

Let Us Deny Ourselves and Bear Our Crosses

(Luke 9:23)

Introduction:

1. During times of uncertainty, such as we have faced the past year, we need to appreciate the blessings that the Lord provides for His followers.
2. While we are grateful for the Lord's blessings, we must not overlook the responsibilities that He requires His followers to fulfill.
3. In Luke 9:23 Jesus revealed 2 of these responsibilities -- "denying ourselves" and "bearing our crosses."
4. To illustrate how important these responsibilities are, let us consider the Lord's statements in Luke 9:24-26.
5. In our lesson we are concentrating on the Lord's dealings with 3 men that we read about in Luke 9:57-62.
6. As we look at these men, let us examine our approach to the responsibilities that the Lord has given us.

Discussion:

- I. (vs.57-58) JESUS DEALT WITH A MAN WHO WANTED TO FOLLOW HIM
 - A. (vs.57) This man said he would follow Jesus wherever He went.
 1. This man was a volunteer as well as a "scribe" (Matthew 8:19).
 2. It would appear that he would have been an ideal follower of the Lord.
 - B. (vs.58) Jesus said that he would have to be willing to sacrifice to follow Him.
 1. Unlike foxes and birds, Jesus did not have a place to lay His head.
 2. If this man followed Jesus, he may not have had a place to lay his head.
 - C. This man had to examine himself.
 1. Was having a home or following the Lord more important to him?
 2. Was he willing to deny himself and bear his cross?
- II. (vs.59-60) JESUS DEALT WITH A MAN HE DID CALL
 - A. The Lord told him, "*Follow me.*"
 1. This man was a disciple of the Lord (Matthew 8:21).
 2. The Lord wanted this man to respond to His call as Peter, Andrew, James, John, and Matthew did (Matthew 4:18-22; 9:9).
 - B. This man asked the Lord to allow him **FIRST** to go and bury his father.
 1. This is interesting because if the man's father had been dead, he would have been taking care of burying him.

2. Perhaps this man's father was advanced in years and the son wanted to wait until after his death to follow Christ.
- C. Jesus responded by telling him to let others take care of this matter.
1. Jesus was not saying that we do not have responsibilities to our parents.
 2. Jesus apparently knew that someone else could take care of the father.
 3. Jesus had an important mission for this man -- to preach the kingdom of God.
- D. This man had to examine himself.
1. Who did he love more: his father or the Lord? (see Matthew 10:37)
 2. Was he willing to deny himself and bear his cross?
- III. (vs.61-62) JESUS DEALT WITH ANOTHER VOLUNTEER
- A. This man wanted to follow Jesus, but he **FIRST** wanted to say good-bye to those at his home.
1. He wanted to impose his own terms on following the Lord.
 2. His condition would cause him to take his focus off what was truly important.
- B. Jesus responded with those familiar words in vs.62.
- C. This man had to examine himself.
1. Was he willing to follow the Lord unconditionally?
 2. Was he willing to deny himself and bear his cross?

Conclusion:

1. When it comes to denying ourselves and bearing our crosses, we must put first those things that are of spiritual importance (Matthew 6:33a).
2. We can tell what is really important by observing where we give our greatest attention, effort, and interest.
3. The Lord will bless us abundantly for the sacrifices that we make on His behalf (Luke 18:29-30).