

Finders Weepers, Losers Keepers (Part 1)

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[0:00] Take your Bibles, would you, and open them to our text this morning, Luke chapter 9.

! And I'm going to be reading verses 23 through 27. That's our text. We're going to take a couple of Sundays to look at this passage. It's a key, a very key passage, not only in the Gospel of Luke, but in all of the Bible.

Of course, it is also given to us in both Matthew and Mark, each one, of course, giving a little bit more, some less, each one a little different perspective, but we're going to be looking at Luke's perspective on this particular event in the life of Jesus, or teaching in the life of Jesus.

But it is a key passage. It is one of those key truths in Scripture, as we shall see, I hope, by the time we're finished here this morning.

And before we get to the passage, and you can just hold it there, and hopefully you won't lose your place. We'll get to it in just a moment. But before I do, I want to make a connection.

[1:18] That is, to connect this particular text of Scripture with the text that precedes it, which we looked at last week, of course. Jesus, you remember, has just confirmed what God the Holy Spirit had revealed to Peter.

And not just to Peter, but to all of the apostles, because Peter is really the spokesman for the apostles. And so Jesus has confirmed what the Holy Spirit has confirmed or revealed to Peter about Jesus' true identity.

And in effect, he said, Peter, you're right. I am the Christ. There were any doubts in anybody's mind about it?

I want to confirm that right now without any doubt, without any vagueness whatsoever. I am the Messiah. You're right about that. And then Jesus warned his apostles not to tell anyone about it, which I'm sure was quite strange to them, quite a surprise to them.

And really to us as well. He said, don't tell anybody about this. And then Jesus told them why. Remember? Told them why.

[2:33] Why they must not tell a single soul that he is the Messiah. And this too would have been quite a shock to them. Because he said, he told them that the Messiah, the Christ, must be rejected.

That's not something they were expecting. He must be rejected. And not only rejected, but executed. And then resurrected on the third day.

And what was his point? His point was, apostles, nothing you preach, nothing you teach from this point on must in any way lead people to certain actions that might serve to stand in the way of my sacrificial work.

That is, I don't want you to teach them anything that would cause them to attempt to stand between me and my cross.

That's what he meant. And that's what we talked about last Sunday. Because Jesus had come to die. Not to rule. At least not yet.

[3:48] He had not come to rule. Jesus had come for a cross. Not yet for a crown. Jesus had his saving work.

His saving work. And that work must precede his sovereign work. That is, sovereign in the sense of his sovereign rule. As king. Now, of course, one day he will rule.

Okay? Praise the Lord. One day he will. One day Jesus will come as the king of glory. Now, yes, he is king now. Don't make any mistake about that. He is king.

He is king of kings and lord of lords. He is king now. In the first place, he is king in our hearts. That is, those of us who are born-again believers. His kingdom, his rule, his throne, as it were, resides within the heart of every born-again believer.

So he's king right now. But he's also, in reality, the king, the true king of heaven and earth. Don't make any mistake about that. But his kingship, his kingship has not yet been revealed to the world. [5:00] That is, in the sense that he has not yet manifested himself as king over all. He has not manifested himself clearly and openly as the supreme king of all.

He's not done that yet to this world. That's revealed in the scripture, of course. And revealed to his children, his born-again believers, but to the world. He's not yet been revealed.

He has not yet come to take his rightful throne. That is, the throne of David. Now, one day he will. Okay? Hallelujah. Hallelujah. One day he will. But that is not, apparently not this day.

Well, the day's not over yet. And I guess there's still time, obviously. He's going to come on schedule and establish his throne. But apparently it's not yet.

It certainly was not yet for his apostles when Jesus was having this teachable moment with them. He's not come yet to be king.

[6:00] So that's why I said last week that today, as born-again believers, as the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are to be about his saving ministry. That's what we're to be about.

And we're to be about that until he comes one day to sit upon David's throne. But the problem is, and I want to say this again to all of us in case there's some confusion.

