

**Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)**

**Luke 9: 18-27**

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. Today, we will continue reading Luke chapter 9, verses 18 to 27.

Earlier we mentioned that the account beginning in verse 18 is actually separated by several months from the previous miracle of the five loaves and two fish. Luke chose not to record the events that happened in between, but instead moves directly from the miracle of the five loaves and two fish to what took place several months later, when Jesus took His disciples to Caesarea Philippi. We believe Luke had his particular reasons for doing so, and we hope that as we read the Scriptures we may gradually ponder them. Although we may not be able to fully understand Luke's original intent, we ask God to help us, and in the process of reading His word, to grant us revelation and light.

**Verse 18: "And it happened, as He was alone praying, that His disciples joined Him, and He asked them, saying, 'Who do the crowds say that I am?'"**

Because of Jesus' ministry, His fame had already spread throughout the region around the Sea of Galilee, and it had even disturbed Herod the king. He had heard people say that this man was John risen from the dead; others said Elijah; and still others said that one of the ancient prophets had risen again. Against such a background, Jesus left with His disciples and went north, to the region near Mount Hermon, to Caesarea Philippi. While Jesus was praying, the disciples were with Him. His prayer should be understood as the unity and fellowship within the Triune God. Jesus sensed that the time had come to enter the final stage of His ministry—the last six months. He had to begin telling His disciples about His going to Jerusalem to be crucified. In this context, He first asked His disciples, Who do the crowds say that I am?

**Verse 19: “So they answered and said, ‘John the Baptist, but some say Elijah; and others say that one of the old prophets has risen again.’”**

What the disciples said here was almost exactly the same as what Herod had previously heard. Luke deliberately strings these events together, placing the miracle of the five loaves and two fish in between. Clearly, Luke intends to show us that the five loaves and two fish signify that Jesus Himself becomes the supply for us all and becomes the ransom for us all. Luke then records what happened at Caesarea Philippi: Jesus first asked His disciples, Who do the crowds say that I am?

**Verse 20: “He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Peter answered and said, ‘The Christ of God.’”**

After that, Jesus asked His disciples, But who do you say that I am? This is an extremely important question. One day, Jesus will personally ask every person who follows Him, Who do you say that I am? If this question is not clear, it is very difficult for us to follow the Lord faithfully throughout our whole lives. Among the twelve disciples at that time, each one followed the Lord with different motives, yet that did not matter. Likewise, each of us who has been saved came to follow the Lord under different circumstances and considerations. These are only the beginning, and they are not the crucial matter. But one day, Jesus will personally ask you, Who do you say that I am? This most critical question determines how we will follow Jesus thereafter.

Thank the Lord, among the twelve disciples there was Peter, who immediately answered, The Christ of God. Luke is very distinctive here; he stops at this point. In Matthew chapter 16, the record there is quite different. When Jesus heard Peter’s confession, Matthew 16:17–18 says, “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.’” In other words, Peter’s recognition was a tremendously great recognition—so great that Jesus had to declare, You are blessed; this revelation was given to you by My Father

in heaven. Not only so, but I also tell you, I will build My church upon this rock, that is, upon such a revelation.

But in the Gospel of Luke, he chooses not to record any of this. It seems very straightforward: Peter said, The Christ of God. Luke especially portrays Jesus as gentle and pure, and as the Son of Man who desires to establish a most beautiful relationship with every person who belongs to Him. In other words, through Jesus' question, Luke is also asking every reader of his Gospel, Who do you say that I am?

We hope that every reader can learn from Peter and say, You are the Christ of God. To Luke, such recognition does not seem extraordinary at all; rather, it is the recognition that every follower of Jesus Christ must have. If today you cannot confess that Jesus is the Christ, it is very difficult to follow the Lord well. Why? Because immediately after such recognition, Jesus will continue to speak to you.

**Verses 21–22: “And He strictly warned 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 be raised the third day.’”**

In other words, once you recognize that Jesus is the Christ, you must understand that the path Christ walked is not an easy one. It is a path of sacrifice, a path of the cross. He will suffer; He will be rejected. Rejected by whom? By the elders, chief priests, and scribes—the leaders of Israel's society, those who were esteemed by the people. These would reject Him. Not only rejected, but rejected to the point of being killed. But thank the Lord, what is rejected on earth is accepted in heaven; on the third day He will rise from the dead.

