

# The Pattern and the Point: Cruciformity in the Life (and Death) of a Christian (Part 2)

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## Introduction

### The Text

A. I'm going to read from the last verses of [Acts 25](#) here this morning.

1. Remember, Paul has been on trial before the Roman governor Festus in Caesarea.
2. But Festus, like those before him, has been a bit at a loss as to what to do with Paul. So he's called for assistance from the Jewish petty king Herod Agrippa II—thinking maybe he can help get to the bottom of all this. Why are the Jews so upset at this man? What's he done? Why should the Roman authorities care?

B. And so that's where we pick up the story in [Acts 25:23](#)—and we'll read to the end of the chapter . . .

<sup>23</sup> So on the next day Agrippa and Bernice [his sister] came with great pomp, and they entered the audience hall with the military tribunes and the prominent men of the city. Then, at the command of Festus, Paul was brought in. <sup>24</sup> And Festus said, "King Agrippa and all who are present with us, you see this man about whom the whole Jewish people petitioned me, both in Jerusalem and here, shouting that he ought not to live any longer. <sup>25</sup> But I found that he had done nothing deserving death. And as he himself appealed to the emperor, I decided to go ahead and send him. <sup>26</sup> But I have nothing definite to write to my lord about him. Therefore I have brought him before you all, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that, after we have examined him, I may have something to write. <sup>27</sup> For it seems to me unreasonable, in sending a prisoner, not to indicate the charges against him." (Acts 25:23-27)

### Part 1

A. The title of this morning's sermon, if you saw it there, is "[The Pattern and the Point: Cruciformity in the Life \(and Death\) of a Christian \(Part 2\)](#)."

1. If you were with us for Part 1 a couple weeks ago then you know I really only used [Acts 25](#) as a sort of launchpad into a broader discussion about these latter chapters of Acts and the way Luke portrays Paul here.
- B. You see, Luke seems to be going out of his way in these chapters to show how the story of Paul follows after the pattern of Jesus.
1. Remember, Luke is not only the author of the book of Acts, he also the author of the Gospel that bears his name—the Gospel of Luke.
  2. And when we compare the latter chapters of Acts and the story of Paul with the latter chapters of Luke and the story of Jesus, the similarities are unmistakably striking.

- a. I identified eight layers to this pattern shared between Jesus and Paul. I can only list them off for you here (but you can go back to that sermon and dig deeper if you'd like). But here they are: Layer #1: The Jerusalem Journey; Layer #2: The Fearless Resolve; Layer #3: The Unsavory Arrest; Layer #4: The Myriad Trials; Layer #5: The False Charges; Layer #6: The Unavoidable Verdict; Layer #7: The Relentless Rejection; Layer #8: The Ultimate Triumph.
- C. That was the pattern. But, then, as the title of these sermons puts it, what is the point? *"The Pattern and the Point."* What's the point of this pattern? Well, I think it's relatively straightforward:
  - 1. The pattern of Christ will mark the people of Christ.
  - 2. His story will become our story.
  - 3. Where he has gone his followers will go.
  - 4. Those who look to Jesus will look like Jesus—but more specifically, as we see here, they will look like the cross.
  - a. Ah, and that is where our little subtitle comes from: *"The Pattern and the Point: Cruciformity in the Life (and Death) of a Christian."*
    - i. We don't just look like Jesus in general. We look like his cross in particular.
    - ii. We're not just saved by the cross. We're to be stamped by it.

(1) As Paul said: *"I bear on my body the marks of Jesus"* (Gal. 6:17).
- D. What about you? What about me?
  - 1. Can people read the gospel off of our very lives?
  - 2. Can they see it in us? Is it on display in the way we live and the way we die in love for them?

