

Luke 9 • (Part 2): 18-26 • Denying Self

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Luke chapter 9. We're taking our time getting through the Book of Luke here because there's so much to go through. And there's actually several verses in this particular chapter, about 62 verses. And I'm always, just not wanting to go too quickly just so we don't miss anything that's so important, but we're going to be picking it up here in verse 18.

Luke 9:18, and we're going to be reading down through verse 26. Follow along with me as I read. I'm reading out of the ESV. Goes like this.

“Now it happened that as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him. And he asked them, “Who do the crowds say that I am?” ¹⁹ And they answered, “John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen.” ²⁰ Then he said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” And Peter answered, “The Christ of God.” ²¹ And he strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, ²² saying, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”

²³ And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. ²⁵ For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? ²⁶ For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.” (ESV)

Let's stop there. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, open our hearts to this, the ministry of Your Word. We believe that everything in the Scripture is important, but we sense Lord God that we're standing, as it were, on holy ground with these words. Thank you, Lord, for giving us the insight into them. Now we pray that You would help us to understand them and apply them in our lives. We ask it Lord, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Showing you, and maybe this might help some of you who are taking notes what we're looking at here this morning. We'll put this up on the screen for you. Essentially, what we're seeing here in these verses are:

- Peter's confession of Jesus as Messiah
- The revealing of God's plan to save mankind
- Jesus' challenge to we who would follow after Him

Peter's confession of Jesus as Messiah. Jesus then begins to speak of how God's plan to save mankind is going to be played out. And then thirdly, we see this incredible challenge that Jesus gives us who would declare ourselves to be His followers and He has some pretty difficult words to say related to that.

We're going to begin with this question that Jesus poses to His disciples. But actually before that, notice in verse 18 it says, *"Now it happened that as he was praying, the disciples were with him."* And dah, dah, dah.

We begin to see this in a place of prayer. Jesus is spending time in prayer. Nothing too amazing about that. We've read in several different passages throughout the Gospels that Jesus spent time in prayer. But you might be surprised to learn that some people really get tweaked when they find out, or they read in the Bible that Jesus spent time praying, and they read it and they come up with questions, and I've had them asked to me before something like well, if Jesus is God, then who is He praying to?

You ever heard that one? It's actually not all that uncommon. Or here we've got this passage here where Jesus and God the Father are speaking and they'll say who's Jesus talking to? Is He talking to Himself since He's God?

Well, the very questions that people will sometimes ask related to this reveal an ignorance, frankly, about two important things. Number 1., the nature of God, and number 2., the nature of prayer. And as we speak about the nature of God, when somebody asks the question, was Jesus praying to Himself, they're stumbling over the fact that God the Father, and God the Son are not the same person.

They are separate persons, even though they, along with the Holy Spirit, make up one God. And I know that tweaks people, and I've had people ask me, well, can you explain to me how God can be three persons and one God?

And I always say the same thing. No, I can't explain that because nobody can. It frankly, belies our human intellect. But aren't you kind of glad that the nature of

God transcends our intellect? Because if you and I could understand the nature of God, that would mean that our intellect was equal to the nature of God. I don't want to be equal with God. I'll be just completely honest with you.

I want Him to be way bigger. And the fact that His nature is beyond our comprehension. I almost said unknowable, but that really wouldn't be true because frankly, the nature of God is knowable from the standpoint that you and I can know that God is a triune being. Meaning that He is one God, but three persons.

We know that. We know that from the revelation of Scripture. But we don't know it intellectually. We don't understand it, comprehend it. There's a difference between knowing and comprehending, and I am glad that God's nature is beyond our comprehension in that particular sense.

But the other thing that people forget is that this conversation that going on between God , the Son, and God the Father, this has been going on for all eternity. You think this just started? I mean, good grief, the persons of the Godhead have been talking from eternity, and we can go back to the very beginning to the Book of Genesis to see these conversations going on. Let me show you this on the screen from Genesis chapter 1. It says,

Genesis 1:26-27 (ESV)

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Look at this, Genesis chapter 1. This is the very beginning. Creation, and we hear, we get to hear God having a conversation within the persons of the Godhead. He is conversing, He is speaking, and they're saying the persons of the Godhead are saying, let Us make men in our image. Notice the plurality of those references.

