

The Gospel of Luke, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 13: The Twelve, the Five Thousand, and the Confession

Luke 9:1-27

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

A great deal is at stake doctrinally in this lesson, and the teacher should feel its center of gravity in Peter's confession and Jesus' immediate response. When Peter says, "The Christ of God" (v. 20), and Jesus at once begins to speak of suffering, rejection, death, and resurrection (v. 22), Luke is teaching us that to confess Jesus as the Christ is to confess a crucified and risen Messiah, not a political deliverer or earthly king. This is the same good confession that the New Testament ties to the gospel response, the confession Christ Himself made before Pilate and that we make when we come to Him in faith, repentance, confession, and baptism (Romans 10:9-10; 1 Timothy 6:12-13; Acts 8:37). The teacher must hold the title and the cross together, refusing to let students keep a glorious Christ without a crucified one.

There is also a kingdom note that requires care. The disciples, like most of their countrymen, expected the Christ to drive out Rome and restore an earthly throne, and Jesus deliberately dismantled that hope in this passage. When He promises that some standing there "will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God" (v. 27), He is not predicting a future earthly thousand-year reign. He is pointing to the kingdom that drew near in His ministry and was established with power when the church began at Pentecost, over which He now reigns from the right hand of the Father (Mark 9:1; Acts 2:36; Colossians 1:13; Daniel 2:44). Guard the class against every form of premillennial expectation and lift their eyes to the reign of Christ that is a present reality.

At the same time, this passage was never meant only to settle doctrine. It is here to form cross-bearing disciples. Jesus calls every follower to deny himself, take up his cross daily, and lose his life in order to save it (vv. 23-24), and He warns against being ashamed of Him and His words (v. 26). Aim at both targets every week: send students home surer that Jesus is the crucified and risen Christ who reigns now, and more willing to follow that Christ down the costly, daily road of self-denial that He walked first.

Question 1

Student Question:

Jesus called the Twelve together and "gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God" (vv. 1-2). What does this commissioning teach us about the nature of the apostles' work, the message they were to preach, and the source of their authority?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Begin with the striking fact that Jesus shares His own power and mission with the Twelve. He “gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal” (vv. 1–2). Up to now these men have watched Jesus do these things. Now He authorizes them to do them in His name. The work of the kingdom has always been a sent work, carried by people whom God commissions and empowers.

Notice carefully what they were sent to preach: “the kingdom of God” (v. 2). This is the heartbeat of Jesus’ own preaching (Luke 4:43), and it is the announcement that God’s reign was breaking into the world in the person and ministry of Jesus. The miracles were not ends in themselves; they were signs that authenticated the message, confirming that the kingdom had drawn near. Help students see that the apostles were heralds of a King, not wonder-workers performing for a crowd.

Teach the source of their authority plainly. The Twelve had no power of their own. Every bit of authority over demons and disease was delegated to them by Jesus. This guards us against two errors: thinking that the work of God depends on human ability, and thinking that we may invent our own message or mission. The apostles preached what they were given to preach and worked by power that was given, not generated.

Draw the line forward for the class. The miraculous, sign-confirming work of the apostles belonged to the founding era of the church, when the message was being authenticated before the New Testament was complete (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3–4). We do not claim those sign gifts today. But the central commission, to proclaim the reign of Christ and call people to Him, still rests on the Lord’s church, carried now not by new revelation but by the completed and sufficient word (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The apostles’ authority as delegated by Christ, not self-generated (Luke 9:1; John 20:21)
- The kingdom of God as the central message of Jesus and the apostles (Luke 4:43; Mark 1:14–15)
- Miracles as signs that authenticated the message rather than ends in themselves (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3–4)
- The founding, sign-confirming work of the apostles as belonging to the era before the New Testament was complete
- The abiding commission of the church to proclaim the reign of Christ by the completed word (2 Timothy 3:16–17)

Discussion Prompts

- What were the Twelve actually sent to preach, and why does that matter?

- How does delegated authority guard us from depending on our own ability or inventing our own message?
- How is the church's mission today both like and unlike the mission of the Twelve?

