

To Walk with Jesus Part 2

Story: February, 1997 - Mobile, AL

Matthew 16:24 NLT

Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If any of you want to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me.

Colossians 1:24 NIV

Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, **and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions**, for the sake of his body, which is the church.

Is Paul saying that the work of the Cross was incomplete? Not at all... But even as Jesus said to Saul of Tarsus “Saul, Saul why do you persecute me?” Jesus at that time was in Heaven and the Church was suffering at the hand of Saul. The work of God continues in the world and with that affliction at times for the sake of the body, the church.

To really understand the cross Jesus calls us to carry, We should start by looking at the cross he carried.

Not My will, but Your Will

Luke 22 - Garden of Gethsemane

41 And He (Jesus) was withdrawn from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and prayed, **42** saying, “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.” **43** Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.

Jesus in the Garden, in prayer, was wrestling with what was about to happen...

Jesus a man of suffering, familiar with pain, demonstrates complete obedience to the Father and here he shows his own humanity. Yet in full surrender to the Father resolves his own feelings to this...

Nevertheless **not My will, but Yours, be done...**

Perhaps the sum of the Cross is best understood from that right there - Not my will, but Yours, be done...

When brought to the point of decision; Jesus yields his way to the father's way...

That is a good resolve: **Not my will, but yours be done...**

It's human nature to wrestle, resist or even avoid the Cross but at the end of our wrestling May We Say - **Lord not my will, but Yours be done...**

The Cross Chosen, Not Imposed

Matthew 26

47 While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people.

48 Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him." 49 Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him.

50 Jesus replied, "Do what you came for, friend."

Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him. 51 With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. 52 But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. 53 Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?"

"A legion is judged to be six thousand soldiers and seven hundred horse. And this great army of angels is by prayer despatched from heaven in an instant." (Trapp)

Jesus says, "could I not call upon more than 72,000 angels"

The number is impressive, especially considering that one angel killed up to 185,000 soldiers in one night (2 Kings 19:35).

The point is this Jesus didn't have to bare the cross, he chose to...

John 10

17 For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. 18 No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.

Jesus said I am here by my own choosing...

I don't have to be here...

I could call upon 12 Legions of Angels and this situation would change quick...

But Jesus with power and ability and resources allowed those things to rest while he willfully embraced this place of suffering and shame and not without reason. He suffered to accomplish what the Father had for Him to do...

How many Christians could lash out but they bridle the tongue
How many because of surrender to God allow themselves to become vulnerable for the sake of a witness... or a reminder from God's word...

Philippians 2:5-9

...have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

6

Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

7

rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

8

And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

9

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place

There were 3 crosses the day Jesus was Crucified...
3 men were crucified that day...

2 of them had to be there
1 of them didn't have to be there

2 Men lost their lives - They didn't have a choice...
1 Man laid down his life - That was his choice - And he got it back

Matthew 16

25 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.

For the Non Believer is the only Heaven they will ever know...
For the Christian this is the only Hell they will ever know...

The Cross for the Christian is an Invitation to walk where Jesus Walks

When you walk where Jesus walks, you feel him next to you...

DC Talk released a song on August 1, 1995 that was title "Jesus Freak". it was the lead radio single from the group's fourth album. The song was written and produced by Toby McKeehan. Lyrically, the song is about standing up for the belief in Jesus Christ in the midst of persecution.

*"What will people think
When they hear that I'm a Jesus freak
What will people do when they find that it's true
I don't really care if they label me a Jesus freak
There ain't no disguising the truth"*

Matthew 5

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because

great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Perhaps even preaching on the Believers Cross isn't in itself a Cross to the Preacher who preaches it. It's probably not in today's top 20 ways to grow your church in 2020.... But who cares what they say, I desire Jesus more than anything in this world...

It would be a better way to grow your church to stick to the benefits of the Cross of Christ...

But to preach of the Believers Cross is to call them to hearty stance with God and closer intimacy...

Robert Roberts, Paraphrased - "We have been led to believe that the self is the new God. Just as in earlier times it was never thought fitting to deny God, today it never thought fitting to deny oneself."

Your Cross is the whatever the necessary cost to following Jesus...

What that might look like is different given different circumstances...

For the Muslim

For the High Schooler

For the Christian in a Christian Family

For the Business Person

For the Athlete

For the Mother

For the Father

For the Missionary

The Cross is present with each one and "to whom much is given much is required."

The Cross is not the End, It's not even the Point

Philippians 2

8

And being found in appearance as a man,

he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

9

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,

10

that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

11

and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

- The Cross is not the End, It's not even the Point
- If the Cross was the Point Jesus would still be there but he's not...
- Jesus is Victorious over Death...

And “God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name”

News Flash: God doesn't lose, He has never lost and he never will...
God always wins...

Those who walk with him he exalts...

We may suffer with Him, but we will also reign with Him...

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Philippians 3:10

10 I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,

Closing:

What does your Cross look like? Well, only you can answer that?

What does it Cost to say “Jesus, Not my will, but Your will be done”

- at my School
- at my Work
- at my Home
- with my Friends
- on the Ball Field?