

“If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.” Luke 9:24 NLT

## [lectio] // LUKE 9:21-27

Jesus lays out what will happen, in exact order of how it will happen, and who will do it. He tells them he is going to suffer, then die, all by the hands of the religious leaders (those who have sworn to protect the law, temple and priesthood). He tells them IF they want to follow him, they've got to pick up their own cross to do so. The “cross” was not a religious symbol of love or sacrifice at this time, it was a real, life-size, humiliating means of execution, reserved for the worst offenders, the extremists, the terrorists, the worst enemies of the state. Then Jesus called them to this new kind of life, one in which they lose everything. More specifically, they give up their life. In that moment, Jesus says, they also find real life, find meaning, thus saving their own life by losing it IN him. This may all sound theoretical or philosophical - it wasn't, it isn't. The life God intended from the beginning of time was meant to be wholly and satisfyingly live in him. It's more like tucking or securing life into God himself. It's the way it's always supposed to be. Because of human will, desire, selfishness and rebellion, the process of “losing” his life is not easy because others will fight and struggle against those who choose to place their life in God become an irritant, a reminder, a judgment on those who want life OUTSIDE of their creator. A human that chooses to return their life, give their life, submit their life to a right, true and just God is a blatant affront on everyone else's sense of autonomy, free will and choice! The suffering, the shame, the anger is there because it clashes with humanity's dark destiny of SELF. People would be far happier to deal with a fellow rebel who takes up the hammer and nails rather than taking up their own execution.

## [oratio]

pray as responding to the words, phrase, sentence that God has stirred within you

Dad,

Gain my life? I did not have a life until you intervened! Lose my life? I was already a loser! Take up my cross? I had already suffered immense chaos, confusion and loneliness before you offered me a real life, a full life. I had no idea how grand and adventurous life would be when I said Yes. I wasn't trying to get a rich life or a fulfilling life or even a comfortable life, I was saying yes to hope, love and having a father! I didn't know how big you were until I began to give over my life, trust you with it and truly follow you. I still don't know how big you are, really, I just know how big you are to me, in my own life.

## [contemplatio]

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root