

Title: I Believe, Now What?

Text: Luke 9: 23-26

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Someone asked me this question, "I believe the gospel, now what?" We do not have to speculate about what we are to do once we find ourselves believing the gospel, Christ tells us plainly in our text.

**Luke 9: 23: And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. 24: For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. 25: For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? 26: For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and *in his* Father's, and of the holy angels.**

## COME TO CHRIST

**Luke 9: 23: And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me,...**

First, we are to come to Christ. Coming after Christ is believing on Christ alone. Faith is not Christ plus our law-keeping, not Christ plus our experience or morality. Coming to Christ is believing on Christ alone to save me beginning to end, apart from anything in me. The Lord Jesus said,

Matthew 11: 28: Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Isaiah 45: 22: Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else. 23: I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. 24: Surely, shall *one* say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: *even* to him shall *men* come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. 25: In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.

Coming to Christ is spiritual in the newly created heart—

Romans 10: 10: For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness;

Hebrews 10:22: Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience...

Coming to Christ is to *willingly* cast all your care on Christ, "*And he said to them all, If any man will come after me.*" By nature, being conceived in sin, no sinner is willing to believe on Christ and rest in him. Willingness comes from Christ.

Psalms 110:3: Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power,...

Psalms 65:4: Blessed *is the man whom* thou choosest, and causest to approach *unto thee, that* he may dwell in thy courts:

So all who truly come to Christ come to Christ willingly because they find satisfaction nowhere else but in Christ.

Psalms 65: 4...we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, *even* of thy holy temple.

Coming to Christ is to come believing the doctrine of Christ. Faith is not a blind leap. Those who come to Christ do so in knowledge and understanding. I know WHAT Christ saved me from—sin's curse and condemnation. I know WHO saved me—the Lord Jesus Christ, the God-man. I know HOW he saved me—by His perfect obedience and precious blood. I know WHY he saved me—"according to the good pleasure of His own will"

And coming to Christ never ends—it is not a one-time act—the believer comes to Christ the rest of our lives.

1 Peter 2: 2: To whom coming,...

2 Corinthians 1: 10: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;

## DENY, TAKE AND FOLLOW

**Luke 9: 23:...let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.**

Once God has given me faith to believe on Christ then Christ says *“let him deny himself.”* I must deny that salvation is by anything in me or done by me.

I must deny myself in my choosing Christ. God chose his people in Christ in election before the world was made. Christ said, *“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you.”* (Jn 15: 16)

The believer denies himself by denying my works contribute to salvation. God said, *“I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works; for they shall not profit thee.”* (Is 57: 12)

When it comes to any contribution in making atonement and making myself righteous, I must deny myself. The believer says, *“I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.”* (Is 61: 10)

I must deny myself concerning my faith, repentance and all fruits of the Spirit. Scripture says, *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”* (Ti 3: 5)

Truth faith denies myself in perseverance. The Psalmist wrote, *“For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.”* (Ps 37: 28)

As I continue trusting Christ, I must deny myself in good works—*“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”* (Eph 2: 8-9)

I must deny myself all glory and praise. My heart says, *“Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth’s sake.”* (Ps 115: 1)

As the servant of Christ, I must deny myself in ungodly behavior and worldliness. Christ word has come to us, *“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.”* (Ti 2: 12)

Not only must I deny myself, I must suffer for the sake of Christ. Christ says, *“let him deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me.”* Our flesh would rather not suffer persecution from our family and friends but *I must deny myself and take up his cross daily and follow him.*

When declaring the doctrine of Christ I must stand with God’s word rather than the false doctrines of family and friends. When obeying the will of Christ I must do what Christ commands rather than the will of unbelieving family or friends. I must sanctify and honor Christ rather than family and friends—if I fear and bow to peer pressure I am sanctifying and honoring my peers above Christ! t is called a cross it is painful. Christ said,

Matthew 10: 34: Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. 35: For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. 36: And a man’s foes *shall be* they of his own household. 37: He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38: And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

## CONSECRATE TO CHRIST

**Luke 9: 24: For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. 25: For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?**

Christ declares here that his disciple must be fully consecrated to Christ.

