

Carry On

What can leaf-cutting ants teach us about following Jesus? A leaf-cutting ant is a special kind of ant that dedicates its life to carrying leaves that can be over twenty times their body weight back to their colony for food. While one ant may only carry one leaf a time, the entire colony moves together to reap an enormous harvest. When we all move with one purpose and carry our crosses with the same type of purpose-driven unity and devotion there is no telling what God may work in us.

I. **We Carry a Cross** (Matthew 16.24 “Take up his cross and _____ me.”)

A. What does the cross represent? (John 17.20-26)

1. Specifically v.23 “So that the world may know that you sent me and loved _____ even as you loved me.”

a) An eternal reminder of God’s *immense love* and *our purpose*.

2. Carrying our own cross of love and purpose as we fulfill John 17.

B. Cross-Bearing is the distinctive mark of a Christian

1. We work through life differently. (Romans 5.3-5, James 1.2-4)

_____ and _____ have a purpose.

2. When we all continue to praise through difficulty, it preaches loud.

II. **Just Trust Jesus** (Matthew 16.25 “Whoever loses his life will _____ it.”)

A. Jesus prayed that we may all be one in John 17.21. What brings us together?

1. Jesus’ death and resurrection and our trust in him brings us together.

2. 1 Corinthians 12.27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

B. This is the crucified life, this is the resurrected life. Galatians 2.20

III. **The Big Picture** (Matthew 16.26 “What will it _____ a man to gain the whole world and _____ his soul?”)

A. I am no one and nothing... what good can one little leaf do?

1. Exodus 3.11 “Who am I to lead the people of Israel?”

2. It wasn’t about what Moses could do. It was all about what God could do.

B. Unimaginable Harvest

1. We can’t even imagine the good that’s coming. Romans 8.18. Present sufferings are not comparable to coming glory.

2. “This is the good stuff.” Acts 2.42-47

a) Living _____ lives. v.42

b) Life-changing relationships. Being _____. v.44-47a

c) Winning souls to Christ. People being _____. v.2.47b

Being a disciple is not just about coming to church and restoration is not about five acts of worship or the steps in the plan of salvation. If we want to really be restored, we need to get back on track in a major way. We need to put down our sticks and stones and pick up what we were always meant to carry—the cross of Jesus Christ.

BLANKS

Follow
Them
Suffering
Trials
Find
Profit
Forfeit
Devoted
Together
Saved

QUESTIONS

1. What is cross-bearing?
2. What was Jesus praying for in John 17?
3. What is the purpose of the church?
4. How does that purpose bring us together?
5. Why do we carry on with Jesus' mission even when it's difficult?

Scripture reading - Matthew 16:24-26