## A Contrast in Spectacles

- A. This is actually why I chose to read that last little section there in [Acts 25](#) as I did.
  - 1. Though we're not going to spend much time with it, I do think there is something there that really gets us back into that larger discussion we've been having about the cruciform life.
- B. What I see in that little scene—with Herod and Bernice and Paul as they're presented here—is a contrast in spectacles . . .
- C. The first, with Herod and Bernice, is so flashy, so showy. "Here we are! Blow the trumpets. Get out your cameras." So Luke says in the first part of v. 23: "[O]n the next day Agrippa and Bernice [his sister] came with great pomp, and they entered the audience hall with the military tribunes and the prominent men of the city."
  - 1. That word translated *"pomp"* there, it's the Greek word *phantasia*—where we get our word *"fantasy"* from.

- a. The idea is that they're putting on this great show, a pompous display, making an appearance, parading about trying to get people to notice them.
  - b. They've got their robes and crowns on and all this.
  - c. And they're followed by the highest ranking officers the leading men of the city and whoever else, just to pad their sense of importance.
  - d. It's a spectacle. It's something to behold. "Look at me!"
- D. But then, the second spectacle comes into view when the Apostle Paul makes his grand entrance. And it's a bit different, isn't it?
  - 1. There's no pomp, there's no pageantry, there's no fireworks, no show.
  - 2. There's just a humble, beat up little man brought out in chains.
    - a. So Luke says in the latter part of [v. 23](#), after this grand entrance of the royal family: "[Then, at the command of Festus, Paul was brought in.](#)" There's nothing more to it than that.
      - i. But something is being put on display in Paul's life here too, isn't there?
        - (1) Only now it isn't "Look at me!" it's "Look at him . . . look at Jesus!"
        - (2) We look at Paul and we see the cross of Christ.
  - 3. This is why in [1 Cor. 4](#), when he's recounting all of the ways he's suffered as a follower and apostle of Jesus, he says: my life is a "[spectacle](#)"—it's a show. "[I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men](#)" (v. 9).
    - a. It's interesting, that word, translated "[spectacle](#)" here is the Greek word [theatron](#). You can hear it right? It's where we get our word "[theater](#)" from.
      - i. So make no mistake, as Christians, we're to be putting on a show too. It's just a show of a different kind.
    - b. What's playing at this theater? What's showing on this stage?
      - i. What does he say? "[I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death . . .](#)"
      - ii. That's the show. The cross of Christ—"cruciformity . . . in the life (and death) of a Christian."
- E. I wonder what's playing in your theater these days? Is it more like Herod and Bernice—"Look at me!"? Or is it more like Paul—"Look at him!"?

## Part 2

- A. You say, "Okay, that was a pretty good sermon, thanks Pastor." Actually that was just the intro.

1. I'm simply trying to get us back into the discussion we were having last time about the cruciform life.
  - a. If you remember, in Part 1, I could only deal with the application of all this briefly.
  - b. And I said I'd come back this time and give us a bit more color, flesh it out further, and show you more of what it might mean to "look like the cross" in the day-to-day.

B. And so that's what I want to do this morning . . .

## Seven Situations

- A. And the way I'm going to organize this is I'm just going to take us to some of those places in the NT where the authors are already calling us to look like the cross in one way or another.
  1. It's really fascinating to see how often the NT writers—when they're trying to help us deal with this or that situation in our lives—they, as a reflex, as an impulse, lead us right back to the cross of Christ and say: "You need to handle it like that. You need to look like that."
- B. The cross of Christ, it would seem, is the touchstone of the Christian ethic.
  1. If you want to know what you're supposed to do, or what you're supposed to look like, in whatever situation you may be currently facing, the first thing to do is climb up Calvary's hill and take in the view once again.
  2. We're to look to the cross and then go and look like the cross.
    - a. That's the NT message time and again, in one situation after another.
- C. And so I just want to show you seven of these situations (though I could've shown you many more). As it is, we'll still have to be somewhat quick. But I think the cumulative force of all this is pretty powerful.

