

# Luke 9:1-27 // The Saviour's Call

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[ 0 : 00 ] Today's reading can be found on page 1038 of the Pew Bibles.

! It's Luke 9, verses 1 to 27.! Jesus sends out the twelve.

When Jesus had called the twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal those who were ill.

He told them, Take nothing for the journey, no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra shirt. Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town.

If people do not welcome you, leave their town and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them. So they set out and went from village to village, proclaiming the good news and healing people everywhere.

[ 1 : 13 ] Now Herod the Tetrar heard about all that was going on, and he was perplexed, because some were saying that John had been raised from the dead, others that Elijah had appeared, and still others that one of the prophets of long ago had come back to life.

But Herod said, I beheaded John. Who then is this I hear such things about? And he tried to see him. Jesus feeds the 5,000.

When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done. Then he took them with him, and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida.

But the crowds learned about it and followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God and healed those who needed healing. Now late in the afternoon, the twelve came to him and said, Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging, because we are in a remote place here.

He replied, You give them something to eat. They answered, We have only five loaves of bread and two fish, unless we go and buy food for all this crowd.

[ 2 : 33 ] There was about 5,000 men were there. But he said to his disciples, Make them sit down in groups of about 50 each. The disciples did so, and everyone sat down.

Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to distribute to the people.

They all ate and were satisfied. And the disciples picked up 12 basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

Peter declares that Jesus is the Messiah. Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, Who do the crowds say I am?

They replied, Some say John the Baptist. Others say Elijah. And still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life.

[ 3 : 35 ] But what about you? He asked. Who do you say I am? Peter answered, God's Messiah. Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone.

And he said, The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed, and on the third day be raised to life. And then he said to them all, Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it.

What good is it for someone to gain the whole world and yet lose or forfeit their very self? Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God. This is the word of the Lord. Thank you, Lamont, very much.

[ 5 : 02 ] If you could keep your Bibles open at Luke chapter 9, that would be a great help, and you can find an outline in the notice sheet to follow as we look at this together, just inside the notice sheet there.

But let's ask for God's help as we turn to his word. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you so much that you have revealed to us who you are, and through knowing you, we can know who we are.

And so we ask that as we turn to your word now, you will open your word to our hearts, and you'll open our hearts to your word. For we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, last week, the nation was gripped by celebrity traitors. If you missed out, the nation watched as 19 celebrities were placed in a castle somewhere near Dingwall, and three of them were secretly traitors.

That's how the game works. So the question for the 16 faithful throughout the series was, who do you really trust? Now, the surprise package of the series, I think, was Joe Marler, this man, former rugby player.

[ 6 : 12 ] So I don't think he was held up by the other celebrities early in the series as someone who was going to be one of the brightest of the bunch. And he was sensational.

He absolutely mastered the game. He had this big dog theory that worked. And about halfway through the series, he took a risk that Nick Muhammad, one of the other players, was a faithful. And he coined this phrase for this when he was in the private room with the camera. He said, Nick is my hundi. He's my hundi. Now a hundi, said Joe Marler, is someone you're 100% confident in. And he said, Nick is my hundi. Nick, is Nick here? Nick, if you're watching at home, there is forgiveness for what happened. It's only a game.

But you're very welcome. But anyway, Joe Marler said this, and we're allowed spoilers now, okay, although someone did put their hands in the rears at the 9.30, but we are three days on, right? 20 million people have already seen this.

[ 7 : 13 ] In the final, Joe got stitched up. He got totally double-crossed. Absolute scenes. But anyway, if you didn't see it, don't worry about any of that. We're in this series in Luke's Gospel, and we've seen why Luke wrote the Gospel.

The first four verses of his Gospel, he was a physician, and he went around and carefully investigated everything because he wants us to be 100% confident in Jesus, in Jesus' dependability, in his faithfulness, so that we can trust him and we're liberated from doubts that might hold us back from going all in with Jesus and appropriating the life that he offers.

And here in chapter 9, we see why it's so important that we are confident in Jesus because this chapter is full of instruction about what it means to follow Jesus.

