

TAKE UP YOUR CROSS



Long before anyone heard of Calvary,
Jesus told prospective followers that they would have to

“take up their cross.”

Did they understand what he meant?

Do we?

***And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me,
let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me."
Luke 9:23***

Perhaps only super-saints need to carry a cross?

Perhaps the rest of us can get by with simply being *“born again”*?

It seems Jesus does not see it that way.

***He who is not with me is against me,
and he who does not gather with me scatters.
Matthew 12:30***

If we are “with Jesus” we carry a cross.

There’s no way around it.

But what does it mean to ***“take up your cross daily”***?

Everybody in Jesus’ day understood that a cross meant that your life is finished. You’re dead.

To carry a cross meant you’re on your way out. You’re heading toward your own execution.

Jesus did not pick up his cross on Good Friday. He picked up his cross the day he went down into the Jordan River to be baptized by John.

That moment marked the end of his former life.

He was dead to it all.

From now on each day of Jesus’ life was a living sacrifice to his Father until he would arrive at his goal.

“Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

Jesus emerged from the water, received the Spirit, and headed into the wilderness, where he reinforced his grip on that unseen cross.

No shortcuts to provision, protection, or power.

Only obedience to the Father, moment by moment.

Dead to himself.

Alive only to his Father’s will.

Calvary was the climax of a *life lived by the power of his inward cross.*

So that at Calvary the Son of God was now able to vacuum all our sin, all our sickness, all our evil and lies and corruption into his dying body, giving us the chance to rise with him into freedom.

That freedom is possible only to those who

“deny themselves, take up their cross daily, and follow him.”

I take up my cross daily. Every morning I take up my cross by dying to my own agenda, abandoning myself to the will of the Master.

Here I am, Lord. I present my body as a living sacrifice to be lived in your name to the Father’s glory.



I turn my mind away from the Darkness and open it to the light of your Spirit---

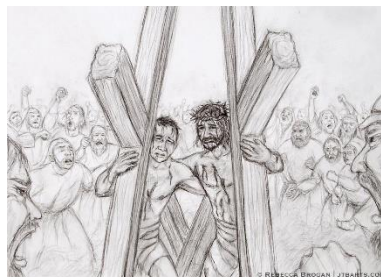
---to love you with all my heart, soul, mind and strength...and my neighbor as myself.

I carry my cross through the day by walking in the light.

This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:5-6)

As I carry my cross, I’m set free from the darkness of self-obsession.

I’m dead.



**My life is hid with Christ in God.
I'm free this day to walk in the light.**



To walk in the light is to live with integrity, no longer wearing a mask or hiding behind a synthetic image.

I walk in the light by doing what I know to be God's will.

I speak truth.

I forgive.

I allow my heart to be ruled by the generosity of heaven.

I pray blessing on those who give me a hard time.

I carry my cross right to the end.

Jesus' inward cross made him invulnerable until he reached his goal.

Likewise the cross I carry keeps me focused and safe until the moment comes to die---
all the while, raising me from the dead, moment by moment until the Final Resurrection.

***....that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings,
becoming like him in his death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.***

Philippians 3:10-11



The Path of the Cross

Message Richard E. Bieber August 2019
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