### Situation #1: When You're Suffering Unjustly

- A. Is anyone facing something like this these days?
  1. You're being treated unfairly—at work, at home, at school, wherever.
  2. And you're suffering because of it, you're hurting because of it.
- B. What are we prone to do in situations like these?
  1. I think pretty typical is we want to fight back. We want to make it right, take matters into our own hands, stand up for ourselves. I'll take you to court if I have to. We want to get ourselves out of this oppressive situation. "It's not fair. It needs to change."
- C. That's what we're prone to do in these kinds of situations. But what do the NT writers call us to do? They call us to look to and look like the cross.

1. 1 Pet. 2:18-24: “<sup>18</sup> Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust.<sup>19</sup> For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.<sup>20</sup> For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.<sup>21</sup> For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.<sup>22</sup> He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.<sup>23</sup> When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.<sup>24</sup> He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.”

D. Do you hear what he’s saying? It’s crazy.

1. He’s saying: What if when you are suffering unjustly—instead of fighting back and getting all ferocious, baring your teeth, talking about what you deserve—you submitted, you endured, you entrusted yourself to the God who judges justly, to the one who you know will make all the wrong right in time, and you loved even those who are taking advantage of you?!
  - a. What if you looked like the cross?
2. That’s what Jesus did for us on that cross, right? There was nothing fair about the way he was being treated there.
  - a. He wasn’t suffering for his own sin. He was suffering for mine.
  - b. He could’ve demanded that things be made right, that he be treated as he deserves, but then he couldn’t have saved me or you.
  - c. He entrusted himself to God. He knew he would be vindicated in the end, so he could endure and love even those who were nailing him to that tree.

E. Now, just to be clear, I’m not saying that looking like the cross in situations of oppression and injustice means you won’t sometimes speak up or call for things to change or hold people accountable—but the manner in which you do those things, if you do those things, will be so different.

1. You’re not speaking from a place of vindictiveness or self-protection or frustration or anger.
2. You’re speaking from a place of humility and submission and trust and love—so that, even if things don’t change or it doesn’t get better, it’s not ultimately the end of the world for you. It’s not the end of the line for that relationship and you’re out.
  - a. Why? Because you trust God to make all things right in the end, so you can endure in love even for your enemy, even for the one who’s hurting you.

## Situation #2: When You’ve Been Sinned Against

A. This is obviously related to the first, but it has its own nuance to it.

B. How do you feel when people sin against you? How are you prone to respond?

1. Some of us take the more active approach. We try to hurt back. We get all fired up.
  2. Others of us take the more passive approach. We grow bitter, distant, cold.
- C. That's what we're prone to do in these kinds of situations. But what do the NT writers call us to do? They call us to look to and look like the cross.
1. Eph. 4:31-32: " <sup>31</sup> Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. <sup>32</sup> Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."
  2. Col. 3:12-13: " <sup>12</sup> Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, <sup>13</sup> bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive."
- D. Some of the most stunning words ever uttered are those that proceeded from the lips of Jesus while he hung near dead on that cross: "Father, forgive them . . ." (Luke 23:34).
1. Not a hint of bitterness or resentment or spite or rage.
  2. Just love, again, even for his enemies, even for the very ones who were in the act of sinning against him. "Father, forgive them . . ." (Luke 23:34).
- E. Do you look like that?
1. Some of us just need to get up, walk out of this place, and go make that call: "Mom/dad/son/daughter/friend/boss/coworker/pastor/church member . . . I've been holding something against you, for days/weeks/years, but I want you to know: I forgive you. If Jesus can forgive me, I can forgive you."

### Situation #3: When Someone Is Different

- A. In this situation, now we're not dealing someone who is morally wrong, or hurting us, or sinning against us.
1. Now we're just dealing with someone who is inconvenient for us because they're different from us.
  2. They're a bit of a bother, a little annoying. We don't get them.
    - a. You got any of those in your life?
- B. How are we prone to respond?
1. We keep a safe distance, right?
  2. When your close friend calls, you pick up the phone right away. But when this person calls, you let it go to voicemail and you may or may not get back to them.
  3. You keep them out of your inner circle, again, not because they're mean, but just because they're inconvenient for you, they're different from you.

