

Are You Following Jesus - Part 3 - Are You Denying Yourself

by Phil Beach Jr.

The sermon emphasizes the importance of following Jesus and denying ourselves for His sake, leading to a life of humility, honesty, and slavery to Him.

Duration: 1:10:29

Scripture: Matthew 16:24, Luke 14:33

Topics: "Denying Self", "Following Jesus", "Self-Denial"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the necessity of self-denial in following Jesus, urging believers to confront their pride and self-sufficiency that hinder their relationship with God. He calls for genuine repentance and brokenness, highlighting that true discipleship requires forsaking worldly pursuits and embracing a life of humility and obedience to Christ. The preacher stresses that following Jesus means laying down personal agendas and desires, and instead, being led by the Holy Spirit to fulfill God's will. He warns against the dangers of making excuses that prevent true discipleship and encourages a deep longing for God's presence in our lives and communities.

Transcript

Testing one, two, three. Father, we thank you for your presence today. We thank you, Lord, for helping us to hear the cry of your heart that you would give us brokenness and you would bring us low and you would humble us and you would convict us of our pride and convict us of our self-sufficiency and convict us, Lord, of of our having become satisfied with the things of this life, the pleasures of this life, the worldly pursuits, Lord, and in doing so, Lord, we have basically pushed you out of our life.

Retaining an outward form of religion. Retaining a form of godliness. Knowing what to say and how to say it, but inwardly, our hearts, Lord, have drawn cold.

We have become calloused. And we have every man gone his own way, and we acknowledge our sin before you this morning, Father. And we pray that you would grant us repentance, that you would grant us genuine.

Brokenness, Lord, that you would. Rescue us from ourselves and our own ways. Please, Lord, give us genuine tears, soften our hard hearts, we acknowledge that apart from you and your work of grace and

apart from your word, we will, in fact, go our own way.

Please, Father, have mercy upon us. We long for your presence in our life. We long for your presence in your church.

And we long. To be able, as a result of that, Lord, as your word says, to be your witnesses, your martyrs. Dead men living by the power and presence of Jesus Christ.

So that your name can be lifted up in our community and that men and women might be drawn to you and that the church might be delivered from being a religious institution and might become indeed what it is, and that is the body of Christ, the fullness, the place where the full expression. Of Jesus Christ, the blessed son of God is made known. To the world, to the principalities and powers in heavenly places, we beg you, Father, to renew our hearts and minds and help us to realize that we're called to follow Jesus, to lay our lives down, to lay our agendas down, to lay our worldly pursuits down and to be.

Empty vessels led and governed by you. We ask, Father, for the sake of your son, not because we are righteous or holy, for we are indeed, Lord, a backslidden people. That have fallen prey to the gods of our culture, those gods, Lord, we have given our allegiance to in our hearts, though our words continue to speak of your name.

Our hearts, Lord, have fallen after the gods of pleasure and money and worldly success. And so, Lord, we ask not because we are a righteous and a holy people, but for your name's sake, we beseech you, Father, for the sake of Jesus, for the sake of Calvary, that you would visit us once again by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, that you would humble us as we humble ourselves. And that you would take up.

Your habitation in our midst, in our families, in our homes, that you would bring our children to their knees, that they might acknowledge your lordship, we need the power of the Holy Spirit to convict us of sin. Oh, God, we pray that you'll do this in this city, in the tri-state area here, Lord. We ask for a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit, that your church, oh, God, might be rescued and become the habitation of God, where you might secure your rights as Lord and master of our lives.

Please, Lord. Give us the capacity to pray for this, give us the capacity to pray in prevailing, prevailing prayer. Help us, Lord, to want this more than anything else and to be willing to lose anything that we might gain this.

Lest you find another people. In another land. Who are truly hungry.

And bypass us, for we know, Lord, that the eyes of the Lord go throughout the whole earth. Looking for those whose hearts are upright in your eyes, that you might show yourself mighty to them. And so, Lord, we just ask these things for the glory of your son.

Have mercy upon us. Forgive us for all of our fleshly efforts and all of our human attempts. They have failed and they'll continue to fail.

Forgive us, Lord, for our divisiveness and our carnal attitudes and strife and envy and jealousy. Forgive us, Lord, for being so proud in our opinions. And so arrogant in our ideas that we've missed your heart, we've missed your word.

Humble us, Lord, we pray. That we might be a broken people and forbid that any flesh should glory, Lord, in the midst of thy great move, forbid that any man should glory. Forbid it, Lord.

