

# Luke 9:57-62 - Part 1

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[ 0 : 00 ] Thanks, Jordan and Anna. Join me in your Bibles in Luke. Gospel of Luke, chapter 9. So as Jake stated earlier,!

Put a lot of thought into New Year's. Maybe I should. But for a lot of people in our culture and those around us, it's like the time to kick off new things.

It's to make big resolutions, small ones, big ones, all the best intention to bring about change in somebody's life. And out of curiosity, I looked up the top 2024 New Year's resolutions.

None of them will shock you, but a survey says improving finances, shocker, 38%. Losing weight, 33%.

Improving one's diet, 31%. And a lot of well-meaning, I guess, but fewer people focus on goals like learning a new skill, 8%.

[ 1 : 23 ] Hobbies, 7%. And traveling more, 5%. The problem occurs somehow when we fail to keep these new resolutions of change. I heard recently that March is the month when most people quit.

Everything they're doing. They start strong in January, they struggle in February, and then they quit in March. And they start to say, this is harder than I thought it was going to be, so I'm just going to stop.

After all, I made this promise to myself and not other people, so I can quit on myself. But some people make resolutions with somebody else, like your spouse or your friend, and that can end too. All you've got to do is tap into that same temptation and weakness that they're having and quit together. So unless one of you is stronger and can kind of push through a little more and say, no, no, we're not quitting. Keep going.

So anyway, our sinful condition tends to drift us towards laziness, indulgence, and comfort. And so we don't like disciplining ourselves.

[ 2 : 27 ] But for the believer, discipline is a critical part of our everyday life. It's not like we just try it once a year. It should be infused to our everyday living.

In fact, like a lot of the meaning of the word disciple comes from this idea of discipline. And so this week, today, next Sunday, we're going to talk about more specific resolutions maybe next week and unpack that.

But I kind of wanted to give us one broad one for the day. And that is resolve to follow Jesus Christ. Resolve to follow Jesus.

And it may sound kind of shallow for Christians, right? Of course we're supposed to follow Jesus. But there are only two types of people in this room.

Those who have given their lives to Christ, who have repented of their sins and thrown their self on the grace of God and come to saving faith in Jesus Christ and are reconciled to God and now are disciples and followers of Jesus and those who aren't.

[ 3 : 38 ] And so let's look at, I mean, just, I think, just a very simple definition of a resolution is to reach a clear and firm decision on something.

Right? And so Jonathan Edwards, we think of him when we think about resolutions, those who know some of their church history and read some of the old guys.

Jonathan Edwards wrote, Resolved by God's grace to love my Lord Jesus Christ by daily denying myself, taking up my cross, and following him wherever he leads, no matter the cost.

Those of you who are familiar with Jonathan Edwards, he did not write that. I wrote that. But I thought you would listen to it more if I said that he wrote it. So this is actually one of the points, okay?

And I want you to, I'll read this slower so you can follow. But this is the main point we will be unpacking today. It's not a lighthearted subject to talk about the cost of discipleship.

[ 4 : 48 ] But our main point, we would say, is this resolution to resolve by God's grace to love my Lord Jesus Christ by daily denying myself, taking up my cross, and following him wherever he leads, no matter the cost.

And so, just a quick reminder that we never graduate or move on from the gospel. It's the greatest news possible that God won for us over sin, over death, over hell by sending his son to graciously save sinners.

That's what we read in John 3, right? That God so loved the world, he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him would have eternal life, right?

They would not perish. For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, right? But in the world that might be saved through him.

So, let's not confuse some things. Salvation is a free gift of God's grace. You cannot earn it. You cannot pay it back. It only comes as a result of God's grace, love, and mercy towards sinners in Jesus Christ.

[ 6 : 06 ] Alright? So, that's the good news. That's what we're resting on. And so, like I mentioned earlier, there's only two types of people in the room. Those who are probably most of us here, the church, those who have a relationship with Christ and have trusted for him and for salvation and have devoted their lives to following him and obeying him and loving him.