If I save my sinful life or save myself the tribulation and rejection of family and friends then I will lose my life eternally—*“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it.”*

Christ says *“but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.”* If I would be saved eternally by my Lord Jesus Christ then I must lose my life for his sake. I must surrender myself to Christ and everything I own to Christ, his people, and his cause. The man who consecrates all to Christ has no worries. Christ shall provide all for him in this life. And Christ shall save him in eternal bliss with Christ in the next.

But when we lose our life for Christ, we have given up nothing—*“For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?”* The life most refuse to lose gives them *no advantage whatsoever, even if they gain the whole world.* Because in the end, *he shall lose himself and be cast away by*

God in just judgment into eternal condemnation in outer darkness. So when we give the entire rule of our life to Christ, we have merely given up that which would surely cause us eternal condemnation. That is why Paul called it dung in Philippians 3:8.

## CONFESS CHRIST AND HIS GOSPEL

**Luke 9: 26: For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.**

We must confess Christ and his gospel.

Never imagine that Christ regards you as one who believes on Christ if you will not confess Christ publicly. You may be under the sound of the truth. You may have believing family members. You may not openly disagree when you hear the gospel of Christ. You may even disapprove of those who forsake the gospel. Yet, if you have never publicly, personally, confessed Christ then Christ says, "*You are ashamed of Christ and his words.*" And Christ assures you, he will be ashamed of you when he returns in glory.

But Christ says, "*Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God.*" (Lu 12: 8) Confessing Christ is necessary.

Romans 10:9: That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10: For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11: For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

So what is involved in confessing Christ?

One, confessing Christ is to personally confess Christ to God. It is to confess my sin and inability to God. It is to confess that all my trust rests in Christ Jesus the Son of God alone.

1 John 1: 9: If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10: If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Two, confessing Christ is to do so publicly before the church and the world in believer's baptism.

Mark 16: 16: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Faith in Christ is the only prerequisite to baptism. There does not have to be a waiting period as false preachers and false churches require. The believer does not have to learn a church creed and a churches extra biblical commandments or sign promises. A believer simply has to believe on Christ and must believe on Christ in order to be baptized. As Philip preached Christ to the Ethiopian Eunuch, "*they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.*" (Acts 8: 36-38)

Three, confessing Christ is to testify his gospel to others. Christ and his gospel cannot be separated. He said be not "*ashamed of me and my words.*" All who are ashamed of any part of the doctrine of Christ are ashamed of Christ. All who are ashamed of Christ are ashamed of his doctrine.

2 John 1: 7: For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.

What is it to confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh? They do not confess Christ accomplished all that God the Father sent him to accomplish, including the redemption of all God's elect, as he declared God just and the Justifier. Those who do not declare and believe the truth of Christ as revealed in the word of God are not simply ill informed. According to God in his word,...

2 John 1: 7:...This is a deceiver and an antichrist. 8: Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. 9: Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

Rob is not ashamed to tell anyone about Kristyn. Why? You are not ashamed to speak of someone you love.

1 John 3: 14: And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son *to be* the Saviour of the world. 15: Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

16: And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

That is why the apostle Paul said,

Romans 1:16: For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17: For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Four, confessing Christ is to publicly unite and identify with Christ's people as your brethren, worshipping Christ under his gospel and at his table together with them and helping them any way you can.

1 John 5: 1: Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

Five, confessing Christ is to do so by walking in newness of life as opposed to walking in sin.

Romans 6: 1: What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2: God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? 3: Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4: Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5: For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of *his* resurrection: 6: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7: For he that is dead is freed from sin. 8: Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 9: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10: For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11: Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. 12: Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. 13: Neither yield ye your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God. 14: For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. 15: What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. 16: Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? 17: But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18: Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

So now, let's hear Christ answer my friend's question who asked, "I believe the gospel, now what?" First, come to Christ in the heart casting all your care on him. Secondly, deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Christ. Thirdly, consecrate yourself entirely to Christ. Lastly, confess Christ publicly before God and men! If any sinner has truly been given life and faith by God then he will obey these words of Christ and he will do so willingly and with delight because his new heart is to obey Christ fully. May God give us grace to do so!

**Amen!**