Oh, God. Go into every home and every family, we pray. And lower the mountains of pride.

The mountains of arrogance level them, Lord, the mountains of self sufficiency. Oh, God, we pray that you will rebuke the gossiping tongue, the critical tongue, the judgmental tongue. That's only evidence that the person is exalting themselves above another.

Oh, God, that you would reveal every area of hypocrisy. That through the presence of the Holy Spirit and the power of the word of God, we would all be reduced and lowered and walk in humility and gentleness. Oh, God, please take the fight and resistance out of us, deliver us from loving ourself more than loving God and your word.

Oh, God. Help us, Lord, we pray. Do it, Lord, we pray.

Oh, God, we pray for Jesus' sake, thank you, Lord. Hallelujah. We need to pray, beloved, that this.

Sense of God's presence that is with us now will not leave us, listen, this doesn't have to leave you. This doesn't have to leave you, this sense of brokenness, this sense of God's presence, this sense of God calling us and drawing us to himself, it doesn't have to leave. You take this with you in your home, you set the atmosphere in your home, you set the atmosphere for your children.

Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord. Hallelujah.

And let's let God's word speak to us. What good? What good? Listen, what good? What profit is to you or I to gain anything and to lose this sense that God is giving us right now in our midst? Tell me, tell me what is worth selling this. The scripture says, buy the truth and sell it not.

What is more valuable to you than to sense in your heart the presence of God and the weakness of Christ working and. And the sense of calling you to himself, what listen, whatever it is, whatever it is that robs you. From the sense of walking in his presence and knowing his heart and having a sensitive, tender heart before God, able to repent when you need to, able to humble yourself, whatever it is that robs you from that abiding place.

Brothers and sisters, we ought to run from it. Even as Joseph, when in Potiphar's household, was approached by Potiphar's wife who sought to take him and cause him to sin against God. What did he do? He fled.

He ran. Brothers and sisters. We ought to flee and run with all of our might and all of our power from anything that robs us from the sense of God's presence, the sense of God's call, the tenderness, the presence of God, the hunger of God.

If something is robbing your hunger for God, turn from it, run from it. What profit is it to gain that thing, but to lose a tender heart? If you can't weep this morning in the presence of God, then ask God, Lord, what is it? What is it that has stolen my heart? What is it that has made me hard and run from it? Ask God for the grace to run so that you can weep in God's presence. You can feel his heart.

You can hear his voice as you read his word. This is the heart cry of God for the church, and he's being gracious to visit us that we might hear his call. Whatever God's manifest presence comes into the life of a

people.

A number of issues will have to be dealt with, a number of issues, the presence of Jesus Christ, the real presence of Jesus Christ in the life of an individual believer or in the life of a family or in the life of a company of believers joined together by the Holy Spirit. Upon the awareness, upon the knowing of the presence of Jesus, a number of issues will have to be settled. We've dealt with a number of them already.

We're going to continue to deal with them. But the first question that we will have to confront when the presence of Jesus comes into our midst and into our lives is are we following Jesus? Are we following Jesus Christ? And we learn in John 21, verses 12 through 22, that there are four invitations from Christ that result when we're truly following Him, when we're following Him, when He has laid hold of our life, when He has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. The first, this is by way of review very quickly, the first is we are called to fellowship with Him.

John 21, verses 12 through 22, there is a call to fellowship. One of the outstanding characteristics and qualities that are evidenced among a people or a person who has been apprehended by Jesus Christ and who has become aware of the manifest presence of Jesus in their life is they have an insatiable hunger and desire to fellowship with Jesus. They long to know Jesus.

The name of Jesus becomes a name that means more to them than any other name. There is a longing to fellowship with Jesus that supersedes the longing to fellowship with anyone else or anything else. And this brings great pleasure to the heart of Christ when He sees those who are called by His name long to fellowship with Him.

Secondly, verses 15 through 17 in John chapter 21, if you are following Jesus, and remember, this is not a call to become a nominal Christian. This is not a call to become a Christian, quote unquote, and to be involved in Christian activity. This is a call to follow Jesus Christ and follow Him in His Word.

Number two, there is a call to honesty. As Danielle was mentioning and Colette earlier, there must come a crisis in our life if we are following Jesus where God will require that we walk in honesty. Honesty.

