

*The main difference between a disciple of Jesus and non-believer is *not* that a disciple is a slightly morally improved person.

A disciple’s heart has been transformed to embrace the glory of Christ.

A disciple understands one critical word in the Bible: glory!

- In order to understand the glory, we need to do one more thing:

2. Listen to the conversation. The conversation is between Moses, Elijah, Jesus have (v31) The topic is his departure (lit Exodus).

- This word is packed with meaning.
- First, it is used figuratively to describe death; Peter uses it that way in 2 Pet 1:15 in ref. of his own.
- But also, the Exodus in biblical history is a saving act. The Exodus is when God acts on behalf of his people *to deliver them from bondage*.

In case you did not catch it...Moses, Elijah, and Jesus are talking about the cross.

(v31 is clearly cross talk—it's through Christ's death that his people will be delivered from their bondage to sin and death.)

It's clear that the cross is the focal point of Christ's glory.

Apply:

Which means if we want to delight in the glory of Christ, we need to delight in the glory of the cross. This is a call to adore the Savior and his work, much like Peter does.

(1 Pet 2:24)

²⁴He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.”

(1 Pet 3:18)

¹⁸For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God,

The men who were on the mountain with Jesus (Peter, John) can't go long without talking about the cross.

2) Delight in the Word (v35)

- The climax comes not so much in what is seen, but what is said. Particularly v35.
- A few short words from the Lord's majestic voice: Listen to the Son. {echo of key OT Messiah-hope texts, Dt. 18:15, Ps 2:7, 2 Sam 7:14}
- Peter's takeaway decades later is striking:

(2 Pet 1:17-21)

¹⁷For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,” ¹⁸we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining

in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, ²⁰ knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹ For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Do you see what Peter does with this experience?

He uses it to ground our assurance in the sufficiency of Scripture.

- Peter does not point back to his experience and say...desire this; instead he points to the Scripture and says: *delight in this!*

Conclusion:

The Bible give proportion to demand and delight. There are times to fast, other times to feast.

In my experience—in my personal life—and helping others, I find that we often gravitate our discipleship in one direction or the other. Some are very disciplined, very self-denying.

Buy you may find it difficult to delight. Others know how to delight. You know the cross value and depths of God's love; you read your Bible and enjoy it, but you need to put self on the shelf.

Jesus calls us to a discipleship balance of demand and delight.

May God shower us with the grace to meet the demands, and also delight in his Son's eternal glory.