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Lent Day 33: The Call

3-4 minutes

Luke 9:18-27 (ESV)

Now it happened that as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him. And he asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" And they answered, "John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen." Then he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered, "The Christ of God."

And he strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised."

And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but 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? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."

After spending days and nights with Jesus, witnessing his words and works first hand, Peter could make an absolute confession that Jesus was the Christ, the promised one of God. Those further from Jesus were less resolute in their faiths, often believing him to be a prophet, but those who followed him regularly knew that he was not simply a messenger, but the message itself. After Peter's confession, Jesus tried to help them understand his mission and what it looked like to follow him, but Jesus was not the kind of Messiah they were expecting, and following him was not what they thought it was going to be like.

Jesus issues a clear call to those who might follow him, that allegiance to him requires denying yourself, taking up your cross daily and following him. Then and now his words are difficult. We live in a culture that teaches us to glorify ourselves and to pursue comfort, control and the satisfaction of our desires above all else. To deny oneself and pursue the things of God can feel like death, but that is what Jesus calls us to. He tells us that to follow him we will have to relinquish all control and endure suffering and rejection, but he also promises that this will make us like him. In him, triumph will come through suffering. Jesus is calling us to lose our lives as we know them, but only so that he might give us real and eternal life in him. Do you hear him calling you? Are you willing to deny yourself and take up your cross in order to follow him? Do you trust that he will lead you to life?

Prayer

Gracious God, we thank you that you have revealed your Son to us, that Jesus is the Christ, the deliverer we all need. Please give us the grace we need to follow you. You alone are worthy and we want to give you our lives, but need your help to do so. In Christ's

Name, Amen.

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