

## Lesson 8      17 September, 2017

### Disciples of Jesus Christ

**Lesson Scope:** [Luke 8:1-21](#); and [Luke 9](#)

*References in brackets refer to Luke 8 and 9 unless otherwise noted*

#### Lesson Focus

"O faithless ... generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? ... Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men" (Luke 9:41, 44). Such yearning Christ had for a response of faith and obedience! Such patience as He waited for the peaceable fruits of righteousness!

As He challenged them to a life of discipleship, some rejected Him (8:37), and others simply eyed Him curiously (9:7-9). Even the disciples, sure they understood His mission, stepped up quickly to take a prominent place (9:46) and to call down fire on any who opposed them (9:54).

The call to hear and follow sounds the death knell of human reasoning and the flesh. "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it" (Luke 11:28).

Jesus Christ "took upon him the form of a servant" and "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Those who follow Jesus must commit their lives to Him and to His work in this world.

Men marvel at instances of extraordinary power such as were considered in Lesson 7. Much attention is sought by those who claim to have access to this power by merit of a personal encounter with Christ.

But the real treasures of the kingdom of heaven are often traded for an "easy gospel" by those who "seeing [do] not see and hearing [do] not understand."

The plea of this lesson calls us beyond "faith unto salvation," to consider the need of faith for the life and work that follow. Only as our faith responds in humble obedience can we be a true disciple.

**Lesson Aim:** To identify the involvements of true discipleship.

**Theme Verse:** [John 8:31](#). Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.

## Lesson Text

### Denying Self

[Luke 9:18-26](#)

And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am? <sup>19</sup> They answering said, John the Baptist; but some *say*, Elias; and others *say*, that one of the old prophets is risen again. <sup>20</sup> He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God. <sup>21</sup> And he straitly charged them, and commanded *them* to tell no man that thing; <sup>22</sup> Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day. <sup>23</sup> And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. <sup>24</sup> For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. <sup>25</sup> For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? <sup>26</sup> For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and *in his* Father's, and of the holy angels.

### Serving Humbly

[Luke 9:46-56](#)

Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest. <sup>47</sup> And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him, <sup>48</sup> And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great. <sup>49</sup> And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us. <sup>50</sup> And Jesus said unto him, Forbid *him* not: for he that is not against us is for us. <sup>51</sup> And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, <sup>52</sup> And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. <sup>53</sup> And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. <sup>54</sup> And when his disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? <sup>55</sup> But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. <sup>56</sup> For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save *them*. And they went to another village.

## **Following Christ**

[Luke 9:57-62](#)

And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain *man* said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. <sup>58</sup>And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air *have* nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head. <sup>59</sup>And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. <sup>60</sup>Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. <sup>61</sup>And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. <sup>62</sup>And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

## **Questions for Study**

### **Denying Self**

1. If the disciples were not yet to tell "that thing," what was their message to be (9:2, 60)?
2. How does Christ's suffering inspire us to discipleship?
3. What might we do to save our life that would result in our losing it?
4. List marks of a life lost for Christ's sake.

### **Serving Humbly**

5. Contrast the carnal response of man with the Spirit that is in Christ.
6. How can we check our motives as we relate to others?

### **Following Christ**

7. What comfort can the true disciple find in these verses?
8. What "legitimate" things threaten one-way vision?

## **Analyzing the Passage**

Verse 22 records one of Jesus' most explicit declarations concerning His coming death.

No doubt 9:21 is Jesus' effort to avoid the vain acclaim of the fickle masses. He had just fed the five thousand, and John records how at that time the multitudes intended to forcibly make Him king. Discipleship

II includes knowing who Jesus is (9:20), but it is very important also to understand that "[Christ's] kingdom is not of this world." Many fail these tests of discipleship in favor of pleasing the flesh.

Understanding this concept would have helped the disciples avoid their carnal competition and vindictive spirit.

The father mentioned in verse 59 may have been far from dying. The son

making the request represents those who shy away from spiritual service while others are here to do it.

A disciple is a learner. Not only the various would-be disciples (9:57-62), but also the twelve themselves had many things to learn from Jesus' example and teaching.

## **Principles and Applications**

### **Denying Self**

1. Discipleship begins with a confession of Jesus Christ (9:18, 20). See 1 John 4:15; 5:1. The devils identified Jesus as the Son of God. But Peter went much further; he subjected himself to the dominion of Christ. This is a true disciple.

2. True disciples of Jesus Christ are saved by faith in His sacrificial death and resurrection (9:21, 22). Man can claim no glory in this. All men bear the sins which took Jesus to the cross. But Jesus grants full release to all who claim the power of His resurrection by faith.

3. True discipleship involves self-denial and cross bearing (9:23-25). Carnal man understands nothing of this but its counterfeit. How well do we understand these concepts? The question "Is it legitimate?" must give place to "What is most important?" "Daily" must be taken as "No exceptions." Many of the things we might think are an advantage to our appearance, our financial success, or our physical convenience could result rather in our being cast away. Jesus said, "Follow me."

