



## Introduction:

Just because you are saved doesn't mean you are surrendered. There is a real difference. Salvation from the penalty of your sin is by God's grace through your faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. It is believing that what He accomplished by His death, burial, and resurrection has the power to forgive you of your sins and give you true, spiritual life. Salvation is a completely divine, creative work of God. He has done everything in order to offer us the gift of eternal life. Nothing we have done or could do can merit us eternal life. He did it all! As believers and followers of Christ, God has called us to surrender our life unto Him to fulfill His will, living according to His way (Romans 12:1; Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 1:29). God desires fruit to be produced out of the new nature He has imparted to us, but this is directly related to how much of our life is surrendered to Him (Galatians 5:22-24). What are you wrestling with that you won't give over to God? What is hindering you from surrendering to His guidance and direction?

## The Focus:

- Every believer must live a surrendered life. How?
  - By dying to my way.
  - By deciding to follow Christ.

Our biggest problem is that we want our own way, which is in opposition to God's way. This has always been man's biggest struggle. In our text, Jesus said that in order to "*come after*" Him you must take up your cross daily. What did Jesus mean? Was He talking about a person, place, thing, or idea? No! During the time of Christ, it was very clear what was meant when a conversation involved a cross – it meant death. The cross we bear daily is the decision to die to self and surrender everything over to Christ. Paul stated in Romans 12:1, our lives given to God to fulfill His purpose is our "*reasonable service*." Just as Satan manifested His rebellion toward God (Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:15-18), man was equally rebellious, being deceived (2 Corinthians 11:3; Genesis 3:1-7) and willfully (1 Timothy 2:14) ignoring the wisdom of God. The satanic spirit of rebellion that lead Satan's heart astray is the same attitude revealed in man's nature (Ephesians 2:2-3).

In mankind's finite wisdom, we often live and act in defiance of God's wisdom, disregarding the future and the consequences of the things which immediately bring us temporary pleasure (Proverbs 14:12). But Christ is calling us to renounce our own way of self-dependency and submit our hearts to His Word. Any change that will ultimately help a person must move him away from autonomy toward dependence upon his Creator (Psalm 100:3). To be a true Christ-follower, you must put aside your way and allow Christ's Spirit to flow through you to do things His way. By the way, that's when you get the wonderful fruit God desires for you to produce. If we are going to surrender to Christ, we must daily die to our way (Psalm 25:4; 27:11).

At the conclusion of Luke 9:23, Christ draws the proverbial “line in the sand” and says that if you want to be a disciple of His, you must “*follow*” Him. You have to choose to wave your rights and your actions and choose rather to follow Christ. Ultimately, Christ was saying that if you are serious about being My disciple, it is going to take some action on your part. When we think of a particular issue or sin that we struggle with, we often think we have been defeated. But in reality, we have only been disobedient. As we make thousands of decisions daily, we must make the right choices. Will we please God or will we please self.

### **Response to the Sermon:**

Believing in Christ is different than pursuing the person of Christ. Do you want to pursue Christ? Pursuing Christ is going to take a commitment. God desires that you live according to how He has made you in Christ (Ephesians 2:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17). Living unto God means that you renounce anything in your former life that would cause you to sin against Him (1 Thessalonians 1:9) or remove any weight that would hinder you from effectively serving Him by serving others (Hebrews 12:1). In order for you to truly live, you and your ways must die (Luke 9:24; Galatians 5:24). The Christian life shouldn’t be one brought about by force, it should be one of surrender. When you feel or sense strife in your life, more than likely it is not because you have been defeated, but rather you have been disobedient. Will you surrender the areas you are battling or struggling with? Will you choose to live God’s way (Galatians 5:1; 2:20)?

### **Bible Study Thoughts & Questions:**

Apart from God there is no logic or reasoning. In fact, Jesus has, from eternity past, been known as “*logos*” or logic (John 1:1-3, 14), or as it is translated in the Bible, the “*Word*.” Jesus is the manifested, incarnate logic and reasoning of God. Man’s wisdom is limited; God’s wisdom is limitless (Isaiah 55:9). Following God, according to Luke 9:23, is predicated on us relinquishing control and governorship of our life – “*let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily.*” To deny myself is to accept someone else, therefore, Christ said, “*follow me.*” The Christian’s spiritual life is a daily battle, and we have the choice daily to choose God’s way or our way. (Romans 6; 13:12-14; 2 Corinthians 10:2-5; Galatians 5:1; Ephesians 4:22-24; 6:10-18; Philippians 1:29; Colossians 3:8-10). The Christian life is somewhat of a paradox, in that the way to true life is to die (Luke 9:24), but to die is to truly live (Galatians 2:20).

Paul says that as he lived, it was not him living, “*but Christ*” living in and through him. So, how could Paul say it wasn’t him that lived, but Christ in him (Romans 6:6, 11; Galatians 2:20)?

In order to live “*in Christ*,” you must understand the transformation process that God has done to create you as a “*new creature*,” created in Christ. You must understand that Christ took on all of your sins (Colossians 1:21-22), but after trusting in the finished work of Christ, you are

now “*hid*” in God (Colossians 3:3). Why is it so vital for believers to be aware of their position in Christ and understand and unwaveringly believe in that position?

As a believer, the desire to sin should diminish, but the problem that will still persist is the issue of self. So, how do we overcome self when it rises in protest to the ways of God (Colossians 1:9-17)?

### **Application Questions:**

Christ declared to His disciples that if they were to “*come after*” Him, they must deny their flesh from its desires, cause death to doing things in the power of their old nature, and make a decision to pursue Christ daily (Luke 9:23). Christ, upon explaining the process to become one of His disciples, immediately explained that the life of a follower is built upon God and His works, not on us or what we have to offer (Luke 9:23-24). After explaining this, Jesus asked, “*What is a man advantaged*” if He gets everything he desires or everything the world can offer (Luke 9:25)? In other words, what has he “*profited*” or what has he truly gained if he accumulates all of this stuff, if he loses the most important thing, his soul (Matthew 16:26; Mark 8:36)?

Believer and friend, what are you setting out to do? What are you gaining and losing on a daily basis (Luke 9:23-25; Matthew 16:26; Mark 8:36)?

According to the text, what happens if we fail to deny ourselves the desires of our old nature (Luke 9:23, 25; 2 Corinthians 5:10)?

As a matter of fact, Paul states he was crucified with Christ in that Jesus took upon Himself everyone’s sin from the fall of mankind to the present (1 Peter 2:24). Therefore, Paul and all of us can say (Galatians 2:20), “*I am crucified with Christ.*” This is a key understanding of the Christian life – self has died and Christ now lives His life in and through me (Galatians 2:20). Embracing that Christ now lives His life through me, what two attributes should be seen by others in my life (Galatians 2:20)?

**Prayer:**

- Pray that God would show you areas where you are grieving the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:19).
- Pray that your life would show others the will of God for a believer's life (Romans 12:1-2).
- Pray to God that He would show and teach you His ways found in His Word (Psalm 25:4).
- Pray daily, remembering, that you have been crucified with Christ, therefore it is no longer you that lives, it is Christ living in and through you (Galatians 2:20).