Now, some people might say, well, now wait just a minute here pastor Paul, I think you're stepping here a little too quick. Maybe God is just simply talking to the angels.

Well, there's two problems with that. Number 1., the Bible never says that man was created in the image of angels, and number 2., you'll notice that after having this conversation, "*Let us make man in our image,*" it goes on at the end of that passage to say, "*so God created man in his own image.*" In His own image, okay? So, this is a conversation between the persons of the Godhead.

And now, I'll grant you once Jesus was, born as one of us, once the Word of God was made flesh, as John the apostle says, that conversation had to take on a little different dynamic.

Now it takes on the dynamic of prayer, because Jesus has taken on manhood, literally. He is no less God, but He has taken on our humanity. And now, He is spending time with the Lord in this new mode, voiced through prayer, and prayer is the other thing, the nature of prayer.

The other thing that people forget when they read passage like this and it tweaks them. They forget that prayer is so much more than just talking to God and asking for things. We tend to look at prayer as just putting out my laundry list of needs to God.

When somebody says, well, I'm going to pray about that, we know what they mean. They mean they're going to go to God and they're going to talk to Him about things they need, and they're going to say, dear God, here's what I need. And whether it's strength or peace or health or whatever the thing might be, that's our way of going before the Lord. But prayer is so much more than that. And the fact that Jesus spent time in prayer, talking to His heavenly Father means a whole lot more than just going and asking for things.

Guys, you need to understand that spending time with God in prayer, which is, by the way, something we rarely think about, is a way that we commune with God. And when we are communing with Him, truly spending time with Him, relating to Him, we find there is a whole lot more there than just conversation.

It is in those times when we spend time with the Lord in prayer that we find rest, that we find peace, that we find our hearts being restored. So many times we don't even think about that because we don't do those things. We come to God, again, like we're putting out our I need, I want list to Santa Claus, and we just, and that's it, and we say our stuff and then we leave.

When's the last time you spent time in His presence? And you jumped away from that prayer time energized, jazzed, lighter than when you sat down to pray or knelt down to pray. It's interesting, I've read some testimonies from people who have been in very, very challenging situations, like in prison and that sort of thing. And they'll talk about being in solitary confinement, but they weren't alone. They were spending time in prayer.

I mean, in communion with God. I remember reading about this one particular guy. His name escapes me now, but he talked about how his cell, his prison cell had no light and no window. It was completely dark, pitch black, and he said, they gave me nothing to do. I had nothing to look at, I couldn't see anything anyway. All I could do was spend time with the Lord. And he wrote later, he said, there were times when I had to get up from my prayer and dance for joy, I was so filled with God's grace and peace, and He had so lifted my burdens that I had to literally get up and dance a jig because God had so touched me at the center of my being.

Christians, that's something you and I rarely experience. And therefore, to you and I, we hear about prayer and we think it's like, what could Jesus have had to talk to God the Father about all night long? I think Jesus hung out with His Father because He wanted to just be in His presence. I think He just wanted to hang with Him. I think He wanted to have His heart restored. You and I live in this world, and when we operate within the context of this world, it does the opposite in our lives. It takes away from us, doesn't it?

Because we're always living with some sort of tragedy, some sort of bad news some sort of challenge, and it's constantly draining us from peace. It's constantly draining our joy. It's constantly draining our spiritual batteries, and we don't even realize it, and we're all bummed. And no wonder we're depressed, and we're just, we're a mess, we're just in a tailspin. And we're like, man, I don't know why life is so hard, and we don't take time to simply go into the presence of God and to wait on the Lord.

There's a promise given to us in the Scripture, “...*they... (who) wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.*” (Isaiah 40:31) Right?

That's a promise from God's Word. How many of us have experienced it? How many of us have drawn so close to the Lord in genuine relationship that we came away from that time of communion just absolutely pumped and ready to

go? Or do we just go, Lord, thank You for this day. Here's what I need. Goodbye. Oh, in Jesus name. Goodbye. Got to get that in there.