We must renounce the hidden things of dishonesty. And we learn from that portion of Scripture that the main meaning of that text there is honesty about oneself. Peter was not the super spiritual man that he thought he was.

He had made the boast, Though all men forsake you, I won't. And then he ended up denying Christ three times. If we are following Jesus, we will follow Him into fellowship.

And out of that fellowship will spring a need to be honest. May God help us to renounce and declare war on all dishonesty. We cannot be people of dishonesty.

We cannot be people of darkness. We cannot be people who live a lie. And you know, when we are honest people, that has to affect our pride.

Because you can't be an honest person and be proud at the same time. If I want you to think of me more highly than you ought to, then I'm not going to be honest with you. I'm not going to be transparent with you.

I'm not going to be vulnerable with you. Thirdly, we learned that Christ, as we follow Him, will call us to a life of slavery. Slavery.

Simply put, slavery means this. When you follow Jesus Christ, you lose your rights. You're not the master of your destiny anymore.

I'm not the master of my destiny anymore. Jesus said in John chapter 21, when you were young, you did two things. You clothed your own self and you went where you wanted.

But when you are old, Jesus said to Peter, you will stretch forth your hands and another will lead you. And they will lead you where you will not choose to go. That is a perfect picture of slavery.

We become love slaves of Jesus Christ. When the manifest presence of Jesus Christ breaks out in the life of a person or group of people, these realities become evident. When we were watching the video of those revivals that are breaking out up in the Antarctic area and in Uganda, the immediate result of the manifest presence of Jesus in the lives of these saints was they're crying out, Oh God, I've been dishonest, I've allowed sin in my life, I've been critical, I've gossiped, I've been self-centered in my life, I've wanted my own way, I've been satisfied with the things of this life, I've put value on things that don't matter in eternity.

You see, when Jesus comes, this word is just a letter until the presence of the Holy Spirit comes. And when the Holy Spirit comes in a corporate setting, or even if you're just reading it in your own private closet or bedroom, suddenly this word reveals Christ. That's what it is.

It reveals Christ. And you can't have Christ revealed to you without being the same. When the Bible is no longer revealing Christ to you, you need to repent and cry out, God, have mercy.

If the Bible becomes a place where you see everyone's false but your own, you've got a problem. If the Bible becomes a book where all you want to do is learn theology, you've got a problem. But when the Bible is approached by a heart that is under the control of the Holy Spirit, that has brokenness and tenderness, then the Bible becomes the means by which the Holy Spirit reveals the beauties of Jesus Christ.

And so we saw thousands of people in Uganda and thousands of people in the Antarctic area shedding tears and crying, and it was so beautiful. And it was because Jesus came on the scene in their lives. And as I mentioned earlier, it wasn't simply a show that was put on when they came together in church in a building.

It affected husbands. Listen, husbands were standing up crying out, I have been abusive to my wife, forgive me. Yes.

Husbands. Women. I have been manipulative.

I have been a manipulator. Have mercy on me. You see, when Jesus comes, men cry out, women cry out, teenagers cry out.

Everyone cries out, God have mercy on me. When Jesus comes on the scene, this is what God wants to do. This is what He wants to do in our lives.

This is what He wants to do in the church. Everywhere. The tri-state area.

Away with religion. Away with it. Away with outward form.

God wants living stones in whom the living Christ is revealed. Through whom the perfections of Jesus is made known. Where there is honesty and transparency.

May God visit us with His presence. And then lastly, we found in answering the question, are we following Jesus? We look at John 21, verses 20-22, and we discover that when we follow Jesus, we hear a stern, loving rebuke. And that is simply this.

If you follow me, mind your own business. Remember after Jesus commissioned Peter to follow Him, what was it that Peter did? Rather than falling on his knees and saying, oh, I tremble, Lord, because I just realized I denied You three times, and I realized that in myself I can't follow You, and I am in such need of Your grace and such need of Your power. What does Peter do? He looks over and says, well, what about Him? What about Him? There is too much of a preoccupation in our lives about other people.

You know, when you're too preoccupied with other people, you're going to miss God. What about you? Jesus said to Peter, what's it to you? Follow thou Me. I listen to what people say.

I listen to what my own family says. I listen to what my children say. I listen to what brothers and sisters tell me when they write me with emails and they call me on the phone.

And I get grieved very often, because you know what I discover when I talk to people, Norman? 95% of what they talk about has to do with other people. Very little has to do with how they need God. They need to be changed.