Question 2

Student Question:

Jesus instructed the Twelve to “take nothing for the journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money” (v. 3), so that they would lean wholly on God. Where in your own life are you trusting your resources, your planning, or your reputation more than you are trusting God, and what would it look like to travel a little lighter and trust Him more?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the first self-examining question, so steer the group away from information and toward honesty. Jesus told the Twelve to “take nothing for the journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money, and do not have two tunics” (v. 3). He was deliberately stripping away the ordinary supports a traveler relied on, so that they would learn to lean wholly on God and on the hospitality He would provide.

Be clear that this was a specific instruction for a particular mission, not a blanket rule that Christians must own nothing. Jesus is not condemning planning or provision as such. But the principle beneath the instruction reaches every believer: the kingdom advances by trust in God, and our hearts cling far too easily to our own resources. The disciples had to discover experientially that God could be trusted.

Help students name the specific things they trust instead of God. For most of us it is not staff and bag but a bank balance, a resume, a circle of influential friends, a carefully managed reputation, or a backup plan we never tell anyone about. These are not evil in themselves, but they quietly become the thing we rest on, and they crowd out real dependence on the Father.

Point toward freedom rather than guilt. Traveling lighter is not loss but release. The disciples came back with stories of God's faithfulness precisely because they had nothing else to fall back on. Invite students to identify one resource they are gripping too tightly and to loosen their hold this week, choosing to trust the God who fed five thousand from five loaves.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Dependence on God as central to kingdom work and to discipleship (Matthew 6:31–33)
- The difference between wise provision and trusting our resources in the place of God
- The subtle idolatry of money, reputation, and self-sufficiency (1 Timothy 6:17)
- God's faithfulness to provide for those who serve Him

Discussion Prompts

- What are the modern equivalents of staff, bag, and money that you lean on?
- Where is the line between wise planning and trusting your resources instead of God?
- What would it look like for you to travel a little lighter and trust God more this week?

Question 3

Student Question:

When the disciples wanted to send the crowds away to find food, Jesus said, “You give them something to eat,” and then used five loaves and two fish to feed thousands with twelve baskets left over (vv. 13–17). What does this miracle reveal about who Jesus is, about His compassion, and about how He works through the small and inadequate things we place in His hands?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Move to the feeding of the five thousand, one of the few miracles recorded in all four Gospels, which marks its importance. The disciples, weary and practical, urge Jesus to “send the crowd away” to find food (v. 12). Jesus answers with four words that turn the problem back on them: “You give them something to eat” (v. 13). He intends to teach them, and us, something about Himself and about how He works.

Let the class marvel at what the miracle reveals about Jesus. He has compassion on a hungry multitude and will not send them away empty. And He has the sheer power of the Creator, multiplying bread and fish in His hands until “they all ate and were satisfied” (v. 17). This is no magician’s trick; it is the Lord of creation providing for His people, echoing the manna in the wilderness and pointing ahead to Himself as the true bread of life (John 6:35).

Draw attention to the method. Jesus takes “the five loaves and the two fish,” looks “up to heaven” and blesses them, then gives them to the disciples to distribute (v. 16). He begins with the little they have. He does not despise the five loaves; He takes them, blesses them, and makes them more than enough. This is how God so often works, multiplying the small and inadequate things we place in His hands rather than waiting for us to bring Him something impressive.

Do not miss the twelve baskets left over (v. 17). The abundance is pointed. There is exactly enough for everyone and more besides, perhaps one basket for each of the Twelve who had said it could not be done. God’s provision is never stingy. Help students see that when Jesus is given the loaves, the result is not bare sufficiency but overflow.

Bring it home pastorally. Many believers withhold their small gifts because they seem too little to matter. This miracle says otherwise. Offer Him the loaves you have, your ordinary time, your modest means, your limited ability, and watch what He does with what is surrendered into His hands.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The deity and creative power of Christ, Lord even over bread and fish (John 1:3)
- The compassion of Jesus for the physical and spiritual needs of the crowds (Luke 9:11; Matthew 9:36)
- Jesus as the true bread who satisfies, foreshadowed in this sign (John 6:35)
- God's pattern of multiplying the small and inadequate things surrendered to Him
- The abundance of God's provision, signaled by the twelve baskets left over

Discussion Prompts

- What does the feeding of the multitude reveal about who Jesus is?
- Why is it significant that Jesus began with the little the disciples already had?
- What small loaves and fish is God asking you to place into His hands?