So, for you, for most of us, let's renew our desire to follow Jesus. Renew our desire to take up our cross.

And then there's those who don't have a relationship with Christ and are still at odds with God. In fact, called enemies of God and under his judgment. A very chilling verse in John 3, right after the famous John 3.16.

John 3.36, whoever believes in the Son has eternal life. Whoever does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

And so, point number one, so I gave you the resolution about following Christ, but point number one, there's just two points today, and we'll spend, I've done my best to keep you in Luke.

[ 7 : 21 ] So, besides looking at one other place. But, point one, is that Christ demands that you weigh the cost of following him.

Christ demands that you weigh the cost of following him. And, we're going to start in Luke 9, go to verse 57.

Alright, and in the context here, Jesus, it says earlier, has set his face towards Jerusalem. He's making a final journey towards Jerusalem where he knows he will be arrested, beaten, and crucified to save men from their sins.

And so, along the way, Jesus encounters three different men who all claim and have interest in wanting to be his disciple. Right? And they're, what they say doesn't seem unreasonable on its face, but then Jesus responds to them kind of surprisingly.

Let's look at verse 57. As they were going along the road, someone said to him, to Jesus, I will follow you wherever you go.

[ 8 : 34 ] And Jesus said to him, foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head. To another he said, follow me.

But he said, Lord, let me first go and bury my father. And Jesus said to him, leave the dead to bury their own dead, but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.

Yet another said, I will follow you, Lord, but first, let me say farewell to those who are at home. And Jesus said to him, no one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.

So, why does Jesus actually call them to weigh the cost here? Right? Why does he tend to drive them away?

As far as we know, these men turned away. We never hear about them again, never heard from them after this. And, what I want to throw forward to you is like in your evangelism and your sharing of the good news with unbelievers, I tend to get to a point where I've met with people several times and I've gone over the foundational gospel message with them.

[ 9 : 51 ] and when they get to that point and they say, yeah, like I'm in, I'm there, I believe it. I then kind of cringe and go, okay, let's look at Luke 9, let's look at Luke 14, let's look at Matthew 10 and I hope you know what I'm saying when I say this, but I try to talk them out of following Jesus after that.

And, not what you do if you want to grow a successful ministry and have a lot of people come around. But in fact, this is exactly what Jesus did when he got too popular and he would turn around and say, hey, listen guys, listen, this is serious.

I'm not playing games. I'm not here for your fun and entertainment and to give you prosperity. So, at first glance, Christ seems to be a little unreasonable, but a closer study of the passage might help us unpack what's going on.

and he looks straight through their words and goes after the idols of their heart. He chooses to sift at those things. And all of them refused to obey Jesus immediately when he said, you know, follow me.

This proved, really, that they did not really believe who Jesus was. Okay? So, it's not like they had this genuine faith in Christ and he's saying, no, not you, go away.

[11:12] He's basically revealing they don't really believe who he is. That's like what's happening right here. He's exposing that. And so, the first man, Matthew, in Matthew 8, 19, also tells this story and he says that he was a scribe.

Alright? And so, this scribe made a very bold claim. I will follow you wherever you go. That's a huge claim for anybody to make, right?

Very bold. But we know based on how Jesus responds to the man that he's looking for something else. And often, in this time, just like today, you would find an influential person, an influential teacher and attach yourself to that person in order that as they continue to prosper, you would kind of rise up with them.

That's how you do it, right? Especially in the business world. And so, this guy really saw Jesus as a way of personal advancement in society and probably a means of comfort and security, right?

And Jesus basically said, look, if that's what you're looking for, I'm not it. Go away. I'm not here to make you comfortable. Even foxes have places to go.

[12:27] I do not. And so, we know just based on Jesus' response what this guy was actually looking for. But rather, the Christian life is not one of comfort, but as we're talking about, suffering, going against the ways of this world, persecution even.

And so, this man considered his earthly comfort and status more important than actually being redeemed, right? Have you ever seen people confess to be followers of Jesus, but yet in time it just revealed over time that they actually were trusting in Jesus for some other reason?