- C. That's what we're prone to do with these kinds of people. But what do the NT writers call us to do? They call us to look to and look like the cross.
1. In [Rom. 15](#), Paul is writing about the relationship between various Christians—Jewish and Gentile Christians in particular—coming in with their different upbringings and their different cultures, and their different levels of faith and maturity and things, and he says . . .
  2. “<sup>1</sup>We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. <sup>2</sup>Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. <sup>3</sup>For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, ‘The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me.’ . . . <sup>5</sup>May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup>Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God” (vv. 1-3, 5-7).
- D. Listen, when you turn your shoulder on a brother because he's different, when you close the door on a sister because she's not as put together as you, when you keep someone at a distance because they're a burden to you—you are forgetting the welcome that has been shown by God to you in Jesus.
1. Do you really think Jesus looked at you and thought: “Now that's a person I'd love to hang out with. He's so brilliant. She's so magnetic. They offer much to me with their smarts and their talents and their wealth” or whatever.
  2. No. We're broken sinners. The only thing we brought into this relationship is our burdens.
    - a. But still he loves us. Still he invites us. Still he welcomes us.
- E. I think of that thief next to Jesus on the cross.
1. He brought nothing but his junk into that relationship. And yet what does Jesus say?
    - a. “Get out of here. You're a burden to me.”
    - b. No! “[Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.](#)” (Luke 23:43).  
“You're welcome here, with me.”
- F. Brother, sister, if Jesus has welcomed us like this, how can we then turn around not extend that same kind of welcome to others, anyone—whether they've sinned grievously against us, or they're just different than us?!

## Situation #4: When Someone Needs Help

- A. It seems to me, sometimes we can get so caught up in our own needs, our own worries, our own stuff, that we excuse ourselves from helping others.
1. I've got too much going on in my own life.
  2. I don't have time or resources or bandwidth to help you.

B. That's what we're prone to do, even when there are people around us who need help. But what do the NT writers call us to do? They call us to look to and look like the cross.

1. 2 Cor. 8: " <sup>1</sup>We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, <sup>2</sup>for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. <sup>3</sup>For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, <sup>4</sup>begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints . . . " <sup>9</sup>For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich"(vv. 1-4, 9).

C. What does the grace of God look like when its poured out on a person? It looks like radical, even nonsensical, generosity.

1. Even when they're personally facing a "severe test of affliction", even when they're dealing with "extreme poverty",
2. still, he says "they gave "—which is a miracle in itself, but, more than that—"they gave . . . beyond their means . . ." (v. 3). They "overflowed in a wealth of generosity . . ." (v. 2).
3. And where does this come from? It comes from the cross. Jesus had it all and yet he gave it all so that you could have it all.

D. And, when you really get that, you'll give too. It opens your hands others.

## Situation #5: When They're All Throwing Elbows (Vying for Position)

A. Silicon Valley is a very competitive place, I know.

1. With these tech companies especially—it's like you're always having to showcase your worth to survive. You feel like you have to make sure they see you're better than the next guy so you can keep your job, so you can climb the ladder.
2. But it's not just this way in the office, right? It can be this way in the classroom, it can be this way in the home, it can even be this way in the church.
  - a. We're all prone, I think, to want to be first, to want to be noticed. There's a certain insecurity in us that drives us to compete with the people around us.

B. That's what we're prone to do when we live in a cutthroat place like the Bay Area. But what do the NT writers call us to do? They call us to look to and look like the cross.

