***Luke 9:21-23  And He strictly warned and commanded them to tell this to no one, 22saying, “The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.” 23Then He said to them all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.***

 The morning that we celebrate the Risen Savior is only four Sundays away, including this morning. Let’s start our celebration early. I know some may say, “Celebration?!”, like they decry, “Happy Easter!”. I have to tell you that the day that my Savior, our Savior rose and came out from the tomb is a happy day, it’s a day for celebration. He saved me and by that He made me able to be eternally grateful. The time for weeping has ended! The time of victory is here. If we can’t get happy about that, we just can’t get happy I don’t guess.

 This morning, we’re with Jesus and His disciples near the town of Bethsaida, hometown of Peter, Andrew, and Philip, near where the Jordan River enters the Sea of Galilee. The name means House of Fishing, which makes sense. Multitudes are being healed, thousands have just been miraculously fed, Peter has just confessed Jesus as the Christ, and Jesus’ ministry is growing. All looks like happy unicorns, sunshine, and cotton candy clouds.

 Into this, Jesus speaks… He speaks His real purpose and tells specifically what is ahead. Verse 21 - *And He strictly warned and commanded them to tell this to no one.* Jesus strictly warns and commands, having the idea of forbidding them, that they tell no one that He is Jesus the Christ, as Peter confessed.

 Verse 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 be raised the third day.”* Jesus now states – He will suffer many things, which we know was true. He will be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes. Let’s fast forward, because we can, Luke 22:66-67 as Jesus is interrogated, notice who’s there *- As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, came together and led Him into their council, saying, 67 “If You are the Christ, tell us.”*

*But He said to them, “If I tell you, you will by no means believe.* Chief Priests – check. Elders – check. Scribes – check. He knew that they would not believe Him, and this is rejection plain and simple. Check. Jesus knew what awaited Him in Jerusalem, and He set His face to go. He didn’t go for Himself. He went for me, for you, for all that believe. Let’s celebrate this morning!

 Let’s divert quickly down to Luke 9:43-44 *And they were all amazed at the majesty of God. But while everyone marveled at all the things which Jesus did, He said to His disciples, 44 “Let these words sink down into your ears, for the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men.* Here, Jesus clearly tells that He will be betrayed. Betrayed – to expose someone to danger by treacherously giving information to an enemy – someone trusted giving information to the enemy. Fast forward to Luke 22:47-48 – *And while He was still speaking, behold, a multitude; and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. 48 But Jesus said to him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”* Judas, one of the trusted, one of the twelve, he of newly washed feet, having eaten at the table with Jesus, having dipped bread in the same bowl, having welcomed Satan in, betrayed the Light of this world to the darkness. Betrayed into the hands of men- check.

 Verse 23 - *Then He said to them all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.* Now, Jesus adds something very interesting. He adds the method of His death. If He were to be killed by the Jews, He’d be stoned. That was their way – John 8:59 - *Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.* John 10:31-32 – *Then the* *Jews took up stones again to stone Him. 32 Jesus answered them, “Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?”* No. Jesus clearly reveals that it is the Romans that will be the instrument of His death. The Jews will betray their Christ into the hands of Gentiles to be killed! Truly, out of the hands of God’s chosen people, into the hands of men. Betrayed by Judas, and betrayed by the Jews, who cried. “We have no king but Caesar.” He tells His disciples, and us, to bear the cross daily. The cross, an instrument of Roman execution. The Cross that He will soon offer up His Spirit upon, so that we might live forever. Yes my friends – If we are saved, it’s time to celebrate.

 One more fast forward – Luke 24:5-8 *Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, “****Why do you seek the living among the dead****? 6****He is not here, but is risen****! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, 7 saying, ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. 8And they remembered His words.* True one, true all. One by one, Jesus fulfills what He speaks. One by one, He keeps His promises. We can trust His word. John 14:3 *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.* John 14:6 – *Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.* True one, true all. If you have not received Him as Savior, do it today. He prepares a place for those that believe. Those that don’t believe are not received.