It's just this, it's just this mechanism that we use to get our needs met. No wonder Jesus longed for sweet fellowship with the Father. No wonder He spent all night in prayer often. He was living among the people who were constantly pressing in on Him and drawing from Him. He had to find a way to get fill back up.

Let's get back to this question, “*Who... (do) the crowds say that I am?*” Jesus poses this to the disciples. Look with me again in verse 19. It says, and they answered. “*Well, some say John the Baptist.*”

Those were only the dumb ones because Jesus and John the Baptist had been seen publicly together, so these people that were saying that it was John the Baptist, they were one taco short of a combination plate.

But anyway, it says, “*others say Elijah and others that one of the prophets of old has risen.*” And they're throwing out all these opinions, and by the way, we pause here just long enough to remind ourselves that the crowd is always wrong. There's a crowd mentality. There's a crowd opinion and we're really big on opinions now.

I, well, we're no, I shouldn't say it that way. We're big on airing our opinions. We do it through social media and everybody's got an opinion and they say, well, I think that, and they go on and tell us their little personal slant on something. But this is one of those interesting reminders to you and I that the voice of the crowd is pretty dumb, actually, and if you read comments today online, you'll realize that it hasn't gotten any smarter in 2,000 years. It's pretty much the same sort of a thing. People are wild with their responses. Oh, some people say you're him. Some people say, some people say.

Then Jesus says to His disciples, “*Who do you say that I am?*” This is verse 20. Peter comes back with a response. He says, “*You're the Christ of God,*” which of course means the Messiah, you're the Messiah of God.

Now, at this point, Luke doesn't tell us what Jesus said to Peter in response to what he said. We actually have to go to Matthew's account to get that. Let me put it on the screen for you. From Matthew chapter 16 it says,

Mathew 16:17 (ESV)

...Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

...Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! (or Simon, that means son of Jonah) For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

And we read this, and we think, wow, that's pretty cool. Peter had a revelation from God as to who Jesus was. Wow, lucky Peter. You know what we forget? We all have. Well, if you are in Jesus today, if you are in Christ today, and what I mean by that is you've put your trust in Him as Savior, as the one and only Savior who can save you from your sin, you have had a revelation just like Peter had. Because you know what? It is only through the Holy Spirit that we can understand and know who Jesus is. We didn't think that Peter got it revealed supernaturally and we got it by intellect, did we? I don't think so.

It goes on here, look at verse 21, and it says, *"He strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, saying, the Son of Man must suffer many things."*

And there's two key words in that verse. The first one is *"must."* *"The Son of Man must suffer."* In other words, there's no option here for any other sort of a way of saving mankind. But then, of course, the other word is *"suffer."*

And then look what He goes on to say, *"and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes. And then He says, "and be killed and on the third day be raised."*

Now guys, can I have you stop there for just a moment? This must have been an absolutely mind-bending sort of a statement that Jesus made to the disciples.

I want you to notice these key words He says first of all, I'm going to suffer, I'm going to be rejected, I am going to die, and then I'm going to be raised. I don't think they probably even heard the last one because they were already so weirded out by the first three because you see, that didn't fit their understanding of what Messiah was going to come and do, because you see all these years Jewish people were raised with this heroic picture of Messiah and His coming. He was going to come and He's going to come as a conqueror.

The Messiah is going to take up the sword and He is going to liberate us from our captors. Now, of course, at this time it was Rome. Rome was the big guy on

the block right now, and they dominated Israel. And so the Jews believed that Messiah was going to come. He was going to liberate them from their Roman oppressors. Yay us! But look what Jesus says.

“The Son of Man must suffer.” The Son of Man must be rejected. The Son of Man must be killed, and then the Son of Man will be raised.