1. Do you remember when the disciples are all jockeying for position, arguing about who's the greatest and things, looking to get at Jesus' right and left hand? What does Jesus say to them?
2. Mark 10:42:45: " <sup>42</sup>You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. <sup>43</sup>But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, <sup>44</sup>and whoever would be

first among you must be slave of all. <sup>45</sup> For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

- a. “You want to be first? Get on the floor. That’s what I’m doing for you.”
- 3. Or what about Phil. 2:3-8: “ <sup>3</sup> Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. <sup>5</sup> Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”
  - a. He just goes down - down - down - down:
    - i. “I’m God, but I’ll come down and become man.
    - ii. But not just any man, I’ll be your servant.
    - iii. But I’m not just going to serve you, I’m going to die for you.
    - iv. But I’m not just going to die any old way for you, I’m going to go to the cross—where I’ll be utterly shamed, utterly ravaged.”
  - b. It’s like an inverse ambition. “How low can I go to care for you?!”
- C. What if you could be so free in Jesus that you don’t care whether you get that promotion or your teammate does?
  - 1. Your identity isn’t wrapped up in your work or your production—so you don’t need to compete.
  - 2. You can serve, you can congratulate even when they get ahead of you. You can look like the cross.
    - a. I’m not saying you won’t get promoted or appreciated or recognized.
    - b. I’m just saying you don’t need it to be whole, to be full, to be right. You already have all you need in Jesus.

## Situation #6: When You’re Out with Your Friends

- A. I have to be quick on this. But think about how you typically choose your friends.
  - 1. You go for those people who have something to offer you.
    - a. You might not put it that way, it sounds transactional.
    - b. But it’s how we often approach it. They make you laugh, they listen well, they share the same hobbies, they like the same things, etc.
  - 2. You get something out of the relationship. It does something for you.

B. That's what we're prone to do with our friendships. But what do the NT writers call us to do? They call us to look to and look like the cross.

1. Eph. 5:1-2: " <sup>1</sup> Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. <sup>2</sup> And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

C. That's what your friendships should look like.

1. It's not: "What's in it for me? What can I get from you?"
2. But: "What can I give? How can I love?"

## Situation #7: When You're Home with Your Spouse

A. If we're prone to look to get something for ourselves with our friends, we're even more prone to that, I'd say, with our spouse.

1. The way marriage is presented in our culture is that this is the person who's supposed to complete me. They're my soulmate. They're going to fulfill me in a way no one else can.
2. And I'll just tell you, if you come into your marriage with those kind of exaggerated expectations about this person, it's a recipe for disaster.

- a. Because they're just another broken sinner like you.
- b. They can't fill you like that. Only Jesus can.

B. Even still, that's what we're often prone to do in marriage with our spouse. But what do the NT writers call us to do? They call us to look to and look like the cross.

1. Eph. 5:25-27: " <sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, <sup>26</sup> that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup> so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish."

C. I think sometimes people struggle with this idea that God appoints the man as the head of the household—as head of his wife even—because they think it means he gets to boss her around, that he's the first to get what he wants.

1. But that's not what God says it means.
  - a. He's not the first to get what he wants. Again, he's the first to hit the floor.
  - b. He's the first to give up what he wants to make sure his wife and his family are doing okay.
  - c. He's not the king of the home. He's the servant.
2. And God's going to come knocking on the dude's door first: "Brother, did you look like the cross for her? Were you sacrificing yourself for her, or were you sacrificing her for yourself?"

- D. It's the sort of thing that should make us tremble. It makes me tremble, because I fall far short of that so much of the time. But I want to look more like the cross in my marriage.

## Two Clarifications

- A. Let me make a couple of quick clarifications now as I draw things to a close . . .

### Clarification #1: You're Not Doing This in Your Own Strength

- A. In case it wasn't clear already, you're not doing this in your own strength.
1. You're not looking at Jesus on the cross as your example merely and then trying with all your might to be like him.
  2. No. He's not merely your example, he's also your Savior. And he's come not merely to show you the way, but to give you the power to walk in it!
- B. It's as Paul says in [Gal. 2:20](#): "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."
1. You're not doing this in your own strength. You're doing it in his.
  2. You don't just look to him as a model to follow. You look to him for help.