They need Jesus. Very little. You know what that's a sign of? There's no living revelation of Christ in their heart.

How are you doing? Are you so worried about everyone else that you haven't seen your need for God? When Jesus comes, Isaiah chapter 5, Woe is me. Woe is me. I am a man of unclean lips.

And yes, you realize everyone else is unclean too. But the revelation comes first. I am a man of unclean lips.

Are you following Jesus? Now let me tell you, these things won't be happening to you if you're following Christianity. If you're following an outward form of Christianity, these things won't happen. But if you're following the Savior, these things will happen.

So the question is, are we following Jesus? Then the next question is, do we have the Holy Spirit? And then in response to that question, does the Holy Spirit have us? And we learned last week that to have the Holy Spirit means that, number one, our lives are going to be passionately longing to obey God. We learned that not only is our lives going to be passionately longing to obey God, but we learned also that the world will hate us. The system of the world, the spirit of the world.

We learned that John chapter 16 and 15, we learned that as we're controlled by the Holy Spirit, listen, there is a sense of utter dependence upon God, a sense of utter dependence that the Holy Spirit will convict us over self-sufficiency, convict us over areas where we're taking things into our own hands, matters into our own hands, where we're not renouncing our own wisdom and our own understanding. That's John chapter 15. And the Holy Spirit also will result in you and I being witnesses for Christ, witnesses, living martyrs for Jesus Christ.

And so the question that we want to ask is, do you have the Holy Spirit? Does the Holy Spirit have you? And now for a short time, we want to continue along asking questions. Number four, are we denying ourselves? If we are following Jesus and if the Holy Spirit is not only in our lives, but controlling our lives, we will hear Jesus and He'll bring us to Luke chapter 14. And we're going to read a few Scriptures and then discuss them.

What will happen when Jesus Christ comes and visits us? What will happen when revival comes? What will happen when a company of people are truly filled with the Holy Spirit and begin to walk in the fullness of Christ? Visions and signs and wonders and manifestations? Essentially, no. Possibly, but essentially, no. What will happen is a people will fulfill the Word of God.

That's what Jesus wants to do. He wants to fulfill His Word in a people. There's an entire movement in the body of Christ today.

People are looking for the fullness of Jesus with the evidence of something that is not revealed in the Scripture. It's hogwash. It's flesh.

Luke chapter 14. Listen. Following Jesus, we will hear Him say, Luke 14.33, So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he has, he cannot be My disciple.

It was discovered in a missionary's Bible by his daughter, who actually never met him. He died when his wife was pregnant with this girl who discovered notes in his Bible. And she saw where he had a devotional prayer in his Bible, and he had quoted this Scripture.

So likewise, whosoever be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple. And in the prayer he said, Lord, this is the call on my life, and I willingly forsake all things for You. Matthew 16.21-25. From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples how He might go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and the chief priests and scribes and be killed and be raised up again the third day.

Then Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be far, be it far from You, Lord. Another translation says, Have mercy on Yourself, Lord. Have mercy on Yourself.

In other words, Jesus, don't subject Yourself to such an awful fate. Don't subject Yourself to such an awful fate. Brothers and sisters, listen.

Following Jesus is not a lifestyle of happy, happy, happy I am because I get everything I want. That's not what following Jesus is. Listen to His words.

But He turned and said to Peter, Get thee behind Me, Satan. Thou art an offense to Me, for thou savorest not, or you do not understand the things that be of God, but those that be of men. Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after Me, hear the words of Jesus this morning.

Forget about what you've been taught. Forget about what the traditions of Christianity are. Forget about what everyone is saying.

Just what does Jesus say right here? If any man will come after Me, if you're going to be a follower of Jesus Christ, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever will save his life shall lose it, and whoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it. The questions we have.

Are we denying ourselves? Are we disowning ourselves? And are we carrying our cross? A life that is under the control of the Holy Spirit, a life that is driven by the power of God to be obedient to the Word of God, will be a life that is following Jesus, resulting in three things. Denying oneself, disowning oneself, and carrying our cross daily. Jesus rebuked Peter.

Listen carefully. And He said, when Peter said, have mercy on yourself, in other words, when Peter thought... You see, Peter was devoted to Christ, but his devotion was tainted, like many of those before they received the Holy Spirit. They were devoted to Christ, hoping that Christ would be some benefit for them.

