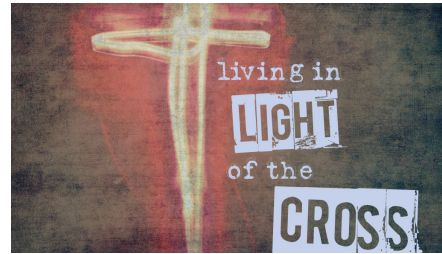


Living in light of the Cross #1

In this short series at MR we'll be considering what the cross says about our discipleship. Each week we'll consider a passage and how it relates to a different aspect of following Jesus.



Overview of Luke 9v18-26..

We began by thinking about the prevailing culture around us that seeks to squeeze as much into our time on earth as possible. To live life to the full. We said that Jesus would be thoroughly behind the concept – he longs for us to flourish & have life. Just not through being self-centred. Through being centred on him. It's as we follow him that we thrive.

We split the passage into 2:

1. God's king who suffers... & LIVES- v18-22:

Unlike the crowds who think he's simply a prophet, Peter gets something of who Jesus is, he sees he's God's long awaited king – the Messiah. The immediate shock is that this title, MUST be tied together with the concept of suffering & death (& resurrection). For us to thrive & grasp life, we must also understand who Jesus really is.

The second big shock is that Jesus' followers must also be prepared to follow in the footsteps of Jesus:

2. Daily following God's king who suffers... & so we LIVE - v23-26:

There are 3 linked statements that Jesus makes as he outlines how his followers must live::

1. v23: If we want to follow him we must imitate him daily. Like Jesus we must also be prepared to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Jesus. And we must do this each & every day.
2. v24-25: If we want life we must lose it. A very black or white statement. Our problem is we want life as the world sees it now and life as Jesus sees it then. We must be prepared to lose it now though, to be prepared to let him set the agenda.
3. v26: If we want honour before Jesus we must not be ashamed before the world. Shame about Jesus and his words now results

in his shame about us upon his return. In a culture that's often very anti-Jesus (for example due to vocal atheists, relativists or simply in having a 'sanitized' view of God).

This passage is not so hard to understand – it's just very hard to do! Daily denying self, taking up our cross and following Jesus, being prepared to lose our life and not being ashamed of Jesus or his words, whilst living in these sinful human bodies challenge us each hour of the day. It is vital that we keep our eyes fixed on the one who's gone before us if we are to follow him.

Here are some possible thoughts and questions. Please be selective and adapt them for your group:

Possible Questions

v18-22:

- Why do you think the crowds come up with the list they do?¹
- What kind of a list might people come up with today for who Jesus was?
- What sort of expectations would the people have had for what God's King would do? Why?
- What does Jesus insist he must do?

v23-26:

- How are Jesus' followers to follow him?
- Outline the 3 statements given by Jesus & put them in your own language.
- How are they different? How do they relate?
- Which challenges you the most & why?
- How can we encourage each other to daily follow him?

What 2 things can you take away from this study? Share them with the group and pray for each other.

¹ See also see Mal 4v5