### Clarification #2: You're Not Doomed to a Miserable Life

- A. I think people, myself included, might hear that, as Christians, we need to look like the cross and fear that means that were basically doomed to a miserable life here. We're constantly sacrificing and giving up what we'd rather do, what we want to do "for God and others."
1. On a good day, it sounds hard.
  2. On a bad day, it sounds horrible. Who wants to take up their cross, look like the cross?
- B. But there's little conversation Jesus has with his disciples in [John 15](#) that just flips all of this on its head. The logic runs totally counter to the way we naturally think.
1. Listen to this and then I'll help you see what I'm after: "<sup>9</sup> As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. <sup>10</sup> If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. <sup>11</sup> These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. <sup>12</sup> This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends" (vv. 9-13).
  2. Let's make sure you see the logic here:
    - a. "If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, and my joy will be in you, and your joy will be full."
      - i. Okay, great. I want the fullness of joy. What's are these commandments?!

- b. He homes in on one in particular: “The commandment I give you (that you might abide in my love and have my joy in you, and thus have joy in its fullness) is this: love one another as I have loved you, and lay down your life!!!”

B. Do you want to know why we’re not as happy as we wish we were?! Do you want to know why our joy is not full?!

- 1. It is not what we think. We think we’re not happy because we don’t have all that we want.

- 2. Jesus is saying:

- a. That’s precisely why we’re not happy! We keep trying to get more for ourselves.
- b. When his joy, real joy, full joy comes to those who finally stop trying to fill themselves with the things of this world and start pouring themselves out for others.

- i. You do that and you’ll be full. Why?

- ii. Because that’s where Jesus is. And Jesus is all we truly need and all we ultimately want!

- 3. Herod and Bernice thought joy would be found in everyone looking at them—“Aren’t we great?” They never found it.

- 4. Paul found joy in Jesus so he didn’t care if people saw him anymore. He wanted them to see Christ, to see the cross.

C. How about you?

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## Situation #8: When You're Tempted to Sin

Where are you tempted to sin right now? Notice I didn't ask are you tempted. I know you are. We all are. I asked where are you tempted? Where are you tempted to turn from God to something else for you joy, your satisfaction, your security, your identity, your life? We've all got it. The weak spots, the vulnerable spots. What's yours right now?

Here's how we typically handle temptation in our lives. We might fight back for a little while, we push and we strain against it. But a lot of times we just end up giving in, right? We equivocate or compromise or justify. But we give in.

That's what we're prone to do when temptation comes. But what do the NT writers call us to do? They call us to look to and look like the cross.

Heb. 12:1-4: “<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup>looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. <sup>3</sup>Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. <sup>4</sup>In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.”

I love what C.S. Lewis writes about temptation in his book *Mere Christianity*: “No man knows how bad he is till he has tried very hard to be good. A silly idea is current that good people do not know what temptation means. This is an obvious lie. Only those who try to resist temptation know how strong it is. After all, you find out the strength of the German army by fighting against it, not by giving in. You find out the strength of a wind by trying to walk against it, not by lying down. A man who gives in to temptation after five minutes simply does not know what it would have been like an hour later. That is why bad people, in one sense, know very little about badness. They have lived a sheltered life by always giving in. We never find out the strength of the evil impulse inside us until we try to fight it: and Christ, because He was the only man who never yielded to temptation, is also the only man who knows to the full what temptation means—the only complete realist.”

In the words of Heb. 12: “In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood” (v. 4). Oh but he has. He resisted temptation all the way to the end. He's faced the full power of it and overcome it.

You've got to know, as he was hanging there on that cross, he was tempted—tempted to hurl lightning bolts at these guys mocking him as he's gasping for breath, acting like he's not the Son of God who made them and sustains them even in their rebellion. He could have called down the angels and lit that place up right there. He could've skipped out on his Father's plan and saved himself. But he didn't.

And how did things end up for him? I don't know. Crowned with glory forevermore. I'd say things went pretty well wouldn't you? Though of course it was rough in the moment.

And the author of Hebrews says, when you're tempted, look to him! But more than that, look like him. Don't give in, don't shortcut, don't buy the lie that sin is selling. It won't do it for you. It can't.