And the heart of the call is in chapter 9, verse 23, if you just have a look there. Then Jesus said to them all, whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.

Three things there. First, he says, to follow Jesus is to choose to deny yourself. That is, it's time to step off the throne of your life and invite Jesus, the true king, to be in charge of your life from now on, to be the center of your life.

[ 8 : 40 ] And compared with everything we're told, this is completely upside down, isn't it? The buzzwords for our time are self-fulfillment, self-love, self-esteem, self-help, self-worth.

The message for our generation is don't you let anybody get in the way of the life that you deserve and you choose for yourself. Jesus instead calls us to self-denial, to say no to our personal preferences.

Using our gifts, time, talents, resources for ourselves, Jesus says, if you would come after me, stop doing that from now on. Instead, use all those things to please him as you let him be on the throne of your heart.

Then he says, take up your cross daily. And so this is about the extent to which his call applies. This phrase, take up your cross, gets misused sometimes today, doesn't it?

People will say, you know, I've got an irritating colleague or I've got a bad back but we all have our crosses to bear. In the first century you saw someone taking up their cross, they were carrying the cross beam on the way to be executed.

[ 9 : 59 ] Here then is the extent to which we are to be willing to deny ourselves for the sake of Jesus even to the point of death. And in some parts of the world today to call on the name of Jesus

means death.

But Jesus is saying here that it's a daily decision for every believer that you would say today and tomorrow and every day. Jesus, I'm ready to follow you today whatever the cost, wherever it leads me.

And then he says follow me. So to decide to follow Jesus is to go on an adventure into the unknown. We don't know where he will lead us. For some it leads you to live in places you'd never have chosen to live as you serve the gospel of Jesus.

I was at a meeting on Monday night about people at work for the gospel in Glasgow and there was a man who moved from a very nice rural area to the heart of Govan.

I'm not saying there's anything wrong with Govan but he moved into like urban density because him and his wife have moved there to tell people about Jesus in that community living where they never thought they'd live like Tim and Lauren who have moved from Sydney earlier this year to the east end of Glasgow and are calling on us to consider all of us whether we would move with them to help plant that new church in the east end.

[11:24] For others it affects it changes where we work as we might feel called to a different job where we feel we'd be more effective in life for Jesus' priorities his agenda or for others of us that we feel called to be set apart from secular work for full time gospel work.

For all of us with our time our money our talents our energy there is a handing over of it to Jesus. He's got the con he's in control. Now what do you think about that?

Maybe you're here today and as you think about your life Jesus' words here are they particularly point you to something specific in your life where you're aware you're not living as Jesus would want you to live and the spirit is convicting you of that to hand that over to the will of Jesus.

or maybe you're here today and as you think of Jesus saying take up your cross it makes you think of a situation where it's especially hard to be a Christian because of opposition.

Maybe you're belittled at high school for being a Christian by teachers. Maybe there's a particular relationship or it's in your workplace where it's costing you your reputation or a friendship or you're being left out or mocked or sidelined.

[12:45] Or for others of us maybe you're here today and when you hear Jesus call what strikes you is not a specific thing but just how comprehensive it is what Jesus says here that he's calling us to take all that we are and all that we have and offer it to him today and tomorrow and the next day for him not for me for his purposes.

So there's no spin with Jesus no hiding the small print he's not a salesman who tells you all the good bits and not the hard bits and nor should there be for us as his people.

We as a church are seeing wonderful growing numbers in our congregation of people who are just looking at Jesus they've not been in a church before they've not been for a long time they're exploring being drawn to Jesus and if you're like that today we're not covering up from you today that he says if you want to follow me it means radical self-denial for me it's a whole new direction for your life and the rest of us could ask ourselves would people be able to see that in my life today? And faced with that candor from Jesus we ask ourselves is it worth it? is it going to be worth that change of direction? And that's what the rest of the chapter is all about the disciples need to grasp three deeply reassuring reasons why we should be willing to follow Jesus whatever the cost the first is his provision that's our first point the provision Jesus gives he sends out his disciples in verse 1 and look at verse 3 he told them take nothing for the journey no staff no bag no bread no money no extra shirt it's extraordinary isn't it?