The problem is that we have a tendency to want Jesus to do his kingly work on this earth right now. And, I mean, beyond our own personal lives and the lives of his people.

We want him to do his kingly work on this earth right now before Jesus finishes his saving work, which is what he's doing right now. His saving work. And so too many of God's people today, especially Christians in this country, especially in America, are trying to bring a culture under the rule of Christ and to do it somehow apart from preaching the cross, preaching the gospel.

And so we try to put Jesus on the throne of our nation by getting the right judges appointed, you know. And by supporting the right legislation.

[7:19] And by getting the right lawmakers elected. Now, I think it's all right for us to be involved in that. Please don't misunderstand me. But we're trying to bring the culture somehow under the rule of Christ right now by somehow getting the right lawmakers elected, whether it's in Congress or whether it's the White House.

But I assure you, dear people, that Jesus will never sit in the White House. That would be a step down for him. Okay. Because one day he will rule every nation.

But that's not right now. Because right now he is still the rejected Christ. Wouldn't you agree with that? He is still widely rejected in this world.

And he is still the crucified Christ. Christ whose cross must be proclaimed. And, of course, he is the resurrected Christ. Resurrected on the third day by his power so that all who will believe in him may be saved from their sins.

Now, we talked about all that last Sunday. And so why am I bringing that up again? Well, because our text for this morning is a continuation of this discussion that Jesus had with disciples.

[8:34] Although he broadens now his discussion or his instructions beyond the disciples to a lot of other people. But his theme is still the same.

Jesus continues here in our passage with the theme of death. That's how he concluded the passage we looked at last week. His own death. Rejection and death.

And so he continues that theme. The theme is death. And the theme here is sacrifice. The theme is the cross. But not his cross now.

The theme now is the disciples' cross. All right, now we're ready to look at the passage, okay? Luke chapter 9, starting with verse 23. Then he said to them all, If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

For whoever desires to save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world and is himself destroyed or lost?

[9:47] For whoever is ashamed of me and my words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when he comes in his own glory and in his Father's and of the holy angels.

And I tell you truly, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the kingdom of God. Now, I would say very clearly, this is an invitation.

This is an invitation. Jesus is very clearly inviting people to follow him.

That's what he's doing here. Essentially, I would suggest to you that this is a gospel invitation in its purest form. A gospel invitation. But there's something, of course, quite striking about it.

What is that? Well, it is that it is so totally different from the typical kinds of invitations that are extended today by many preachers, many churches in our day-to-day.

[10:51] Because we have a tendency, at least in our culture, in our world, we have a tendency to make our invitations to follow Christ so easy and so non-threatening.

We tend to extend invitations to follow Christ that are void, almost completely void of any sacrifice. That, I think, pretty well characterizes many of the gospel, quote, gospel invitations that are extended in our day-to-day.

That's because we're more interested in a positive decision for Christ than we are for any real conversion to Christ. And the reason why we're more interested in a positive decision for Christ rather than any real bonafide conversion to Christ is because we're more interested in growing our church than we are in any real growth to the kingdom of God.

That's just kind of how we have declined, really, here in America. But what can we say about Jesus' invitation?

I mean, if this is an invitation, and it clearly is, then what can we say about His invitation? Well, in the first place, He's speaking to the multitudes. That's important for us to note in this passage right at the beginning.

[12:18] He's not just speaking to His disciples. He's speaking to the multitudes. Luke says here that He said to them all. And in case we're misunderstanding that, Mark kind of fills in the blank a little bit there.

In Mark 8.34, in his account of this same event, Mark says that He called the people to Himself. The crowd, literally.

The crowd with His disciples also. And so this is an invitation extended to all, all who were there, this multitude of people.

And also then, what can we say about the invitation itself? Well, what is the invitation? Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me.

That's the invitation. If you're going to follow me, if you're going to come after me, if you're going to be one of my disciples, deny yourself, take up your cross daily, and follow me.

[13:28] I would say that the essence of the invitation is in verse 24, where He says, Lose your life in order to save it. That's the invitation. I'd say to you that how different this is from gospel invitations that are extended today by many.