Like to get them somewhere else, to give them something that they wanted, claiming to be believers. So, the second man, very tricky here, right?

The second man, he said, let me go and bury my father. I'll follow you, but let me first go and bury my father. So, it seems like an honorable request. And Jesus isn't attacking that idea of honoring your father and your mother because we know elsewhere in the Gospels Christ defends the commandment to honor your father and your mother against those who really weren't doing that. But, with this statement, let me go and bury my father, it did not even necessarily mean that his father was dead yet, for one. So, meaning that he was waiting for him to pass away.

[13:52] And the phrase, I must bury my father, was a common figure of speech, which could also mean, let me wait for my inheritance. Like, let my father pass away and then let me get my inheritance and then I'll follow you.

That's just what this really could mean. And again, Jesus isn't going against the commandment. He just basically said, look, this is more important.

What I'm asking you to do is more important than waiting for your inheritance. Right? It could reveal that the man really desired money and title that he would receive over the call to follow the Messiah. Right? So, again, we know these things just based on how Jesus responds to them. We know he's not attacking the commandment to honor your parents. So, very clearly, this guy had a different motive.

So, thirdly, the third man, he basically says, let me say farewell to those at home. Let me go home, kiss everybody goodbye, wrap up my business, and then I'll follow you. Of all the requests, this seems the most reasonable, right?

[14:58] Like, it seems like, sure, Jesus would surely allow them to go and do that. So, what's the problem? Why does Jesus respond this way? It seems like kind of harsh.

So, please hold your hand or your bookmark in Luke, but look really quickly. This is the only other place I want you to turn, but look at 1 Kings really quickly. 1 Kings chapter 19, and you'll see some

very scary parallels in this text, but this is when Elisha was about to be taken up into heaven and he was passing on his mantle as prophet to Elisha.

Alright? And look at 1 Kings 19, verse 19, now, just think about how Jesus responded to that third man and then think about this passage.

Alright? So, he departed from there and found Elisha, the son of Japhat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen in front of him, and he was with the twelve.

Elijah passed by him and cast his cloak upon him. Symbolic. And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, now listen to this, let me kiss my father and mother and then I will follow you.

[16:19] See the connection? And he said to him, go back again for what have I done to you? And he returned from following him, took the yoke of oxen and sacrificed them and boiled their flesh with the yokes of oxen and gave it to the people and they ate.

Then he arose and went after Elijah and assisted him. So, we'll stop there. So, what's amazing is Elijah grants that request.

Sure, go home, kiss your mother and your father goodbye. But, why did Jesus refuse to do it?

What's the difference? Well, the difference can be seen in what Elisha actually does when he goes home.

He immediately returns home, says for a while to his parents, then he takes all the oxen, and oxen are huge. I saw one at a fair a few weeks ago. They're like a truck.

They're like, you know, Oregon Trail doesn't do them justice. So, like, a bunch of oxen. So, he sacrifices them and gives it to the Lord.

[17:24] Right? Here you go, Lord. symbolic acts of severing your old lifestyle to start a new one. You see that? He had nothing to go back to. He destroyed everything. He had nothing to return to.

So, this proved, right, that Elisha abandoning his home and his livelihood proved that his true passion and devotion was to follow the Lord's call on his life.

So, Elijah didn't mind if he temporarily returned home to do something like that. However, we see clearly that Jesus perceived something very different about this third guy.

And this is a hard one. He basically said, you may come after me for a little while and you may follow me for a little while, but you're always going to be looking over your shoulder.

You're always going to be going, looking back at home, looking back at your family. And at some point, you're going to miss them so much that you will leave me and you will go home.

[18:22] And most people don't plow around here. I've done some hay cutting and hay raking, not the best thing to do if you have a respiratory problem. people. But like just keeping your rows straight.

But if you're plowing a straight line and you're always going like this, you tend to do this, and so you don't really accomplish the goal. And so Jesus clearly perceived that this man would leave him and return back to his family.