as they have to learn to rely on God and as they do that they go from village to village verse 6 and God is at work through them verse 6 they proclaim the good news of Jesus that in him the kingdom of God has come and they heal people everywhere notice there's quite a lot at this stage the disciples don't know it's only later in this very chapter that one of them realizes Jesus is the Messiah but he's already sent them out if you're here today and you're thinking is it too early am I too young a Christian to start telling people crack on he just sends them out to do it well the apostles return in verse 10 and they report to Jesus what they'd done mission accomplished Jesus man you should have seen what happened you should have been there it was amazing Jesus what happened they're learning that as you depend on him you experience his provision his sufficiency his adequacy and then Jesus withdraws with them from the busy crowds that have been overwhelming and I've got a map just on the screen to where they go they go to Bethsaida so this is the end of Jesus' ministry in this region the north of Israel

[16:06] Galilee and Bethsaida is a remote place you can see there on the map that it's up to the north of the Sea of Galilee where the Jordan River comes into the lake and so it was hard to get to on the water or even just on land as well so he withdraws with the twelve to instruct them but the crowd realize where he's gone and so we're told that they come en masse tremendous numbers even just the men there are five thousand so with women and children you're thinking this is like Fir Hill Stadium and Scottsdale Stadium at capacity of people arriving in a remote wilderness place and Jesus rather than dismiss them he's full of compassion verse 11 he welcomes them he teaches them about the kingdom of God so that they can know the living God they can encounter God and his grace he heals those who need healing this great mark of his future kingdom there's going to be no more sickness and no more sadness with him what a day it must have been a taste of heaven and then it gets to dusk and the disciples start to worry where are these guys going to get food send them away

Jesus verse 13 he commands them verse 13 he replied you give them something to eat and they say about mission if they were from Glasgow I think what they would have said is I write is that right?

I think that's right I think that is a correct use of I write where I'm from you'd say you're joking aren't you? that's what we would say in Glasgow I write that's not going to happen is it? because what they do is they look at what they've got five loaves and two fish this is impossible we can't do it about mission Jesus but what's really interesting about that is that he just sent them out to do impossible things and when they went and did it he did it through them now faced with a new challenge they focus on what they are able to do how much food do they have and I think the lesson there is that sometimes Jesus asks you to do things that you couldn't possibly do so that you are confronted with your own inadequacy and you discover and experience his dependability and we can be like the disciples faced with a new challenge that we can look back on our life and we can say well I remember God helped me here and I know that he helped me there and in fact he's always helped me but then we face a new challenge a new difficulty in our family in our workplace a trial we've not faced before and we have to learn all over again

I cannot do this but what I can do is turn to Jesus and lay it before him and trust his provision that he will equip me to do what he wants me to do here so they sit the people down in groups of 50 each even just the men that's 100 groups this is an enormous crowd and they've got these five loaves two fish but look at Jesus verse 16 taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven he gave thanks and broke them then he gave them to the disciples to distribute to the people he breaks off bread he gives it to the disciples they hand it out they come back he breaks off more he breaks off more he can create more each time and we read verse 17 there are outrageous leftovers the disciples picked up 12 basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over why are we told about the leftovers surely so that we would know nobody left that day thinking we just about managed to make do be good to stop off on the way home for more

[20:29] I remember I used to work as a lawyer and we the food we'd serve at meetings was kind of it depended on the nature of the client who was there and we we had this guy who came to be a witness on a trial and he was a lord you know he was gentry and I remember my boss phoning the catering team saying it's lord whoever it was it'd be nice to make an effort with the food and it was a very posh man and we were sat around having this meeting I really remember we were eating this food I'm thinking this is amazing and he said and he was talking this man and then he suddenly stopped and he went I really have had a very good lunch and I think that's the kind of thing people would have been saying in the crowd that day as seconds were called out the seconds and then thirds and leftovers are being gathered up because they've been offered round and people are saying I've done well thanks