I would also suggest to you that Christianity, the Christianity of the Western world, and when I say the Western world, I'm really talking about, you know, about the Western half of Europe and stretching all the way across to the Western coast of California in our own country.

The Christianity of the Western world has all but been eclipsed by an easy-believism kind of gospel. One that barely resembles the biblical gospel.

The gospel according to Christ, to Jesus Christ. Now, what about this invitation? That's the first thing we need to see. That's the first thing we have in the text.

An invitation. What can we understand? What must we see about this invitation? That's the first thing. In verse 23, we have Jesus' invitation.

[14:42] Very clearly extended. An invitation. And this will be our focus for this morning. And then, in verses 24, 25, and 26, we have Jesus' explanation of the invitation.

In a sense, an explanation with application. Kind of expanding, giving a full explanation of the invitation. That's what we see in those three verses, and we'll get to that next Sunday.

And with that, we'll see in verse 27 what I would call an affirmation. An affirmation of what is in store for all those who respond correctly, the right way, the only way, to the invitation.

First, the invitation. Look at it again. Verse 23. Then he said to them all, If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

There's the invitation. Come. Deny yourself. Take up the cross. Follow me. That's the invitation.

[16:06] Or we could word it this way. Deny yourself. Die to yourself. And dedicate yourself to me.

That's the invitation. Now, understand a few things here. And this is very important because some have misunderstood at this very point and have missed the entire importance, significance, and power of what Jesus is saying.

Understand that this is not an invitation to some higher level of discipleship. Now, we could wish that that's the case here.

You know, some higher level that we could choose or not choose. He's not talking about a higher level of discipleship. Do you understand that?

Jesus is not just talking to his disciples here. If he were just talking to his already disciples, then maybe we could come to that conclusion. He's not talking to just his disciples, those who are already following him.

[17 : 15] And he's not saying then, he's not saying to them, okay, fellows, who's ready now to go to the next level with me? That's not what this is about.

You know, as if Christian discipleship is some health care plan. You know, you've got the bronze plan, the silver plan, and the gold plan. You can just choose. And maybe you're on the bronze plan, and at some point, you kind of are ready to graduate to the silver plan.

And so, Christianity is not like that. And that's not what Jesus is talking about. Jesus is not just talking to his disciples. Again, I point this out because it's very crucial we see this.

He's speaking to the multitudes. He says, if anyone of you desires to come after me, he says in verse 24, whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

This is the one invitation to be his disciple, to be one of his true disciples, the one and only invitation. And it is a gospel invitation.

[18 : 24] In the second place, and this is very obvious, Jesus is absolutely honest. He's giving a full disclosure.

He's being very transparent. This is not one of those bait and hook or bait and switch kind of methods of evangelism. He is revealing on the front end what it's going to cost you.

Are you willing? Are you willing to pay it? It's not like the, and excuse me for being a little political, but it's not like the current health care law debacle that's going on in our country today.

Which really resembles more the TV game show, Let's Make a Deal. You remember that one?

Well, I guess it's still on TV today. I saw it not too long ago. Although it's not like it was back when I was a kid and Monty Hall was, you know, the whatever you call it, the host.

You know, those are just weird, wacko people coming on the set dressed in the strangest of things, you know. And they come up there and Monty Hall's there and it's time to make a deal.

[19 : 36] You know, maybe here's a pretty good scenario. They've got \$100. They already have \$100. And now, would you like to trade that \$100 for what's in my pocket?

Of course, you don't know what's in his pocket. Or, better yet, would you like to trade that \$100 for what's behind door number one?

Or door number two? Or door number three? And then you have to choose, of course, because you don't know which door has the big prize and which one has the booby prize. Yeah.

I suspect that with the affordable health care law, all the doors have booby prizes behind them. But you can make up your own mind about that.

There's no bait and switch with Jesus. There's no hook and then grab you and then you're caught kind of thing. Jesus holds no punches.