Question 4

Student Question:

Faced with a need far beyond their means, the disciples saw only what they lacked: "We have no more than five loaves and two fish" (v. 13). When you face a need or a calling that feels far bigger than your resources, do you tend to focus on what you lack or on what God can do, and how might this scene reshape the way you respond?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-examining question grows directly out of the miracle. When the need appeared, the disciples did the math: "We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless we are to go and buy food for all these people" (v. 13). Their eyes went straight to the deficit. They saw the size of the crowd and the size of their resources and concluded that the case was hopeless.

Gently expose how natural this reaction is. Most of us, facing a need or a calling that dwarfs our resources, immediately calculate our lack. We tally the money we do not have, the time we cannot spare, the gifts we were never given. The arithmetic of scarcity feels responsible, even humble, but it leaves Jesus out of the equation entirely.

Set the disciples' math beside Jesus' response. The same five loaves that proved the impossibility of the task in their hands became more than enough in His. The difference was not the size of the resource but the presence of the Lord. The question is never simply, what do I have? It is, what can God do with what I have when I give it to Him?

Press toward a concrete situation. Ask each student to name the place where they are currently focused on what they lack, a ministry they feel unqualified for, a relationship that seems beyond repair, a financial need with no visible answer. Invite them to bring that very lack to the Lord this week and to ask Him what He would do with their five loaves.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The contrast between an economy of scarcity and trust in God's sufficiency
- Faith that reckons with God's power rather than only with human resources (2 Corinthians 9:8)
- The danger of leaving Christ out of our calculations when we assess what is possible
- God's habit of accomplishing His purposes through inadequate means and people

Discussion Prompts

- When you face a need bigger than your means, where do your eyes go first?
- How does this scene reshape the way you measure what is possible?
- What lack are you focused on right now that you could bring to the Lord this week?

Question 5

Student Question:

On a day of prayer, Jesus asked, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" and then, "But who do you say that I am?" and Peter answered, "The Christ of God" (vv. 18–20). Why does Jesus press His disciples beyond the opinions of the crowds to a personal confession, and what does it mean to confess Jesus as "the Christ of God"?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Now the lesson reaches its first great doctrinal turn. On a day when Jesus was "praying alone" with the disciples near, He asked two questions in sequence: first, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" and then, sharply personal, "But who do you say that I am?" (vv. 18, 20). The crowds had opinions, John the Baptist, Elijah, one of the old prophets. Peter, speaking for the Twelve, answered, "The Christ of God" (v. 20).

Help the class feel why Jesus pressed past the crowds' opinions to a personal confession. A secondhand report about Jesus saves no one. The crowds admired Him, speculated about Him, even followed Him for the bread, but they had not surrendered to Him. The decisive question is never what others think but what you yourself confess. Faith in Christ is finally personal, and Jesus will not let His disciples hide in the safety of the crowd's vague opinions.

Unfold what Peter actually confessed. "The Christ" means the Anointed One, the Messiah promised through the prophets, the long-awaited King in the line of David. "The Christ of God" anchors that title in the Father's own purpose and sending. Peter is confessing that Jesus is the one toward whom all of Scripture had been pointing, the centerpiece of God's plan to save His people.