To recognize Jesus as the Christ, one must also recognize that Christ is the One who was rejected, who passed through suffering, yet ultimately was exalted by God and raised 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.’”**

Luke goes on to tell us that to recognize Jesus as the Christ is to know that He would suffer. Not only so, every person who truly desires to follow the Lord must walk the path that Jesus walked. That is to say, if anyone desires to follow Christ, he must deny himself. To deny oneself means to deny your self interests, desires, etc. If you love comfort, lay aside comfort; if you love freedom, lay aside your freedom; if you love enjoyment, lay aside your enjoyment. In denying yourself, you must also take up your cross daily and follow the Lord.

**Verse 24: “For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.”**

Here the word life in Greek is *psuche*, which is often translated in English as soul. You may read it this way: For whoever desires to save his soul-life will lose his soul-life, but whoever loses his soul-life for My sake will save his soul-life.

The soul is our mind, our emotions, and our will—how we think, what we like and love, how we make decisions. That is our soul, or our self. If you seek to preserve your own self, if you want your soul to remain intact, in the end you will lose your soul.

“But whoever loses his soul-life for My sake will save it.” Our soul-life has no value in itself, because it operates according to our own thoughts, loving what we love and making the decisions we choose. But if you hand over the sovereignty of your soul to the Lord, then you can take the mind of the Lord Jesus Christ as your mind, His preferences as your preferences, and His decisions as your decisions. If you do this, you will instead save your soul-life.

**Verse 25: “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?”**

Everything in this world hopes that we will throw our whole being into it—using our mind for the world, our emotions for the world, and our will for the world. Then, after you have fully invested yourself and gained the whole world, your mind, emotions, and will—your entire self—are lost, because in the end the world is nothing but vanity, and after vanity comes the judgment of God. Therefore, if you gain the whole world and lose your own soul, or lose your very self, what profit is there? For what you obtain is merely the praise of the world, merely temporary glory, merely emptiness belonging to the earth.

**Verse 26: “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.”**

Here Jesus clearly sets Himself in contrast with the world. If for the sake of the world you forfeit your self, in the end there is no benefit at all. If for the sake of the world you regard the Lord and His words as shameful, then one day, when the Lord Jesus comes in His glory—coming with the glory of the Father and of the holy angels—when He comes in that heavenly glory, He will also regard you as shameful. Today, if in order to protect yourself and to love the world you lay aside the word of God, on that day the Lord will also regard you as shameful.

**Verse 27: “But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the kingdom of God.”**

In other words, Jesus was telling His disciples that what He was speaking was not vague or illusory; very soon some among them would see it. Of course, many interpreters believe that what He referred to here is what is recorded next—the event of His transfiguration on the mountain, when He revealed the glory of the kingdom of God to several of His disciples. Whether a person can follow the Lord depends entirely on how he knows the Lord—whether he recognizes that He is the

Christ. Once you recognize that He is the Christ, you must know that when He comes again, He will come in glory.

If today you are willing to take up the cross and follow the Lord, though we may have tribulations on earth and encounter what Jesus Christ encountered on earth, one day when He comes in His glory and in the glory of the angels, you will be exalted. But if today you refuse to let go, refuse to lay aside the world and all that belongs to it, then on that day you will not be able to stand together with Jesus Christ in glory. In order to encourage everyone who follows Him, God is able and very willing to let us have a foretaste of the glory of the kingdom of God. That is why Jesus said that before tasting death, they would see the kingdom of God.

Let us pray together: Lord, we confess that it is not by our own ability that we can follow You, but by truly knowing You. We ask that You would unveil to us Your priceless manifestation, so that we may know that the One we follow is the best and the glorious One. In Your glory, remember each one of us who desires to follow You yet at times feels weak and unable. Help us to see Your glory, and help us in our daily lives to be willing to take up our cross. Bless my life. I pray in the holy name of Jesus Christ. Amen.