[20 : 36] Jesus is not like our evangelism, our typical kind of evangelism where, you know, it's just simply on the front end, God loves you. He has a wonderful plan for your life.

Without any mention of what it will cost. Your total sacrifice to Jesus as Lord, as Supreme Master of your life.

But Jesus holds no punches. He says, you want to come after me? You want to follow me? You want to be one of my disciples? Here's what I require. First of all, deny yourself.

That's the first thing he says. Deny yourself. Which is something that is almost totally foreign.

To most of us. All of us, really. We're locked into our own culture. Denying yourself is not something Americans do very well.

[21 : 45] Do we? This is what Jesus said. Deny yourself. John Calvin said that self-denial is the sum of the Christian life.

That is what he meant was you can sum up the genuine Christian life with just two words. Deny yourself. Deny yourself.

I'm not talking about a Christian-like life. Or a Christian-looking life. Which I'm afraid to say a lot of people have rather than the real thing. They just kind of look Christian.

Living according to some Christian principles. But it's just a Christian-like life. But real Christianity is summed up with these two words. Deny yourself.

But now what does that mean? Really? What does that mean? Well, Jesus is going to give, I think, a full explanation of this.

[22:47] A full example of it. In the next few verses. And we'll get to that next Sunday. But let me give you a good definition. A good definition of self-denial in the Christian context.

Self-denial is the willful abandonment of anything in your life that would seek to challenge your complete loyalty to Christ and his kingdom.

Man. Is it possible that that could be what Jesus means? Self-denial? That I would willfully abandon, forsake anything in my life that would seek to challenge my complete loyalty, my complete allegiance to Christ and his kingdom.

Be it my desire for possessions. That has to leave the list. My desire for possessions. Not just simply to have more, but to keep what I have.

Or be it the influence of people in my life. Or be it the desire for power. Glory.

[24:17] Self-glory. Or be it the desire for personal achievement. I mean, we're all, we've all been fed on these things all of our lives.

And even to entertain the thought of abandoning these things for Christ is such a totally foreign thing to our way of thinking.

Whatever it may be. Whatever it may be. The pride of life itself. Valuing my life so much. That it would draw me away from my loyalty and allegiance to Christ and to his kingdom.

Or the promotion of man. You know, what others think about me. And on and on we could go. And listen, if you think that that's a little unreasonable.

And that surely Jesus does not mean that. Then why don't you just look with me to Luke chapter 14 and verse 25. Luke 14 and verse 25.

[25:33] This is not, I mean, this is another occasion where Jesus is speaking on the same subject. You see this theme numerous places in the gospel, in the teachings of Christ and in other places in the Bible.

Now great multitudes went with him and he turned and said to them. To whom? His disciples? No. The multitudes. He said to them. If anyone comes to me and does not hate his mother and father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sister, yes.

And his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. I know we would like to, you know, say, well, let's explain that. Certainly he doesn't want us to hate our mothers.

Well, no, he doesn't. This is kind of a hyperbole. This is exaggeration. But don't soften it too much. Because he's saying that, again, self-denial is anything and even anyone who would vie for my loyalty and allegiance to Christ, they are to be forsaken.

[26:43] But he goes on. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. We'll get to cross bearing in a moment.

For which of you intending to build a tower does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it? I mean, no thinking person who's going to build a tower would just start building without thinking about the cost.

Lest after he has laid the foundation he is not able to finish. All who see it begin to mock him, saying, this man began to build and was not able to finish.

Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with 10,000 to meet him, who comes against him with 20,000. Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace.

And we're not talking about, you know, different kinds of genuine conversions here. We're talking about a false profession. Someone who did not count the cost and did not truly believe.

[27:50] And therefore, the life does not give an example of absolute self-denial. For Christ. You're not going to do these things, you know, or else, while the, he says, so likewise, whether you, you, what, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be my disciple.

It's just strong, strong stuff. And, you know, we want to say, well, surely he's got to mean something else here. But he does not. Self-denial.