Connect this to the gospel and to the good confession the New Testament calls every believer to make. The same Jesus who drew this confession from Peter is the one we confess as Lord and Christ when we come to Him. With the mouth we confess and with the heart we believe (Romans 10:9–10), the good confession Jesus Himself made before Pilate (1 Timothy 6:13) and

that the Ethiopian made before his baptism (Acts 8:37). Confessing Christ is not a private feeling tucked away in the heart; it is a clear acknowledgment that shapes everything that follows.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The necessity of a personal confession of Christ, not a borrowed or secondhand faith (Matthew 10:32)
- The meaning of “the Christ,” the promised Messiah and Davidic King (Luke 4:18; Acts 2:30–31)
- The good confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, tied to the gospel response (Romans 10:9–10; 1 Timothy 6:12–13; Acts 8:37)
- Christ as the center of God’s redemptive purpose, the one to whom all Scripture points (Luke 24:27)
- Confession as a public acknowledgment of Christ’s lordship rather than a private sentiment

Discussion Prompts

- Why does Jesus refuse to let His disciples rest in the crowd’s opinions?
- What does it mean to confess Jesus as “the Christ of God”?
- How does Peter’s confession connect to the confession we make when we come to Christ?

Question 6

Student Question:

Many people around Jesus had an opinion about Him: John the Baptist raised, Elijah, or one of the old prophets (vv. 7–8, 19). Whose voices and opinions most shape the way you think about Jesus, and what would it mean for you to move from a secondhand faith you inherited to a firsthand confession that is truly your own?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-examining question turns on the contrast between the crowds’ borrowed opinions and Peter’s personal confession. Luke surrounds the confession with a sampling of secondhand views. Herod is perplexed and asks, “Who is this?” (v. 9). The people guess John, Elijah, or a prophet of old (vv. 7–8, 19). Everyone has heard something about Jesus, but hearsay is not faith.

Invite students to consider whose voices have most shaped their picture of Jesus. For many of us, our earliest sense of Christ came from parents, a preacher, a Sunday school teacher, a culture that uses His name freely. These influences can be a great gift. But there comes a point where an inherited faith must become a personal one, where we stop merely repeating what we were told and answer the question for ourselves.

Be careful and pastoral here. The goal is not to make students doubt a faith handed down to them, which may be entirely true, but to make that faith their own. Even Peter, who had walked

with Jesus for many months, had to put his own confession into words. A faith never personally owned tends to collapse under pressure, while a faith genuinely confessed can stand.

Move toward action. Ask each person to articulate, in their own words and not borrowed ones, who Jesus is to them. Encourage them to examine whether their confession has ever moved beyond agreement into the kind of surrender that obeys Him as Lord. A faith worth having is a faith we have personally laid hold of and acted upon.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The difference between an inherited, secondhand faith and a personal confession of Christ
- The insufficiency of mere opinions or hearsay about Jesus (John 6:66–69)
- The call to own one's faith and confess Christ for oneself
- Faith that issues in surrender and obedience, not mere agreement (James 2:19)

Discussion Prompts

- Whose voices have most shaped the way you think about Jesus?
- Has your faith ever moved from what you were taught to a confession of your own?
- What would it look like to personally own and act on your faith this week?

Question 7

Student Question:

The moment Peter confessed Him as the Christ, Jesus said that “the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected... and be killed, and on the third day be raised” (v. 22). Why was it so important for Jesus to bind the title “Christ” together with suffering, death, and resurrection, and how does this correct the expectation of a political or conquering Messiah?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is one of the most important moments in the Gospel, and the teacher should slow down here. The instant Peter confesses Jesus as the Christ, Jesus “strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one,” and immediately added, “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” (vv. 21–22). The title and the cross are bound together in a single breath.

Explain why Jesus did this. The word “Christ” carried explosive expectations in first-century Judea. Most people expected the Messiah to be a political and military deliverer who would throw off Rome and restore an earthly kingdom to Israel. Had the disciples gone out proclaiming Jesus as that kind of Christ, they would have spread a fundamental misunderstanding. So Jesus immediately fills the title with its true content: this Christ has come to suffer, to be rejected by His own nation's leaders, to be killed, and to rise. The crown comes by way of the cross.

Hold the title and the suffering together for the class. To confess Jesus as the Christ while refusing a crucified Messiah is to confess a Christ who does not exist. Peter himself would shortly try to talk Jesus out of the cross and be rebuked sharply (Mark 8:32–33). We must let Jesus define what kind of Christ He is rather than imposing our own preferences, whether the prosperous king of the first century or the comfortable, undemanding Savior of our own.