A lot of people wanted Jesus to become what? Their deliverer from Roman tyranny, right? Others wanted Jesus to simply be their provider. I mean, this guy takes a little bit of bread and a little bit of fish, and he multiplies it. Multitudes of people are following Jesus just because they believe that He can give them a seven-figure number for their salary.

That's why they're following Jesus. They want more money. They want more food.

They want more material possessions. But when Jesus said, He's got to go to Jerusalem and suffer and be killed, that's when Peter's devotion was challenged. And He said, oh Lord, don't do that.

But really what Peter was saying was, Peter didn't care about Jesus. Come on, let's be honest. He didn't care about Him.

He cared about himself. He said, wait a minute. I'm a disciple.

I've forsaken everything. I don't have my fishing business anymore. I'm following this guy, Jesus.

I don't want to be led to a cross. I want to be led to a Roman throne. I want to be led to a throne where you can make me one of your deputies and I can go throughout the city of Jerusalem representing your rod of authority, commanding people to do this and that in your name.

But Jesus said, no, I'm going to die. And then Peter said, no, Lord, have mercy on Yourself. What Peter was really saying was, oh Lord, have mercy on me.

I don't want to have to die. I'm following You, and if You get crucified, that's going to put my life at risk. So how much are you willing to follow Jesus until it becomes a personal risk to you and then all of a sudden now, Lord, we need to talk about this? Let's negotiate.

And what was it that Jesus said to Peter? Get behind Me, Satan. Get behind Me, enemy. Enemy.

Enemy. Anything that tried to stop Jesus from going to the cross was his enemy. And brothers and sisters, please listen carefully.

Anything that is trying to get you to turn from the cross is an enemy. It is your enemy. Such thinking, Jesus said, thou savest not, or you do not understand the things which be of God, but of man.

You see, man's understanding is preserve my life. Save my life. Man's understanding is follow Jesus for my benefit.

Follow Jesus for my advancement. For my good. But the things that be of God is follow Jesus to the cross that I might die.

That I might be delivered from the tyranny of self and selfish ambition and pride and ego and covetousness and greed and immorality. Follow Jesus to the cross that I may no longer look at God in heaven as a genie there dedicated to give me whatever I want. Follow Jesus to the cross that I might know what it is to be crucified and be filled with the divine Spirit of God who will give me a new heart so that my existence will not be for self.

For self-pleasure. For selfish ambition. I will not look at life and see how I can gain.

But I will look at life and say, God, what is in it for You? What will bring glory to Your name? We need a total worldview change. We need a total mind change. This is what true revival does.

This is what true encounters with Jesus Christ does. It is foreign in the church today for believers to practice a life of self-denial. It is considered to be asceticism and legalism.

Extremism. Oh, that's Victorian Christianity. That's old-fashioned Christianity.

It is old-fashioned. It goes right back to the words of Jesus. It's very old-fashioned.

That happens to be the kind of old-fashioned Christianity that God honors. Now, Luke 17 is a commentary. Scripture interprets Scripture.

Luke 17 is a commentary. It helps us understand what it means to deny ourself and to disown ourself. We're going to read this portion of Scripture.

But before we do, let me remind you that in Luke 14, where we saw that we had to forsake ourself or else we couldn't be His disciple in context. Listen, in context. When Jesus said you have to forsake yourself, He was basically saying this, you cannot come up with an excuse.

In context, He's talking about excuses. You can't come up with an excuse to say no to Jesus. The cross, the essential meaning has to do with God's Word and God's Spirit so working in our life so that we will not come up with an excuse and thereby be excused from following Jesus.

You remember in Luke 14, a great supper was prepared and the call was out and the Scripture says they all with one accord began to what? Make excuses. One had just gotten married. One had just bought property.

One had just gotten oxen. And each time they said, oh, please excuse me from the call. Please excuse me from the call.

Jesus is calling you and He's calling me. But are we giving Him an excuse? People who give Christ an excuse will not taste of His supper. That's what He says.

And then in verse 26 of Luke 14, we're going to go to Luke 17, just hold on, because it's important to get the context so we understand the meaning of the words of Jesus. Then after He taught about those giving excuses, then He says in verse 26, If any man come to Me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters in his own life, he cannot be My disciple. What's He saying? In other words, He's saying He will not accept excuses.

Can you imagine if Jim Elliot, after hearing the call of God to go to the Alca Indians? Can you imagine? Well, Lord, there's this woman in my life called Elizabeth. And we really believe that You're calling us. I just don't think it would be wise.