Self-denial is the sum, the sum of the Christian life. Historians have written a great deal about Robert E. Lee, you know, the great southern general whose Christianity was profound.

They've written a lot about it. And their story has been told about a young mother who came to Lee later in his life. In fact, not long after this, Lee went on to be with Jesus.

And this young mother came to Lee with her infant, new infant. And she brought the infant to Lee that he might bless, bless him. And so Lee took the child in his, in his arms and hands and he looked at the child.

[29 : 11] And then he looked at the mother. And he said to the mother, he said, teach him to deny himself. That is all. Can you think of anything more contrary, so absolutely diametrically opposed to the way we raise our children today?

We raise them to do anything but deny self. It's indulge.

And that little ones that are born, they are born self-centered. And we grow up, we start out that way. And then I'm afraid to say that our culture continues to feed that.

Until there's, there's no even, not even any concept of self-denial. It's self-indulgence.

But Jesus said, you want to come after me? Here's what that looks like. Deny yourself. Then he said, second, die to yourself.

[30 : 41] I mean, it just gets worse, doesn't it? Die to yourself. And yet, really, just looking at those two things, deny yourself, die to yourself, they seem similar.

But they're not synonymous. Not just the two ways of saying the same thing. For the crowds in the disciples there that day, when they heard Jesus say that, they knew exactly what he was talking about.

There was no ambiguity in their minds about what Jesus meant. When he said, take up your cross. They knew he was talking about death. And so when Jesus said, if anyone desires to come after me, let him take up his cross. They had a vivid image of what that was like.

What that meant. They had that image in their minds. Now, our understanding of what Jesus meant here by the word cross. I mean, we do understand.

[31 : 50] But it's solely based upon what we've learned from history. Biblical history, primarily. And we know about the cross. We know about crucifixion as a method of execution that was widely used in ancient times.

In biblical times. Even before biblical times. We know that. But we have never, not any of us here, ever witnessed an actual crucifixion, have we? Now, we've seen it portrayed.

And Hollywood of late has done a pretty good job of portraying it, I think, just exactly probably the way it was. In all its gruesome realities. But we've never witnessed anyone being crucified.

And let me take that a step further. Not any of us have ever had a family member crucified before our very eyes. And yet many of these people had.

Jesus was preaching in the region of Galilee. And there was, I think, not a single Galilean who had not witnessed the Romans coming into their city or village.

[32 : 54] And arresting groups of people. And then laying a piece of rough timber across their shoulders. So that they could carry that rough piece of timber through the main streets of the city as a public example.

And then nailing that person to that piece of wood. And then lifting them up and laying that on top of an upright post.

And then nailing their feet to that upright post. While their friends and family and loved ones stood there wailing in bitter tears. They had all witnessed such a thing.

In fact, when Jesus was just a lad. A revolt against the Romans was led by a man by the name of Judas. Judas the Galilean he was called.

It's just a matter of history. And Judas the Galilean and his rebels. They wreaked havoc around the region of Galilee.

[33 : 59] As they fought against the Romans and the Roman rule and so forth. And their headquarters was in a town by the name of Sepphorus. Which was just a few miles from Nazareth.

Where Jesus lived and was raised. But the Romans of course were going to allow this to go on. And so they sent Publius Quintilius Varus. To come with three legions of soldiers.

About 20,000 Roman soldiers. To put down this rebellion. And they did that very handily. And they burned Sepphorus down to the ground. And made all of their citizens slaves.

And then they crucified all the rebels. Some 2,000 crosses lined the roads. The main highways and roads in Galilee. And on the hillsides and so forth.

As a gruesome reminder to the Galileans. About who's in charge. They didn't have any confusion in their minds. About what Jesus was talking about.

[34:58] He was talking about death. He was talking about crucifixion. And many of Jesus' disciples of course. Were actually crucified.

In the years of the first century church. Nero even had many of them. Soaked in oil. Then crucified. And then lit on fire. To become human torches. For his garden parties.

Yeah they knew all about this. But all that's fine. What does it mean for us? When Jesus says take up your cross. What does that mean?