Underline the resurrection, which is not an afterthought but the heart of the gospel. “On the third day be raised” (v. 22) means the suffering is not the end of the story. The cross is the path, but the empty tomb is the vindication. The gospel we believe and confess is precisely this: that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3–4; Acts 2:23–24).

Land it where the gospel always lands. Because the Christ suffered, died, and rose, His death can atone for our sins and His resurrection can give us life. This is the Christ we confess and the Christ into whose death we are baptized, buried with Him and raised to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3–4). A glorious Christ without a crucified one cannot save; the real Christ saves precisely because He went to the cross and came out of the grave.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The necessity of Christ’s suffering, death, and resurrection, foretold by Jesus Himself (Luke 9:22; 1 Corinthians 15:3–4)
- Confessing Jesus as the Christ means embracing a crucified and risen Messiah, not a political conqueror
- The correction of a political, earthly expectation of the kingdom and the Messiah
- The cross as the appointed path to the crown, the means of atonement for sin (Acts 2:23–24; Isaiah 53)
- The resurrection as the vindication and heart of the gospel, into whose death and rising we are baptized (Romans 6:3–4)

Discussion Prompts

- Why did Jesus immediately speak of suffering the moment Peter confessed Him as Christ?
- What expectation of the Messiah was Jesus correcting, and how do we make the same mistake today?
- Why can a glorious Christ without a crucified and risen one never save us?

Question 8

Student Question:

Jesus warned, “Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory” (v. 26). Where are you most tempted to be quietly ashamed of Jesus or of His words, perhaps in your workplace, among friends, or online, and what would faithful, unashamed confession look like in that specific setting?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-examining question presses on Jesus' solemn warning: "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" (v. 26). Note that being ashamed of Jesus and being ashamed of His words are joined together. We cannot honor Christ while quietly distancing ourselves from what He actually taught.

Help students locate the real pressure points. Few of us would openly deny Christ. Our temptation is subtler: the silence in a conversation where we could have spoken, the laugh we join in at His expense, the conviction we soften so as not to seem narrow, the post we do not write, the stand we do not take at work. Shame usually shows up not as loud denial but as quiet omission.

Notice that our culture increasingly finds the words of Jesus offensive even when it tolerates a vague, inoffensive Jesus. To confess Christ fully is to stand by His teaching about sin, salvation, marriage, judgment, and His own exclusive lordship. The pressure to be ashamed often falls precisely on His words, which is why Jesus names both Himself and His words in the same warning.

Encourage students without crushing them. The remedy for shame is not bravado but a deep settledness in who Jesus is, the crucified and risen Christ who was not ashamed to bear our cross. The more clearly we see Him, the less we will cringe before the opinions of others. Ask each person to name one specific setting, the workplace, a friendship, a family table, the internet, where unashamed confession is being asked of them this week.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The call to unashamed confession of Christ and of His words (Romans 1:16; 2 Timothy 1:8)
- The unity of Christ and His teaching; we cannot keep Jesus while rejecting His words (John 12:48)
- The seriousness of denying Christ before others and His promise to confess the faithful (Matthew 10:32-33)
- Christ's return in glory as the horizon that shapes present faithfulness

Discussion Prompts

- Where are you most tempted to be quietly ashamed of Jesus or of His words?
- Why does Jesus join being ashamed of Him to being ashamed of His teaching?
- What would unashamed confession look like in one specific setting this week?

Question 9

Student Question:

Jesus said, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it" (vv. 23–24), and then promised that some standing there would "see the kingdom of God" before they died (v. 27). What does Jesus teach here about the true cost and the true reward of discipleship, and what does He mean by a kingdom that some of His hearers would live to see?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the heaviest doctrinal question of the lesson, and it gathers the call to discipleship together with the promise of the kingdom. Right after speaking of His own cross, Jesus turns to all who would follow Him: "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it" (vv. 23–24). The pattern of the Master becomes the pattern of the disciple.

