

Connection Group Discussion Questions

For the week of March 29, 2015

Luke 9:23-25

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

²³ Then he said to them all, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it.

²⁵ What does it profit them if they gain the whole world, but lose or forfeit themselves?

New International Version (NIV)

²³ Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. ²⁵ What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?

Connection Questions:

1. Discuss what it means to you when Jesus says to the disciples to deny themselves and take up their cross daily?

2. How would living the revolutionary lifestyle that Jesus proposes be different than how you live your daily life now?

3. How can you learn to love yourself while at the same time modeling the servant lifestyle of Jesus?

4. Ash Wednesday represents the beginning of the Lenten season where Christians remember Jesus' experience in the wilderness spending intentional time in self-reflection. In this service ashes are placed on the foreheads of participants as the pastor reminds them of their mortality. How does remembering our mortality assist us in faith development?

5. The Greek word *kairos* points to time in a qualitative way, where the Greek word *chronos* points to time in a quantitative way. Jesus is aware of *chronos* on earth, so he resolutely sets his face on accomplishing his *kairos* mission given by heaven. Discuss what this concept means to you.

6. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said in 1963, "If today's church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the twentieth century. Every day I meet young people whose disappointment with the church has turned to outright disgust." Do you think his words would be relevant today? If so, how?

7. Discuss Mike Slaughter's statement: "...indecisiveness and nominalism, the practice of downplaying or denying the existence of universal truths are two of the cancerous conditions infecting the church today..." How can we personally and as a church do a better job at addressing these issues?

8. Share, if you can, a personal experience where you did a selfless act that brought you closer to God.

9. Commercialism's messages of "more" and "individualism" are ever in front of us in our modern world. Acknowledging this reality, discuss the difficulties you might have in living the revolutionary lifestyle that Jesus proposes.

10. As you close your class, remember together in prayer for five minutes, "Not my will be done but thy will be done."