To you. To me. Well Jesus does say. Take up your cross. Daily. Isn't that what he said?

Daily. And so to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. May result in actual physical death. As it has for countless.

[35:58] Countless believers. Since the first century. It may mean that. But of course. You know. You can't do that every day. Right? I mean.

No. No one can die more than once. And also. To be a disciple of Jesus. May bring about physical suffering. At the hands of a persecutor. Torture.

Imprisonment. As it has happened to many. Of God's people. Throughout the centuries of the church. But I don't know too many American Christians.

Who have to worry about that. Unless you go to another country. At least today. We're not really concerned about that.

Are we? About being tortured. Because of our faith. And we may receive some persecution. Verbal persecution. Maybe some. Persecution with a little more teeth in it.

[37:00] In our day. And we're seeing that more and more. Happening in our country. But. To be actually physically tortured. Imprisoned. It's probably not going to happen.

Not for a while yet. Anyway. So what does it mean to us? Well I think the key to understanding. What Jesus means. Is to be found. Not so much in the word cross.

As the verb. Take up. That's what we need. To see here. Take up. Your cross daily. And what it speaks of.

Is a willingness. To trust. The will of God. In your life. No matter what. That may look like. And it's going to look.

A little different. For all of us. For each of us. To trust. The will of God. The providence of God. The leadership of God. To trust.

[38:01] What God allows. To come into your life. No matter what that may be. The cross. Was the will of God. For Jesus. Right?

Certainly. And it was a cruel. Painful. Painful. End. To his human life. No mistake about that. But Jesus.

Gladly. Took it up. He gladly. Took up his cross. For the joy. That was set before him. The Bible says. He willingly died.

He. Took up his cross. For you. For me. And so. To take up your cross. Daily. Means. To. Willingly. Bear. The hard things. Of this life. They are many. And all the while. Knowing. Now this is the hard part. Knowing that God.

[39:00] Has ordained them. We have to believe that. As our. As his children. Our lives. Are hidden. His life. And not anything.

Comes into. Our lives. That does not. Come through. Is not filtered through. His sovereign. Loving. Hands. For us. So we are.

Willing to take. Those things up. Knowing that. It's the will of God. Ordained. For us. In fact. God has actually. Prepared these things.

For us. For our. Eternal benefit. And I. I'm not talking about. Just let go.

And let God. Kind of thing. I'm talking about. Trusting God. With those things. That come into your life. And if God gives you. The wisdom. To do something.

[39:54] About them. Or gives you the wisdom. To avoid certain things. And you ought to. But God is going to. Even when we. Don't use our wisdom. And we sin. Or we go a certain direction. And those things.

Come upon us. Even that is a part. Of his will. For us. A part of his purpose. For us. And we should not. Be complaining. To him about it. We all face.

Various problems. And afflictions. In life. Every single one of us. Life is full. Of heartaches. And hardships. And losses. Of many different kinds. And so. How does a true disciple.

Of Jesus. Respond. To these afflictions. We take them up. We take them up daily. You say. Well what about the people.

Who do wicked things. To me. Well what about them. You take it up. You take it up. You take it up. Because you know. That this is God's. Will for your life.

[40:51] And he has a purpose. For you. Even if the wicked acts. Are done by. People. Around you. Now God's going to deal with them. You don't have to worry about that.

That doesn't mean that. Because they were. Somehow the instrument of God. Then they get off. Scott free. No that's not the point. It's what God's doing. In your life. Is the point. Get all you can get. Out of what God's doing. In your life. You take it up. Remember Joseph. What Joseph said. To his brothers. Remember his brothers. Brothers were jealous. Of him. You know where I'm going. With this. Most famous.

One of the most famous. Quotes. In the Old Testament. Joseph's brothers. Were jealous. And they sold him. Into slavery. But then. By the providence of God. He ended up. A powerful prince. Of Egypt. And he's standing. Before his brothers. Who are. I'm sure. Shaking in their. Not boots. But sandals. And they're waiting. To see what this. Joseph's going to do now.

