

**On the Road with Jesus: The Road to Self-Denial**  
**March 19<sup>th</sup> (Transmitter) & March 26<sup>th</sup> (Fusion), 2017**  
**Lynn Haven UMC**

**Introduction**

Then he said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23 NLT)

"Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine." (Luke 22:42 NLT)

**Digging Deeper**

Following Jesus on the road to self-denial requires us to...

Dethrone ourselves & enthrone God

- Many of us suffer from tunnel vision, getting caught up in the minutia of our lives. Self-centeredness is a trap into which we can easily fall. But Jesus' explicit instructions are to deny ourselves. That means we need to take the spotlight off of us and shine it on Him and His objectives. To do that we must examine our lives to identify and eliminate any idols that occupy that top shelf space that should be reserved for Jesus. If you had to identify the idols that exist in your life, what do you think they would be? Do you think it is possible that you could be inadvertently exalting these things (or people) above God?
- The way of the world is self-desire. The way of the disciple is self-denial. What are some habits of a self-absorbed person? Do any of those things sound like what Jesus taught? How do we ignore and maybe even combat the societal messages we hear that tell us to "just do what feels good to you", "you deserve it all", and "take care of number one"? When we begin to approach each day with an attitude of discipleship, we will discover that deep down, we already knew the depth of the falseness maintained in these ideals.

Detach from ourselves and attach to God

- Read Galatians 2:20 (NLT). The most important thing you will ever do is establish and maintain a proper relationship with Jesus. You start by realizing your old self is dead and it is now Christ who lives in you. Only then can your purpose for this life be revealed to you. Do you struggle with an attachment to self that might be getting in the way of your ability (or desire) to pick up your cross and follow Him?
- It is important that we keep asking God to show us what He wants us to do. Otherwise we might find ourselves leaning on our own understanding (which of course is infinitely limited by comparison). It is certain that habitually seeking God's counsel is beneficial for spiritual maturation. However, some people have a tendency to leave God out of their decision making process all together. Why do you think it can be a struggle to develop habits of holiness?

**Conclusion**

The transforming power of Jesus Christ is on display in the lives of those who have traded selfishness for selflessness. To truly walk with Jesus on the road to self-denial we must be willing to say not my will, but Your will, be done Lord. As we learned last week, early Christians called themselves, "Followers of The Way." Spend time this week in prayer asking God to help you to break any attachment to self that might be preventing you from picking up your cross and following The Way!