This is just so wild. Luke politely doesn't tell us about what Peter did when he heard these words, because, and I don't know why Luke left it out, maybe Peter paid him not to put it in or something, because it made him look bad. But you guys remember, in another Gospel account we learned that Peter actually, when he heard this very thing, he pulled Jesus aside, and he began to rebuke Him. He said, now listen here. I want you to knock off this talk about suffering and dying, okay?

Because I don't know Jesus, if you've actually read the Bible, like we've read the Bible. But the Messiah doesn't suffer and die. He conquers. He's a victor. And we're going to be by your side in glory. So, this talk of suffering and being rejected and dying, I don't want to hear any more of it. Yeah, pretty wild, huh? That's actually what Peter dared to do, and I think all of the men who were there expected the very same. God is going to advance His kingdom through glorious military domination. So what is Jesus doing here?

Jesus is opening the hearts of His disciples to the reality of the fact that God's method, God's way of accomplishing His purpose was going to be different from what they expected, and here's how it was going to come. Very important.

It's going to come through sacrifice and suffering, and again, that was a completely new idea to these guys. Sacrifice and suffering? Are you kidding me? We did not sign up for sacrifice and suffering. We signed up for glory. You guys know that these disciples, most of their conversation was which one of them was going to be the most glorious.

They knew, they believed that they were destined for glory, and so they were constantly having conversations. Which one of us do you think is going to be at His right, seated in the kingdom of God? Well, I have my own thoughts, and who's going to be on His left and down the way, a little ways. I think I know. This is what dominated their conversation. The whole idea of sacrifice and suffering?

But this was what Jesus was communicating to them, first of all, about Himself, I have come to do the will of God. I have come to accomplish the purpose of God.

Let me tell you guys how that purpose is going to be accomplished. It's going to happen through sacrifice and suffering, but I've got a word for you guys too. It's the same with you. Your life is to also be one of sacrifice and suffering. And here's how Jesus put it.

Look at verse 23 in your Bible. *“And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself (and that speaks of self-sacrifice. But He didn't stop there. He said) and let him take up his cross daily and follow me.”*

Now, pause there for a moment because you see, when Jesus made this statement about taking up one's cross, you and I know it only from a biblical standpoint, but they knew it from an execution standpoint.

When a man took up his cross, that was something the Romans would do to humiliate him on his way to his execution. The Romans didn't just nail people on crosses, before they crucified them, they made them carry the cross through town in a sort of a parade, a procession, and people would line the streets and jeer and mock and yell at this person and spit at them as they walked through the streets of the city until they finally got to the place of execution where they were laid down on that piece of timber and they were nailed to it. It was propped up and they would hang there until they died.

So, the whole idea of taking up your cross was understood by these men. But it was understood to be part and parcel of dying. This was part of the dying process. Nobody took up their cross and lived afterwards. It always ended in death.

Now Jesus is talking about you and I here. But He's not talking about a physical death, necessarily, for you or I. It is a spiritual, it is a different sort of a death that He is talking about here. And He goes on, again, verse 23, *“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”*

Here's, I need to make this point, because we're comparing things to the Roman form of execution. Under Rome, no one ever took up their cross willingly. It was demanded them that they do that by the authorities on their way to crucifixion. Jesus is saying to you and I, unless a man deny himself, he's not talking about anybody doing it to you. He's not talking about anyone forcing

you to take up your cross. He says, unless a man deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. He's referring here to this voluntary sort of an action on our part to die to self.

Now, listen, when we begin to think about this and we begin to ask ourself the question, what exactly does He mean when He says, die to self, deny self, die to self, what is that?

Well, first of all, we need to understand that denying, well, we need to understand that all of this is completely contrary to the gravitational pull of our flesh and the message of the world. The world is not telling you and I to die to self, the world is telling you and I to gratify self.

The world is telling you and I to live for self, to make self, our number one purpose for living. We are, according to the world, to be centered on self. We probably wouldn't, the world doesn't like to say, be self-centered, but that's their message. That's the message. Be self-centered. Be centered on you. You are the center of your universe, and everything revolves around you and it encourages that, and Jesus comes along and He says I want you to be the opposite of all of that. I want you to be not centered on you. I want you to be centered on me and I want you to be centered on others.