I mean, emotionally, she really needs me. If any man come after me and hate not... Now, in order to understand what Jesus meant there, you have to go to another place in the Gospels where Jesus qualified the statement. And He's really saying this, if you come after Me, you cannot love your wife more than Me.

You cannot love your husband more than Me. You cannot love your children more than Me. You have to forsake your own life if you want to follow Me.

Because if you follow Me, you become a slave. I am your Master. This isn't a negotiating team that we put together, me and you, Jesus says.

If you follow Me, I accept no excuses. I can't accept excuses. If you hear Me, if I speak to you in My Word, if I call you, no excuses.

Well, Lord, I can't humble myself in my sister's presence. Why? Well, she might think this or this... There you go. No excuses.

You can't make excuses when you hear the call of God. If any man follow Me. You can't love anything more than Me, Jesus said.

Your reputation. Your friends. Well, Lord, if I take a stand and I decline about this, they might not like Me anymore.

Jesus said, who are you going to serve? Your friends or Me? Who are you going to serve? I mean, we can really get into this. Verse 34, Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned? You know what salt is that's no longer good anymore? You know what it is in context now. You see a whole new light.

Basically, your salt, which represents Christianity, is no value if you're making excuses. You've lost your effectiveness. You've lost it.

Deny ourself. Disowning ourself. But Lord, I want, I want, I feel.

Luke 17. Listen carefully to the words of Jesus as He Himself interprets the meaning of what it means to deny ourself and disown ourself. Verse 26, Luke 17, As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it also be in the days of the Son of Man.

They did eat, drank, married wives. They were given in marriage until the day that Noah entered into the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot, they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built it.

But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. We're getting there. Follow closely.

Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. In that day He which shall be upon the housetop and His stuff in the house, here it is, let Him not come down to take it away. And He that is in the field, let Him likewise not return back.

Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to save his life shall lose it. And whoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

In other words, whoever refuses to disown his life, whoever refuses to forsake his life will lose it. But he that loses his life shall preserve it, shall find it. In context, interestingly, Jesus says, whoever shall seek his life shall lose it.

He says that following verse 32. Remember Lot's wife. What did Lot's wife do? She turned back.

Listen, she was looking for an excuse not to follow the Lord. Sodom and Gomorrah was burning. God commanded him, Go and don't turn back.

Lot's wife is moving and all of a sudden she stops. But Lord, but Lord, I hear your call, but Lord, what about? Lord, I have an excuse. She turned into a pillar of salt.

Don't come down. Verse 31. Verse 31.

To take away the stuff in your house when you hear the Lord's call. This is talking about when He's revealed. But this is a principle.

He that seeks to save his life is the one who after hearing the Lord call, we make an excuse. We make an excuse. Look at this.

Luke. Luke chapter 9. Luke chapter 9. Listen carefully. Oh, brothers and sisters, I hope and pray the Holy Spirit is helping us through the Word of God to see the nature of following Jesus and being full of the Holy Ghost.

We're just touching the surface on this now. We're touching the surface. Listen.

Luke 9. Verse 57, And it came to pass that as they went in a certain way, a certain man said to Him, Lord, I will follow You wherever You go. And Jesus said, Foxes have holes, birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head. Jesus was saying, are you going to follow Me? Then listen carefully.

If you follow Me, then you have to come to realize there's no place where you're going to be able to find rest on earth. If you follow Me, you're going to have to find your rest in obedience to Me. Verse 59, And He said to another, Follow Me.

But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said, Let the dead bury the dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. How could Jesus say such a thing? Very easily, He's Jesus.

What's He trying to tell us here? When you hear the call to follow Him, you can't make excuses. And another said, Lord, I will follow You, but let me go first and bid them farewell, which are at home. Remember what we just read? If you're on top of the house and you hear Him, don't go back in and get your goods.

Follow Me. John chapter 12, verse number 32. 23, I mean.

12, 23, And Jesus said, The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, except the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone. But if it die, it brings forth much

fruit.

He that loves his life shall lose it. He, upon hearing My word and hearing My call to follow Me, makes excuses why he can't follow Me. That person shall lose his life.

That's what Jesus is saying. He that loves his life shall lose it. But he that hates his life in this world, evidencing that, we evidence that we hate our life.

We evidence that by, through the power of the Holy Spirit working within us, we deny ourself. We forsake ourself. And we take up our cross.