So he goes, no. Right? So, in case that's not enough, you can go back to Luke now. Go back to Luke.

Luke. In case that's not enough, Jesus goes on to expound more a little later. Like, look at Luke 14. Let's go to Luke 14 a few chapters later, and he returns to this idea of discipleship. So if that's not enough, again, like Jesus basically says, you have to renounce all you have in order to be my disciple.

[19:21] So this is his final journey to Jerusalem. Think about this. He's not like the most upbeat. He's like feeling lonely. He's feeling the weight of what's going to go on. And he's being followed by these crowds of people that basically just want him to do cool tricks.

Right? A lot of them. And he just, it's one of those moments where he has it. You know, he's had it and he goes, hey, listen to me. Listen very carefully. He boldly turns around and confronts this crowd, this sort of flirting with him, if you want to put it that way, and warns them of the heavy weight and cost it means to be his disciple.

Don't be quick to become my follower. And he uses two examples of building, one building, and one going to war to illustrate this. Luke 14, verse 25.

Great crowds accompanied him and he turned and said to them, here it is, if anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. For which of you desiring to build a tower does not first sit down and count the cost whether he has enough to complete it?

[ 20 : 40 ] Otherwise, when he's laid a foundation and he's not able to finish, all see it and begin to mock him, saying, this man began to build and was not able to finish. Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with 10,000 to meet him who comes against him with 20,000?

And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace, so therefore, any one of you, so personal, any one of you who does not renounce all he has cannot be my disciple.

Gosh. So this isn't like seeker friendly, this isn't like he's really wanting to just build a cool church and have a lot of people, he's like, no. Like if you don't love me more than anything else, even your own life, you cannot be my disciple.

That's a condition. Again, it's not replacing our gospel message of grace and our gospel message of faith alone in Christ. It basically is just saying, you know what, if you truly believe who I am, none of this will be a problem.

But as Westerners, as Americans, we read this and it just doesn't quite ring true, but in Jesus' world, the people he's talking to, for them to become his disciple could mean death.

[ 22 : 07 ] It could mean separation from family. Many years ago, there might be two people here who remember this, Nathan being one of them. I had a friend from Kyrgyzstan come and visit and I got like a large crowd of college students, probably like 80 to 100 in here, to hear him talk.

It's a buddy of mine, his name's Ossal. And he basically said, hey, in America, when people want to become Christians, they walk the aisle, they shake the pastor's hand, they pray a prayer, they're baptized, and then they are expected to kind of show up on Sunday and be a pretty good person and give to the church, just outwardly, right?

But he's like, in Asia, when you become a Christian, first your family rejects you and kicks you out. Secondly, your community will ostracize you.

And then thirdly, the government will either not allow you to work, or they will imprison you or kill you. And then he said, and if someone we've been sharing Christ with does all that, we know they're a true Christian.

So, even today, this is true for many places in the world. And I don't think that Jesus would say to us, hey, Americans, that's not you, so be thankful you live in the land of the free and the home of the brave.

[ 23 : 30 ] I think he would say, no, I demand that same loyalty from you. And that's chilling. But firstly, we see in Luke 14 right here, a superior love to family and self, right?

He doesn't say, the term hating here doesn't mean malice, evil, towards your family or your friends. love to love to love to love to love to love to love to love to love to love to love to love to me.

You should cultivate such a love and devotion to me that all other loves in comparison look like hate. Right? So, very similarly in Matthew's Gospel, you don't have to turn here, but very similar passage about the cost of following Jesus.

Jesus said, do not think that I have come to bring peace. I have not come to bring peace, but the sword. The person's enemies will be those of his own household.

So, meaning, that Christ's real presence in your life will cause division. It will cause people to not want to be around you. I lost a lot of my friends when I first became a believer, just because I didn't want to shoot guns, hunt, fish, and blow things up every day anymore.

[ 24 : 55 ] That was like the context of our friendship, plus a few other things. But, some remained friends, but I basically just said, look, I'm done with that. Look, I'm not living for this anymore.