4. To be a disciple of Jesus Christ, one must be unashamed to own Him as Master and Lord (9:26). A call to jury duty is an opportunity to testify. What apparel befits a Christian at an ag or business meeting? Does a Gospel sign or tract rack reinforce the image of our business, or does it appear an afterthought? Disciples of Christ have no room in their hearts for carnal obsessions, for Christ has full control.

### **Serving Humbly**

5. Disciples of Christ exhibit childlike humility (9:46-48). Generally what a child thinks, he says. Whether or not we voice our feelings of superiority, Jesus perceives the thoughts of our hearts. We all battle our carnal ego, but Christ can help us rise above that. His Spirit can help us to change if we are the first to speak or the last to accept correction. A child of faith has learned humble obedience, which is what makes the least greatest and a small child the best teacher.

6. Disciples of Christ avoid rivalry and competition (9:49, 50). Rather we find blessings as we join efforts. Likely the disciples were feeling sore that

others were succeeding where they had recently failed (9:40). If we insist on tearing others down, victory becomes difficult for everyone.

7. A vindictive spirit has no place in a life of discipleship (9:51-56). We may call retaliation "vindication of truth," but truth is never vindicated by carnality. It is futile to think we can build the kingdom of heaven with the carnal weapons of this world. Christ calls us rather to return good for evil and blessing for cursing.

### **Following Christ**

8. A life of discipleship requires unreserved commitment (9:57-62). Every area of our lives must reveal heavenly purpose. To reserve some part of our life or to delay following Christ until we have fulfilled some ambition is to risk never following at all. Jesus wants the firstfruits of every heart.

### **Important Teachings**

1. Discipleship begins with a confession of Jesus Christ (9:18-20).
2. True disciples of Jesus Christ are saved by faith in His sacrificial death and resurrection (9:21-22).
3. True discipleship involves self-denial and cross bearing (9:23-25).
4. To be a disciple of Jesus Christ, one must be unashamed to own Him as Master and Lord (9:26).
5. Disciples of Christ exhibit childlike humility (9:46-48).
6. Disciples of Christ avoid rivalry and competition (9:49-50).
7. A vindictive spirit has no place in a life of discipleship (9:51-56).
8. A life of discipleship requires unreserved commitment (9:57-62).

### **Answers to Questions**

1. If the disciples were not yet to tell "that thing," what was their message to be (9:2, 60)?

They were to preach the kingdom of God as John the Baptist did. Many were ready to debate the person of Christ, but those who were looking for the kingdom of heaven would easily recognize Him in the glory of the resurrection and Pentecost.

2. How does Christ's suffering inspire us to discipleship?

Jesus' whole intent for offering Himself was not for His own benefit, but for ours! He left a perfect example of sinless responses to hatred, rejection, and abuse. He committed Himself to God. He placed eternal life within the grasp of all men.

3. What might we do to save our life that would result in our losing it?

Society views higher education, social prestige, time off for yourself, or

even scarcity of children as something to attain. To selfishly seek such things will certainly be our downfall. Trying to serve both the Lord and self will result in spiritual ruin.

4. List marks of a life lost for Christ's sake.

The life lost for Christ does not sport an elite business image, or make noises and flash lights that make heads turn. Others will see chaste conversation coupled with godly fear, modest, unadorned clothing, and a meek and quiet spirit (1 Peter 3:2-4). Those called to public service will seek to humbly give God a prominent place.

5. Contrast the carnal response of man with the spirit that is in Christ.

Jesus was willing to serve, doing His Father's will. He was content to be received into hearts as humble as a little child's. Jesus came to save men, though it meant losing His own life. The disciples clung stubbornly to the notion of an earthly kingdom. Each one wanted the highest position. Therefore they viewed others as a threat to themselves, including their fellow disciples, other evangelists, or those who rejected their message.

6. How can we check our motives as we relate to others?

Can we rejoice in the success or promotion of another? Can we appreciate others whose lines of practice may differ from our own? The disciple of Christ will relate redemptively to others. He will not consider it a reproach to let others have the last word. He values God's long-suffering to him and desires that others could also experience it and come to salvation.

7. What comfort can the true disciple find in these verses?

Jesus said, "Follow me." He was a perfect example of all He calls us to. We follow with perfect trust in His ability to lead. When we recognize our weakness, He can perfect His strength in us.

8. What "legitimate" things threaten one-way vision? Ties with unfaithful family have ruined many. The subtle effects and image of new purchases must be considered, even if it makes financial sense. Family keepsakes can steal our affection for the heavenly and even cause strife in families. Computers, phones, and related gadgets may be legitimate. But even aside from their broadening capabilities, they have blocked the vision of many a well-meaning plowman.

### **Summarizing the Lesson**

True discipleship will never be popular. But as we give our all to Christ, the things to which the world aspires will lose their appeal. Only through full commitment will we find the blessings of the heavenly kingdom. What earthly gain can compare with the heavenly reward?

## **Research Guide**

1. Read 1 Peter 2:19-25.
2. Notice what the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11 knew about discipleship.
3. Study self-denial in Doctrines of the Bible (page 480).