

Who Wants A Cross?

by Linville Dunaway, Corinth Christian Church

"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." **Luke 9:23.**

"And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." **Matthew 10:38**

When the Lord spoke of the cross all of those who heard knew what he talked about. The cross was used by the Romans to execute those who were criminals, or enemies of Rome. The Romans did not invent the cross as others had used it before them, but they had perfected the use of it. A person sometimes lived in agony for days before he died. This was done on purpose to make a painful example to all who would oppose Rome.

Jesus used the cross as an example of denial and sacrifice. He was not saying that they all would have to die on the cross, but that they would sacrifice their will to follow him. As followers of the Lord they, and we, are not to go our own way, but to follow the example set before us by the Lord Jesus. He didn't come to this earth to be popular, or to be led by the flesh, but to do

the will of the Father. The person who went to a cross to die was without the ability to do his own will, or to go where he wanted. Likewise the person who follows Jesus is not to do his own will, but to obey the Lord while denying himself.

One difference is that the prisoner who went to the cross had no say in it. He was judged, condemned, and dragged to it and nailed to it until his death. The Christian who chose to trust Jesus and to follow him does so willingly. He decides to obey the Lord and to take up the cross of denial willingly. The Roman cross was for death, while the Christian cross is for life. One brought the death of the flesh while the spiritual cross is to overcome the desires of the flesh and mind.

We don't hear a lot said today about carrying the cross. People want to hear and think about the blessings, heaven, and life eternal. Who wants to hear about self denial and suffering in any form? It seems that to most of today's believers the cross is relegated to the past and is only connected to the gospel story. When someone says, "Jesus went to the cross for us," we take that as there is no cross for us. Besides who wants to deny themselves anything, physical, or spiritual? We don't seem to have much in the way of discipline and hate to deny ourselves anything. Jesus said that we must take up the cross if we are to walk with him, it is

not an option. He came into this world to go to the cross for the sins of the world. When he was born in Bethlehem the cross was waiting for him down the road of time. It, the cross, came as no surprise for it was foretold in prophesy. Zechariah 12:10/ John 12:32-33.

To take up the cross is to follow the word of God, putting Jesus first in our lives. This means that our life is not our own, but we live for him. He gave his life on the cross to redeem us from sin and death. The Lord asks that we give our lives to him, not in death but to live for him. He said to take up the cross daily. Just on Sunday is not enough, we are his every day of the week and are to follow him at all times. We are his people not just on the Lord's Day at church, but everyday wherever we may be. Our example at work, or out in the public places show how close we follow the Lord. I know that we all make mistakes and fail in a moment of stress, or temptation. If a child of God sins he will go to the Lord in repentance and ask forgiveness. We do this because we don't want to sin and we fight the constant battle to overcome it.

At home too, is a place where we need to remember to deny ourselves. It's just as important to take up the cross at home as anywhere else. We can encourage our families in the Lord or we can discourage them from following the Lord.

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Facts About The BIBLE BY JOHN LEHTI

This is a dramatized version of facts taken from the Book of IChronicles Chap. 24 and IIKings Chap. 12 consolidated

ZECHARIAH A YOUNG PROPHET
ZECHARIAH HAS BEEN STONED TO DEATH WITH KING JOASH'S APPROVAL, BUT, WITH HIS DYING BREATH, THE YOUNG PROPHET HAS WARNED THE KING THAT THE LORD WILL PUNISH HIM, AND NOW....

...THE PEOPLE HURRY FROM THE TEMPLE, AS IF IN LEAVING THEY CAN WIPE OUT THE MEMORY OF THIS DEED....

...IF KING JOASH IS WORRIED AT ZECHARIAH'S PROPHECY, HE SHOWS NO SIGN OF IT, BUT....

...WITHIN A SHORT TIME, THE ARMY OF KING JOASH IS DEFEATED BY A MUCH SMALLER SYRIAN ARMY-A SURE SIGN THE LORD HAS TURNED AGAINST ISRAEL....

...AND LYING DEAD ON THE FIELD, AFTER THE BATTLE, ARE THE BODIES OF THE PRINCES WHO CONSPIRED AGAINST ZECHARIAH, AND KING JOASH, HIMSELF, SORELY....

...WOUNDED IN THE BATTLE, IS SOUGHT OUT AT NIGHT AND MURDERED IN HIS OWN BED BY MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD! THIS ZECHARIAH'S PROPHECY IS CARRIED OUT TO ITS LAST, AND FINAL WORD-ALL OF WHICH HAS BEEN RECORDED IN IICHRON. CHAP. 24, AND II KINGS: CHAP. 12

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