

The Cruciform Life: Letting Jesus Shape Your Posture

Discussion Questions

The sermon describes cruciformity as the ongoing work of Christ shaping both individuals and the believing community -- in what specific ways do you see Jesus actively reshaping your personal habits and relationships right now?

Paul challenges the church in Philippians 2 to value others above themselves, which the pastor acknowledges goes against our natural instincts -- what is the most difficult relationship or situation in your life where you struggle to put someone else's interests genuinely ahead of your own?

The pastor draws a parallel between the Roman city of Philippi, which looked to Rome as its savior, and our own community today -- in what ways do you find yourself tempted to place your hope for security, peace, and order in something other than Christ?

The sermon distinguishes between a 'do religion' and a 'done religion,' emphasizing that salvation is what Jesus accomplished, not what we earn -- how does truly believing that salvation is 'done' change the way you approach your daily efforts to live faithfully?

Paul instructs the Philippians to 'work out' their salvation, which the pastor compares to mining gold or cultivating fruit -- what spiritual disciplines or practices are you currently using to draw out and cultivate the salvation that Christ has planted in you?

The sermon points to grumbling and arguing as signs that contradict the cruciform life -- when you honestly examine your words and attitudes this past week, what do they reveal about whether you are truly living with the mindset of Christ?

Jesus is described in Philippians 2 as willingly setting aside his divine status to take the form of a servant, even to the point of death -- how does meditating on that sacrifice practically change the way you think about your own status, preferences, or comfort in your relationships?

The pastor describes the church as called to be a visible witness, not merely a verbal one, to a different kingdom -- in what ways does your life currently make the kingdom of God visible and undeniable to the people around you who do not yet follow Christ?

The sermon suggests that our reactions, priorities, and habits are the true proof of whether we are living the cruciform life -- which of these four areas -- relationships, reactions, priorities, or habits -- do you feel most needs to be surrendered to the shaping work of the Holy Spirit?

Daniel 12:3 is referenced as a prophecy that those who lead many to righteousness will shine like the stars forever -- what would it look like for your family or small group to collectively shine in a way that draws your neighborhood or workplace toward the story of Jesus?

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5-Day Devotional

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Day 1: A New Posture Reading: Philippians 2:1-4

Devotional: The world trains us to look inward, to protect our interests, to secure our own comfort. But Paul calls believers to a radically different posture, one shaped not by self-preservation but by genuine love for others. Valuing others above yourself is not weakness. It is the courageous choice to resist every instinct that pulls you toward pride. Consider the relationships closest to you today. A family member, a coworker, a neighbor. What would it look like to genuinely place their needs above your own? This is not a one-time act. It is a daily reorientation of the heart toward Christ.

Reflection Question: In which relationship do you most struggle to value the other person above yourself, and what is one concrete step you can take today to change that?

Day 2: The Pattern of Servant Leadership Reading: Mark 10:42-45

Devotional: Jesus did not simply teach servant leadership as a concept. He lived it completely and without reservation. When his own disciples argued over who would be greatest in the coming kingdom, Jesus redirected them not with rebuke alone but with a picture of himself. He came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom. This is the pattern we are called to follow. Not because it is easy or natural, but because it is the shape of the life Jesus himself modeled. True greatness in God's kingdom is always measured by how willingly we serve others.

Reflection Question: Where in your life are you tempted to use your position, title, or experience to elevate yourself rather than serve those around you?

Day 3: The Mind of Christ Reading: Philippians 2:5-11

Devotional: Paul places before us one of the most breathtaking passages in all of Scripture. The eternal Son of God, equal with the Father in every way, chose to set aside the privileges of divine glory and take on the form of a servant. He was obedient even to the point of death on a cross, the most humiliating form of execution in the Roman world. This was not defeat. It was the deliberate, loving choice of a Savior. When we are tempted to demand our rights, to insist on recognition, or to resist humility, we must return to this passage and ask ourselves whether we share the mind of Christ.

Reflection Question: What privilege, recognition, or personal right do you need to willingly set aside in order to more fully reflect the mindset of Jesus?

Day 4: Working Out What God Works In Reading: Philippians 2:12-13

Devotional: Salvation is entirely the work of God. Nothing we do earns it or maintains it. Yet Paul calls us to work out what God has already worked into us. This is not a contradiction. It is an invitation to cultivate. Like a miner drawing gold from deep within the earth, we are called to dig into the riches of what Christ has done and let that salvation take visible shape in our relationships, our reactions, our priorities, and our habits. God is already at work inside you. The question is whether you are cooperating with that work or resisting it through complacency and disobedience.

Reflection Question: In which area of your life, whether relationships, reactions, priorities, or habits, do you most need to cooperate with what God is already doing in you?

Day 5: Shining in a Crooked Generation Reading: Philippians 2:14-16 and Daniel 12:3

Devotional: Paul's challenge to do everything without grumbling or arguing is not a minor suggestion. It is the visible proof that a different kind of salvation is at work in you. The world grumbles. The world argues. The world seeks its own comfort and defends its own honor. When believers choose a different way, they stand out. They shine. Daniel foresaw it centuries before Paul wrote it: those who lead many to righteousness will shine like the stars. The cruciform life is not lived in isolation. It is a corporate witness, a church of individuals and families together reflecting the light of Jesus into a darkened world.

Reflection Question: What would those who know you best say about how you respond to difficulty and disappointment, and does that response point them toward Jesus?