I just exposed that they weren't really my friends, sort of, to begin with. But, a superior love to our family and our friends, like it could cost you that. Some of you have had family issues because you've been loyal to Jesus.

You've said, I'm not going to compromise on what Christ said. I'm sorry. And they've responded harshly to you. They don't understand why you think the way you think. Right? But secondly, he wraps that up by saying that you have to love me more than even your own life.

and he calls them to bear their cross. Earlier in Luke 9, if you want to go back to Luke 9, and then we'll, you know, you don't have to turn anywhere else.

We'll go back to Luke 9 really quickly. More of a selection of scriptures today from Luke. But Luke 9, if you go to verse 23, a little earlier in the chapter, okay, he says, if any one of you would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me.

[ 26 : 12 ] For whoever would save his life would lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself or his soul in some translations?

Alright, so take up your cross and not wear a cross necklace. It is an invitation to come and suffer and die. I have no problem with cross necklaces. Just saying, it is an invitation, it is not a pretty thing at all.

One would literally be saying farewell to this life, to their family, to their plans, and like saying, yep, I could die. And in the world we are told to constantly, we are told to protect yourself, promote yourself, preserve yourself, entertain yourself, and comfort yourself, Christ says, slay yourself. Slay yourself. Not to just abstain from certain things, but to relinquish control of your life. Right? A willingness to follow and serve Him, and to keep His commandments, to suffer, and maybe even perhaps die for Him.

But think about it this way, I am not trying to put words in Jesus' mouth, so you can check me here, but paraphrasing, if He said to you, if you knew that coming after me and being my disciple meant that it could cost you your life, would you do it anyway?

[ 27 : 43 ] Are you that desperate for me? Am I that glorious to you? Would you be willing to give up your life here to have eternal life later?

Would you be willing to? You might not, but it could happen. Would you still come? Were you that desperate? Would you give it up? So it's not to be a believer, not just a call to learn.

I love theology, I love doctrine, it's awesome, I'll nerd out with you all day, but becoming a follower of Jesus is not about just learning some cool things and dogma to make our lives better, it's a call to a person.

And Bonhoeffer, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a lot of us know that name, he wrote a book, Cost of Discipleship, and after it was published in the U.S., he had a choice, they said, here in America, hey, why don't you stay here?

Stay here, you'll have a successful ministry, a lot of people will listen to you and trust you and you can have a great ministry here in life, don't go back to Germany, right? the Third Reich is firing things up, and he basically just said, I'm paraphrasing, like, if I don't go back to Germany, everything I wrote in this book is a lie.

[ 28 : 58 ] And so he goes back, you know, and we all know the story, he eventually is martyred by the Nazis. But he said, salvation is free.

Thank goodness, right? But discipleship will cost you your life. And so salvation costs nothing, but discipleship will cost us everything. And it's a lifetime.

Delinquished control of all things. If I had to pull in a passage that Paul wrote that goes alongside this, right?

Talking about the death of Jesus, he says, he died for all so that all those who live would no longer live for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for their sake.

Second Corinthians 5.15, that we would no longer live for ourselves, but live for him who saved us. So if you are a believer, have you taken the command of Christ to deny yourself and take up your cross daily, seriously?

[ 30 : 01 ] Or is it just floating around? I confess there's many days I'm just sort of getting by and I'm not really thinking about what it means to follow Jesus daily in the context that I am, denying myself, denying myself comfort, sleep, food, whatever else, things that I want for the sake of other people, and to give those over fully to Christ.

Has your life reflected a love and devotion to Christ that appears funny and different to the fallen world around you? Already you just blend in and nothing looks different.

It's something to think about. So all of that was point number one. Christ demands that you weigh the cost. And then wrapping it up, point number two, this is the beautiful part.

Christ is worth losing everything to gain. Right? Christ is worth losing everything to gain. Right? The reality is that Christ alone is worthy of our lives.

