

The Way of the Cross

Luke 9:46-62

Theme: Being a disciple in the light of the Cross.

- 1) **The Cross and Greatness** (v.46-48)
 - A) The perspective of a _____.
- 2) **The Cross and Competition** (v.49-50)
 - A) Those who are for us are not _____ us.
- 3) **The Cross and Condemnation** (v.51-56)
 - A) No room for _____.
 - B) The great _____.
- 4) **The Cross and the Cost** (v.57-62)
 - A) Our own _____.

Answers: child, against, exclusivity, equalizer, self-death

Small Group Questions

REFLECT

1. What did Jesus do when the disciples started to argue about who was the greatest?
2. Why use a child as an object lesson?

Consider the following quote by C.S. Lewis from Mere Christianity, "If you want to find out how proud you are the easiest way is to ask yourself, 'How much do I dislike it when other people snub me, or refuse to take any notice of me, or shove their oar in, or patronise me, or show off?' The point is that each person's pride is in competition with everyone else's pride...Pride is essentially competitive - is competitive by its very nature - while the other vices are competitive only, so to speak, by accident. Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man. We say that people are proud of being rich, or clever, or good-looking, but they are not. They are proud of being richer, or cleverer, or better-looking than others. If everyone else became equally rich, or clever, or good-looking there would be nothing to be proud about. It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest. Once the element of competition has gone, pride has gone."

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3. Being open and honest, have you ever gone through a season when you struggled with pride? How did it affect your relationships with others? How does the cross deal with our human pride?
4. What do you think is the point of John's encounter in v.49? How does the cross affect our tendency to envy and competitiveness? See Numbers 11:29, Philippians 1:18
5. What was James and John's reaction to the Samaritans' rejection? How did Jesus respond to this great prejudice between the Jews and the Samaritans? How does the cross put Jews and Samaritans on equal footing? How would the cross change things between Jews and Samaritans in the future? See Luke 10:30-33. John 3:17
6. In verses 57-62, Jesus will interact with three different people. Let's look at them, one at a time, and ask the following two questions:
 - a. How does Jesus respond to the excuses offered by each person?
 - b. Read between the lines. What is at the heart of Jesus' response to each of these three people? What do they imply about the cost of being a follower of Jesus, especially in light of the cross?

RESPOND

Verse 62 gets right to the point, "Anyone who puts a hand to the plow and then looks back is not fit for the Kingdom of God." What things in this world trip us up and get us to look back?

Look at Matthew 6:33. According to this verse, what should be our first priority? How can we live that out in our day-to-day lives – for instance, at work? In our families? In our friendships? In our dreams and hopes for the future?

In verse 59, the man asks to "go and bury my father" before following Jesus. Some scholars say that the man's words did not indicate that his father was dead or on the brink of death, but rather that he wanted to wait until his father one day passed away before he followed the Lord. In other words, he wanted to surrender his life to God, but on his terms. Can you identify with this desire? What makes us want to follow Christ on our terms, rather than His? Which is better in the long run? Why?

WRAP UP

1. "This group does not exist for us." Put an empty chair in the middle of your prayer circle, with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
2. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.

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