I'm done that's the vibe when you're with Jesus what's the lesson well we looked at this passage we run this camping weekend for dads and kids in August as most of you will know dangerous camping the first time we ran it five years ago I had a group of guys in my pod of tents who I didn't know and we sat together on the Saturday morning dads and kids and we looked at this Bible passage and we played a game with the kids and then the kids acted it out and it was all great fun and then I said okay here's a question what does this show us about Jesus and there was this pause and one of the dads who hadn't said anything yet the whole time we'd been away I didn't know him he said you can trust him surely that's right isn't it that if you travel to Bethsaida that day if you were part of that crowd would you not be thinking to yourself there is no person I would rather be with than this man

this is a man you can trust and we've seen

Luke use a word here that is so resonant for our times and it's the word in verse 17 satisfied that whoever they were wherever they stood in society's pecking order they went to Jesus that day they all ate and were satisfied just consider how much of our lives today are driven towards that desire that goal that we would achieve something or have something that would mean we are able to say I'm satisfied Jesus demonstrates here that every single person who follows him will find the satisfaction that our hearts were made for and long for and let's connect that to his costly call it means that when following Jesus means we have to say no to things that we would have done or had or striven to get because we thought they would satisfy us we remember this that it's Jesus who satisfies I think of a friend who said to me recently he's having to explain to his teenage son who has decided that what he really wants to do in life is get rich that the reason that their lifestyle as a family is different to his school friends around him the reason they don't go on the same holidays the reason their house isn't in the same condition the reason their car is an older model it's not that his dad makes less money it's that he gives the money away to support gospel work I think of another friend for whom following Jesus has meant staying single and staying sexually pure when friends around him are thinking you're a fool you're missing out on the chance to be satisfied well picture Jesus that day and it is so effortless for him isn't it he's not like some Star Wars character that can use the force but needs to lie down for a bit to recover now this is the creator himself as a man so this is no trouble for him to give his people everything they need and it's a glimpse of our future with him later in Luke's gospel when he wants us to picture what the future will be like with him he says it will be like a banquet where he is the host picture him that day patiently teaching compassionately healing and then generously feeding and know today if you follow him whatever the cost personally you really will lack no good thing that's our first P provision secondly follow Jesus because of the person Jesus is notice this theme runs through the chapter so Luke brackets the feeding miracle with these questions who is this man if you have a look down verses seven to nine the news has reached the political leader the tyrant

[ 25 : 50 ] Herod that people are asking who is he verse nine Herod says who then is this I hear such things about then Luke shows us the feeding miracle then he brings us to the twelve in verse 18 and Jesus says who do the crowd say I am verse 19 they give the same answers Herod was getting some say you're John the Baptist others say you're Elijah and still others that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life what do all those people have in common they're all dead Jesus is so mind-blowing every theory people have about him in the crowd about who he might be is I think it's a dead person who's come back to life then it gets personal Jesus turns and says but what about you who do you say I am now this is the moment where there used to be this music video some of you might remember in the 80s where there was a woman reading a comic and there was a guy in the comic she was looking at and then his hand came out of the comic and pointed at her and this is one of those moments in the bible you're reading the bible and the finger points at you because this is the most important question any of us could ever have an answer to who do you say

Jesus is and Peter answers God's Messiah the Messiah is God's anointed one he has promised all through the Old Testament a rescuing king who will one day put the world right and bring God's people to God and for Peter the pennies dropped the lights have come on because in recent days he's seen Jesus has got the power to control nature he calmed a storm he's got authority over evil he can liberate people from demonic power he can heal the sick he can even raise the dead the widow taking out her dead son outside Nain had him restored alive again the synagogue leader had his daughter brought back to life Peter's piecing it all together and there's something climactic as well about this feeding miracle because it rings these Old Testament bells for us in verse 12 they were in the middle of nowhere he says it's a remote place