So, others centered, and God centered. And that is incredibly hard because you and I have believed the things that the world has told us. We've gulped it down, hook, line and sinker. The world comes along and says something. In fact, they tell us we need to be self-focused or we can't be others focused. Have you ever heard that message? In fact, let me put a popular message from the world up on the screen for you here.

You cannot truly love others until you learn to love yourself.
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Hey, let's find that in the Bible, shall we? You guys want to look with me, and we'll just see if we can, oh wait, it's not there. Yeah, it's not there because it's not true. It is fundamentally untrue that you must learn to love yourself before you can love others. That message is all about being self-centered. It's being self-focused.

God says don't do that. Don't be that way. Jesus challenges you and I to follow His example and to be others centered. Care about other people, and He doesn't tell you oh, but you got to first learn to care for yourself. There's none of that going on here. But it's amazing, I'll say something like this.

It's amazing how many Christians, Christians will say to me I didn't know that. I believed that idea that you have to love yourself before you can love others. I believed that with all my heart. I lived that way. I bet some people thought it was in the Bible, right next to the golden rule. See, we have to realize, as Christians, how much of the world has seeped into our lives. Please understand, it's not hard for the things of the world to seep into our lives.

We're primed and cocked to accept and to embrace the things of the world because they go with my flesh. I want to think about myself first. I like thinking about myself first. Right? So do you. So when the world comes around and says to you and I, hey, look out for number one, we're like, yeah. I mean, that's just, that just resonates with our fleshly hearts. Jesus comes along and He says, if you want to be my follower, you must deny self and take up an instrument of dying and then follow me instead of following you.

And we're all like, really? Yeah, it doesn't, that's not natural. It's only going to happen supernaturally as I yield to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and allow Him to do that work in my life of crucifixion of the old man. The Paul man. I want you to, I want you to see how the apostle Paul described this whole idea of dying to self. Denying self, in Philippians chapter 2, look at this on the screen. He says,

Philippians 2:3-4 (NIV84)

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility, consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Do nothing out of selfish ambition (Or the ambition that is self-centered. That's what that means) or vain conceit, but in humility, consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

People, this is the opposite of what the world is telling you and I to do, or the way the world is telling you and I to live. God, or the kingdom of God, if you will, gives it from a completely different perspective. You are to be other centered, and then, how does this whole denying of self, relate to my life?

My interaction with God? Well, from that, it's the Book of James that helps us out. James chapter 4, verse 13 and following says,

James 4:13-15 (ESV)

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"— yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that."

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit" (He says) — yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. (I mean) What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that."

This passage gives you and I some insight into how dying to self or denying self plays itself out in our relationship with God. We've seen how it plays out in our relationship with people, right? I'm to consider others better than myself, and I'm to think about their needs above my own. But as it relates to my connecting with God, I am to yield to His Lordship, His agenda, His plan in my life, right? And I am to say, if the Lord wills, then we'll do that.

Do you see what's going on? I am, as I deny self, I am to lay down my agenda, my rights, my plan. Paul's plan. Lay it down and follow Me. Oh, Lord, that's so hard. It's really hard. Anybody who says it isn't is lying. And then we come in verse 24 to what is arguably, I don't know, some of the most powerful things that Jesus ever, ever, said to us here. Look at verse 24.

"For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?"

Aren't those a couple of amazing verses? And I think they're so powerful because I don't think there is a more contrary statement that Jesus ever made to the heart and the attitude of the world that you and I live in. I mean, this is just completely antithetical. He says, if you want to save your life, you're going to end up actually losing it. And what does He mean by save your life? Well, He's talking about making my life the most important thing to me, and doing everything I can to protect it.

And you know what? If my life is the most important thing to me, I'm going to do everything I can to protect it. I'm going to protect it. I'm going to, I'm going to say, well, that's just not safe. I'm going to always be thinking about my safety. I'm always going to be thinking and talking about my health. Doesn't that

just about make you send you into a coma? I struggle being around people who want to talk about nothing but their health. Listen, we're all dying. Okay?