Unfold the terms carefully. To deny oneself is to dethrone self and enthrone Christ, to stop living for our own comfort, reputation, and will. To take up a cross is even stronger; a cross was an instrument of execution, carried by a condemned man on the way to die. Luke alone records the word "daily" (v. 23), and it is crucial. Cross-bearing is not a single dramatic act but a sustained, everyday choosing of Christ over self. Help students see that discipleship is a daily death and a daily following.

Open up the great paradox of verse 24. The person who clutches his life, living for self-preservation, comfort, and his own kingdom, will lose the only life that matters. The person who lets go of his life for Christ's sake, who spends himself in following Jesus, finds true and eternal life. This runs head-on into a culture that says the path to fulfillment is self-realization and self-assertion. Jesus says the path runs the other way, through surrender.

Now handle the kingdom promise with precision, because verse 27 is often misread. Jesus says, "There are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God." This is not a prediction of a future earthly thousand-year reign, and it cannot be, for Jesus says some of those very hearers would live to see it. The kingdom had already drawn near in His ministry (Luke 11:20), and it was established with power when the church began at Pentecost, just as Jesus promised that the kingdom would come "with power" within that generation (Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:1–4). Many standing there did indeed live to see it.

Tie the threads together and guard against premillennialism plainly. The kingdom of God is not a political realm we are still waiting for Christ to set up on earth someday. It is the reign of Christ, who, having suffered and risen, was exalted to the right hand of God and made both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36). He reigns now over His church, which is His kingdom (Colossians 1:13; Daniel 2:44). So the call and the promise belong together: we take up the cross daily and follow a King who is already reigning, and we will share in the unshakable kingdom that will never be destroyed.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Discipleship as self-denial, daily cross-bearing, and following Christ (Luke 9:23; Galatians 2:20)
- The paradox of saving one's life by losing it for Christ's sake (Luke 9:24; Philippians 3:7-8)
- The kingdom of God as a present reality established at Pentecost, not a future earthly reign (Mark 9:1; Acts 2; Colossians 1:13)
- Christ's present reign from the right hand of the Father as Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36; Daniel 2:44)
- A clear guard against premillennialism, date-setting, and the expectation of an earthly thousand-year kingdom
- The unshakable, everlasting nature of the kingdom into which disciples are called (Hebrews 12:28)

Discussion Prompts

- What does Jesus mean by denying ourselves and taking up our cross daily?
- How does the paradox of losing our life to save it cut against the message of our culture?
- Why must verse 27 refer to the kingdom established at Pentecost rather than a future earthly reign?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back across the whole passage, from the sending of the Twelve, to the feeding of the multitude, to Peter's confession, to the call to take up the cross daily. Name one specific way you sense Jesus forming you through these verses. What is the single truth from Luke 9:1-27 that you most need to carry into this coming week?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Use this final question to gather the whole passage into one response. Luke has carried the class from the sending of the Twelve, through the feeding of the multitude, to Peter's confession and the call of the cross. The thread running through all of it is the identity of Jesus, the crucified and risen Christ who reigns, and the kind of life that following Him requires.

Resist the urge to introduce new content here. The aim is integration and personal response. Give students room to name what God has actually stirred in them, whether it is a clearer confession of who Jesus is, conviction about a cross they have been setting down, fresh trust in His provision, or repentance over a quiet shame.

Press gently toward specificity. A general resolve to follow Jesus more closely rarely changes a life. Cross-bearing is daily and concrete. Ask each person to name one definite truth from these verses and one definite way they will live differently because of it this week.

Close the session with eyes fixed on Christ. The whole passage has been moving toward Him, the Christ of God who suffered, died, and rose, and who reigns now. Let the final word be a quiet recommitment to deny self, take up the cross daily, and follow the King who walked that road first and for us.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Integration of the lesson's themes: the identity of Jesus as the crucified and risen Christ who reigns now
- Discipleship as daily, concrete self-denial and cross-bearing rather than vague intention
- The transforming purpose of God's word, aimed at changed lives and not merely informed minds (James 1:22)
- Personal response, confession, and obedience as the goal of studying the passage

Discussion Prompts

- What single truth from this passage do you most need this week?
- What is one concrete way you will take up the cross and follow Jesus this week?
- How has this passage changed the way you see who Jesus is?