[41:46] Now they've discovered. That he is their brother. The one that they sold. Sold into slavery. And what does Joseph. Say to them. He says. What you. You meant. It for evil.

And they did. Didn't they? They meant it for evil. They're not doing. A good thing. It's an evil thing. You meant it for evil. Evil. But then what did he say? God.

God. He meant it. For good. That. That really kind of. Sums up this whole principle. Right there. Joseph. His very life. And what he said. What he believed. And what he took up.

In his life. Sums this up. I mean. People. Treat. You badly. Life. Treats you badly.

Sometimes. Sometimes. And our natural response. Is resentment. Resentment. Especially when it has. Do with people. And anger. And revenge. And retaliation.

[42:43] And so forth. Or. If it's just simply. The events of life. It's sometimes. Our reaction. Is confusion. Discouragement. And depression. And bitterness.

Even. Toward God. And here's. What Jesus says. You must. Put. It. To death. You must.

Die to that. And take up. Your cross. Daily. Adrian Rogers. Used to say. Dead people.

Don't have any rights. All believers. Are dead in Christ. We're looking at. Jesus invitation.

To be one of his disciples. And we're not really liking it. Are we? Oh don't look so spiritual. Out there.

[43:39] We don't really like this. He said. If you're going to come after me. You desire to come after me. Deny. Yourself. Die. To self. And then third and finally.

And this is the ultimate conclusion. Dedicate yourself. Dedicate yourself. That's all you've got left. If you're going to deny yourself. And then. Die to yourself.

Then you're going to dedicate yourself. To God. To Christ. That's the whole point of this. He said. Follow me. That.

That. By the way. Is what makes all this worth anything. Is to follow Jesus. See. When you deny yourself.

Let's just think of this logically a minute. If you deny yourself. You are turning your attention. Away from.

[44:34] What you want. In this life. To what Christ wants. Isn't that what that means? It means sacrifice.

That's what it means. Deny yourself. You. Are turning your attention. Away from. What you. Want. In this life. To what Christ wants.

And. When you. Die to yourself. You are turning your attention. Away from what. Others. Are doing to you. In this life.

And even what life. Is doing to you. Turning your attention. To what Christ. Is doing. And seeing.

That. Everything. That happens. Is a part of what he's doing.

In your life. We don't like it. At the time. But that's. What we understand. We can trust him. And then finally.

[45:34] When you. Dedicate yourself. You are turning your attention. Away from. The ways. The truths. The life. Of this world.

And turning your attention. To. The way. The truth. The life. Which is Christ. Which is Christ.

Following him. Obeying him. Living for him. And. Jesus was walking. By the sea of Galilee.

And saw Simon and Andrew. A couple of brothers. And they were fishing. The Bible says. They were casting their nets. Into the sea. And Jesus said.
Follow me. And the Bible says. They immediately. Left their nets. And followed him. Deny. Die.
[46 : 31] Dedicate. Jesus was walking. By a man. By the name of Matthew. A tax collector. And he was there. The Bible says. Sitting at his booth.
Doing his business. Making his money. All tax collectors. In that day. Were pretty wealthy people. And Jesus said.
To Matthew. Follow me. And the Bible says. He left all. Rose up. And followed him. That's the invitation. That's the invitation.
And there's only one. Right response. Deny yourself. Take up your cross daily. And follow Jesus. Jesus said. In Matthew. 10. Verse 39. He says. The same thing. Uses different words.
[47 : 31] He says. He who. Finds. His life. His own life. Will lose it. That's what you're about.
If. You're looking for your own life. My own way. Things I want. You find your life. Guess what? You lose it. And he who.
Loses. His life. Not just physically. It's. Believe me. Much harder than just. Losing your life. Physically. But lose your own life.
He said. For. My sake. We'll find it. That's why. Jesus way.
Is. Totally opposite. Of our. Because with Jesus. It's. Finders. Weepers.
[48 : 31] Losers. Keepers. Thank you.