We started, we've been dying since birth, slowly and we get to my age and it just starts becoming more noticeable. Okay, so what are you going to talk about? Are you going to focus on that particular fact? Is that going to be the essence of your conversation? Stop boring people. We're all dealing with the same thing. I think, but so you know that is a focus that comes from being fixated on my comfort, and **my** life, and **my** health, **my** existence, that people is the self-life. And again, if that's the most important thing in our lives, we're going to preserve it at all costs.

But the kingdom of God teaches us to deny self, to deny our own comforts, to even renounce or even to disown those things for the sake of others and for the kingdom of God.

Never forget a book I read a number of years ago about a man who had become a doctor. His mother worked as a missionary overseas, and by the time he had become a doctor and practiced for a number of years, his mother had gotten quite elderly, but she was living in a very difficult kind of an environment in terms of just life was hard on the mission field.

And she was having trouble with her heart, and so he finally convinced his mother to come back to the United States and see a doctor about her situation, and the doctor basically told her, yeah, this is pretty serious stuff. If you stop what you're doing now, you could live another few years.

If you go back out into the mission field and keep living and serving at the pace that you've been living I can make no guarantees. And she thought it through and she thought whose life is this anyway? Does it belong to me? She decided rather than being self-focused, she decided to be others focused and she made up her mind to go back to the mission field.

She lived like another 25 years, and served with great strength until she finally died, and the people of that village buried her and loved her to the very end.

The point is, she simply made the determination that was in keeping with the words that Jesus is laying out for us here in Luke chapter 9. If you seek to save or preserve your life, you're going to find that instead of saving it, and instead of preserving it, it's going to slip through your fingers.

But if you lay it down for My sake and give, it even recklessly, for the kingdom of God, you will find that you will actually find your life and the life that you were looking for.

So these are pretty powerful verses and He punctuates it here at the very end in verse 26 by saying, whoever is ashamed of me and my words, of him will the Son of man be ashamed when He comes in His glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

And we read these verses or this verse here, and we wonder why would people be ashamed of Jesus? We've got to understand Jesus has just told His disciples that He is going to accomplish the purpose and the will of God in a way that is completely contrary to what they thought Messiah was going to do. And He's now telling them to live in a way that is completely contrary to the world. Completely contrary.

And do you know what? For some people, that's just going to be too much to handle. It's just going to be too much, and they're going to shrink back and they're going to say, you know what, I just can't do it. But Jesus issues a warning here.

If you are ashamed of what you see in Me, because people, you've got to understand what the world sees in Jesus is foolishness and stupidity. Let's just face it, the world thinks Jesus is stupid. The world thinks He's weak, and the world doubts that anything was accomplished on the cross at all, other than the snuffing out of a life, right?

You and I know that something powerful happened there on the cross. We know that. We understand that. So, we look at it and we understand that the way the world sees it, but we know how we see it. Let me show you how Paul expressed this in 1 Corinthians chapter 1. Verse 18 out of the NIV,

1 Corinthians 1:18 (NIV)

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

For the message of the cross is (absolute total) foolishness to (the world, meaning) those who are perishing, but (what is it to us?) to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Right? But you see, do you care how the world feels? Some people do, and they will be influenced by that, because again, the world looks at what Jesus did and they just, they don't get it.

I want you to notice here in verse 26, Jesus makes a statement about Himself when He says, “*When he comes in his glory.*” Jesus is coming back. He's not coming in weakness. He's coming in glory. He's coming in power. And we're going to end this morning with a powerful statement made by the apostle Paul when he talks about Jesus and what He did on the cross from Romans chapter 1. He says,

“*...I am not ashamed...*” I'm not ashamed. And I'm not going to be ashamed because this Gospel, this good news that we preach, it's the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.

The world can say what they will. The world can say you Christians are a bunch of big idiots. I don't care. “*...I am not ashamed...*” The cross, which looks like absolute failure, was the greatest success that man has ever known. Because on it, the price of our sin was fully paid.

And Jesus conquered the grave and death, and He's coming back to receive those who are waiting in faith.