It overrides everything else. No human relationship, no employment, no hobby, or anything else you have compares to the greatness of knowing Jesus Christ our Lord.

[ 31 : 20 ] All things can be taken away from you. And one of my questions I asked guys I'm sharing the gospel was like, hey man, what are you living for? And they'll say, fill in the blank, you know, money, comfortable life, to be a good athlete, to get married and have a nice place to live and a good job, to have good health.

That's a big one. Especially when you're talking to college students because they think that they're invincible. And then you just say, can you lose all of that? Is all that permanent? And they'll say, probably not.

I can lose all of that. And say, well, it's not worth giving your life for then. Like, you will lose it all. Like, Christ is the only thing that cannot be taken away from you.

Period. And Jesus says later on, and Mark and I will paraphrase some of this, but the disciples come to him and they're kind of whining, you know, like they do sometimes, like we do sometimes. Like, Lord, we've sacrificed and we've left so much to follow you. And he basically is like, really? Have you? Have you sacrificed everything to follow me?

[ 32 : 34 ] Jesus responds to them. Jesus said, Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mothers or sacrificed family lands for the sake of the gospel who will not receive a hundredfold now in this life houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and lands with persecutions and in the age to come eternal life.

So what he basically says is like, whatever you think you're sacrificing, when you compare it to what you're gaining in me, it is no comparison. Like, you will not even be able to speak of sacrificing anything if you truly believe what I'm giving you.

It's like giving up garbage to get gold. You know, you're like, I sacrificed my garbage. You know, it's not like that at all. We gain everything in Christ.

You know, and so I just want to pose this thought to you. We've had it easy. We've had it easy for a long time.

Being a big history guy, I can tell you that we've lived in the most prosperous, peaceful stretch of human history ever. And it may, if God shows mercy, continue that way for a little longer.

[ 33 : 59 ] I'm not at all a doomsdayist or hey, the end is nigh. But if you ask people, anybody in this room that's older than 40, would some of the stuff that's going on today be happening here?

People go, oh, no way. Like, men calling themselves women, women calling themselves men, men getting pregnant, call people by pronouns. If you try to tell your kid that there are any other gender than what they want to be, we're going to throw you in prison, that's actual stuff going on in our country today.

And that blows our minds. And we may be sheltered from it a little bit just because of the culture we live in. But the stuff that we hear today, we're going to have to just kind of kindly say, no.

Because thus says the Lord. Not a conservative American response, but a deeply rooted, gospel-centered conviction about what God says.

That's what we will suffer for. Most of the time when Scripture talks about suffering and persecution, it's not just because you get sick and ill. Of course, that counts as a trial. But it's about suffering for Christ's sake.

[ 35 : 19 ] Right? Saying no to the world around us. And we have to prepare ourselves for that. Have some deeply rooted theology and what it means to follow Jesus and say, Lord, help me.

Right? It's been easy for us. Right? And there's tests that could be coming. I don't know for sure, but it seems to go that way. And then lastly, I just want to affirm just two things in closing.

Like, we fail, okay? We fail at our devotion to follow Christ, okay? So this isn't a call to be perfect. It's not a call to get this all figured out in a week.

But with God's help, we can push forward, we can progress, we can be faithful disciples carrying our cross daily. But when we fail, remember that our identity and our salvation lie secure in Christ so that we strive in His love, not to gain His love, okay?

It's really huge to remember that. But then lastly, again, willpower alone won't be able to help you fulfill this resolution to follow Jesus.

[ 36 : 29 ] And we need God's grace, His strength to help us. Christ is our sufficiency, and He can sustain that life of holiness and devotion to following Jesus.

If you have on your bulletin a quote by Edwards on here, go back to Edwards real quick, start with that and end with that. But your historic quotation by Edwards, he says, being sensible that I am unable to do anything without God's help, I do humbly entreat him by His grace to enable me to

keep these resolutions so far as they agree with His will for Christ's sake.  
That is a great way to say this, like Lord, help us to do that. Close me in prayer. Let's close me in prayer. me in me in