Taking up our cross is a choice we make. Lord, I willingly die to sin, to self, to the world, that I might live by You. If any man serve Me, let him follow Me.

Oh my God. This is, like I said, we're touching. You can't serve Jesus unless you're following Jesus.

Serving Jesus is not devotion. To Christian activity necessarily. Serving Jesus is not devotion to good works necessarily.

Serving Jesus is following Him. And we follow Jesus through His Word. We follow Jesus by obeying His Word.

And where I am, there also my servant shall be. If any man serve Me, him will Father honor. Okay, listen, beloved.

We have much more to cover, but we're not going to go into it. We're running out of time. Next time we get together, and again, please remember, these are not ordinances and rules that we are to learn and follow.

That which I am preaching from God's Word simply is revealing to you and I what will happen when Jesus is truly Lord of our life. And we are possessed by the Holy Spirit. This reveals how we live by His power.

It's not rules that we try and take hold of and then try and live in our own power and will miserably fail. But next time we get together, we're going to show how we live in a society and a church world that is reinforcing the false doctrine that we are not to deny ourself. We are to fulfill and seek to get everything that we want.

And we're going to discover, we have a list of 15 things here, we're going to discover the cause to so many problems plaguing the Christian today is because they no longer deny themselves. Sexual promiscuity. Why is it running rampant? Because if I have sexual desire, I'm going to fulfill it.

They're not being taught to deny themselves. Financial catastrophe. Why is it happening among many Christians today? Because if I want something, I'm going to get it.

If that means credit, if that means borrowing, if that means manipulation, I'm going to get it and I'm going to get it now. No denial. And we'll go on and we'll show.

Do you know it's scriptural? There's not many married people here. There are a few. But do you know why marriages go sour? Because there is no practice of self-denial in the marriage.

And we'll look at that and discover that. So, beloved, in closing this morning, we ask ourselves these questions again. Are we following Jesus? Do we have the Holy Spirit? Does the Holy Spirit have us? Are

we denying ourselves? Are we disowning ourselves? And lastly, are we taking up our cross daily and following Jesus? Father, we thank you for your word this morning.

We thank you for your presence this morning. We thank you, Lord, for the brokenness that you brought to us. We thank you, Lord, for giving us the awareness of our need for a move of your Holy Spirit.

We thank you, Lord, for showing us that we are not candidates for a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit as long as our hearts are satisfied and calloused and hard. As long as we can't weep over our sin, so we ask, Lord, that you'll break our hearts, give us true humility and brokenness. And I'm wondering if anyone is here, listen carefully, if you're here and in your heart you want to ask God to teach you what it means to follow Jesus and deny yourself.

I'm wondering if you've come to realize how miserable and ugly you are when you don't deny yourself. How spiteful and resentful you are. How arrogant you are.

How when you don't deny yourself, you exalt yourself above everyone else. You place demands on people that are unrealistic simply because you're not denying yourself. Have you seen how ugly, not physically, but inside you are without denying yourself? I'm wondering if anyone is here in your heart.

You just want to pray, dear Lord. Thank you for your word. Thank you for reminding us that following you means we must deny ourself and forsake our own ways.

Lord, teach me what this means all over again in my life. I acknowledge that I have not denied myself and that I've tried to exert myself and fulfill my own selfish desires and it has damaged my husband, my wife, my children, and my Christian friends. I ask You to forgive me and heal my heart.

Let's just spend a few minutes here before the Lord as Jeremy sings a song. Let's let God do the hard work today. Take my heart, cleanse every part Yes, Lord, do the work we pray, Lord.

Holy Spirit, breathe on me I will subdue Teach me in words of living flame All that Christ would have me do
Holy Spirit, breathe on me Take my heart, cleanse every part Holy Spirit, breathe on me Take my heart,
divine Teach me in all the flame of love and fire Within this heart of mine Breathe on me, oh Holy Spirit
Take my heart, cleanse every part Holy Spirit, breathe on me Till I'm all Thine, all His lost and found To
prepare me for Thee alone Holy Spirit, breathe on me Take my heart, cleanse every part God bless
everybody. We have to go now, but listen carefully. Listen just for one second.

The failure to disown and deny ourself is creating many problems in our lives. I strongly encourage you to ask God. Many problems that you've been struggling with in your personal life, in your families will be healed.

If you simply deny yourself, it'll be a miracle. And you'll see peace will come into your life. God bless everyone.

God bless everyone.

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