Luke literally he says it was a wilderness well when God's Old Testament people were in the wilderness it was God who fed them from heaven this is a God thing to do to feed people in a wilderness and so Peter has grasped who Jesus is and that's key not just in coming to be a Christian but in keeping going as a disciple we have to know exactly who Jesus is that's what justifies Jesus extraordinary call to deny ourselves and follow him and to say the things he says if you look at verse 26 when he says he'll one day come in his glory and in the glory of the father and of the holy angels there's no one like him if we're against him he will be against us when he comes in glory if we have trusted him and we're waiting for him then he'll give us life forever with him this is

the one relationship you and

I really mustn't mess up which leads to the sobering question what could possibly be worth so much to you that you would let it get in the way of handing over control of your life to this man Jesus puts it like this verse 25 what good is it for someone to gain the whole world and yet lose or forfeit their very self Elon Musk was in the news on Friday wasn't he he's got this new deal from the Tesla shareholders that could be worth a trillion dollars could make him a trillionaire how could it be worth it if it would mean being on the wrong side of Jesus if he is God's glorious majestic conquering forever king don't let anything hold you back and so Jesus sets out this paradox for us in verse 24 notice the for he starts with verse 24 so he's giving the reason why you'd be willing to deny yourself every day to follow him verse 24 whoever wants to save their life will lose it but whoever loses their life for me will save it so he's saying if you want to keep your life in your hands you'll lose life if you're willing to let go of your life and put it in his hands he'll safeguard it so when he says come and die he's actually saying come and die and live follow

Jesus because of his provision follow him because of his person who he is thirdly follow Jesus because of the pattern he sets now this comes as soon as Peter grasps who Jesus is you see that verse 20 he says God's Messiah and then his world is rocked verse 21 Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone and he said the son of man that's him must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders the chief priests and the teacher of the law and then he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life now for Peter and those around him the idea of a suffering Messiah is a complete contradiction in terms it's like he's heard the best news ever and then it got cancelled straight away it's like your team scored the 95th minute winner you went wild and then VAR spotted an offside and it got cancelled it's like you heard you won the lottery and then you realise it was a scam but here there's no scam disciples of

[ 32 : 13 ] Jesus just have to be absolutely clear about Jesus rescue mission we saw him in verse 16 look up to heaven in front of the crowd give thanks break the bread and give it to his disciples and later in Luke's gospel we'll see him give thanks to his heavenly father and break bread and give it to his disciples and he'll say this is my body the feeding miracle here seems effortless but rescuing sinners will cost Jesus his life and that puts his call on our lives to live a cross shaped life in a different light altogether does it not it's so good to remember this when following Jesus is sacrificial because when the Christian life is costly is tough we wobble don't we we're not expecting it we think I never realized it would be this costly the evenings we've given up for church activities the money we've given for gospel work the summer holidays we've missed out on to help with youth camps the opposition we faced in a world that rejects

Jesus but when we see the pattern of self denial in Jesus life it's the thing that makes his life most beautiful this is the beautiful way to live he laid down his life to serve others even you and me Charles Studd was an English cricketer born to a wealthy merchant he played cricket in the first ever Ashes test series but when he was 25 he stopped playing and set off for China to be a missionary there when he was there his father died and he was sent a vast inheritance and he gave the whole thing away to gospel work he said this if Jesus Christ be God and died for me then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for him that's the ordinary Christian life is Jesus costly call worth it for you well picture the crowd being taught being healed picture

Jesus breaking off the bread and the fish always having more and consider his provision his generosity that satisfies hear Peter's confession of the person of Jesus he's God's promised one we are going to meet him in glory and consider the pattern of his life that whatever it costs you to say yes to him it could never match what it cost him to say his yes to you let's have a moment of quiet and then I'll lead us in a prayer just a moment to consider God's word to us heavenly father we are deeply struck by this call to deny ourselves to take up our cross daily to follow

Jesus but father we thank you for who Jesus is as your Messiah that all your promises are yes in him we thank you for his provision and we thank you for the pattern of his life laying it down for us and so we ask that your spirit will deeply impress these truths on our hearts that we would go out ready to live for Jesus praise and glory amen