

Taking Up Your Cross: A Daily Journey of Faith

Following Jesus isn't just about knowing where you're going—it's about understanding how to get there. When we examine what it means to take up our cross daily, we discover that this powerful concept ties together two essential elements: our journey and our destination.

Why Did Jesus Choose the Cross?

The symbolism is profound when you consider that a tree got humanity into trouble, and a tree got us out. When Eve took fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, sin entered the world. But another tree—the cross of Christ—became our path to redemption.

For us today, the cross represents freedom and looks like a plus sign. God takes our negative circumstances and transforms them into positive outcomes. However, in Jesus' time, the cross meant something entirely different—it was an instrument of execution reserved for the worst criminals.

What Does It Mean to Take Up Your Cross Daily?

When Jesus said "take up your cross daily and follow me," He wasn't speaking metaphorically about minor inconveniences. The cross represents a test of obedience, especially during life's most challenging moments.

Taking up your cross daily means choosing to follow Jesus even when:

- Everything seems to be falling apart
- Your prayers aren't being answered the way you want
- You feel distant from God
- Others question your faith

This isn't a one-time decision but a daily commitment to walk in obedience, just like we need daily bread for physical sustenance.

Learning from Simon of Cyrene

Simon traveled 800-900 miles from modern-day Libya to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. He came to honor the Passover lamb but encountered the Lamb of God himself. When Jesus could no longer carry His cross due to exhaustion and torture, a Roman soldier selected Simon from the crowd.

Simon's Unexpected Calling

Imagine Simon's thoughts: "I just traveled hundreds of miles to worship God, and now I'm being forced to carry a criminal's cross?" The 40-pound beam was covered with Jesus' blood and flesh. Simon probably worried about what people would think, whether he'd be mistaken for a criminal, and what would happen to his reputation.

Yet this moment of reluctant obedience changed everything. Simon carried the cross behind Jesus—not ahead of Him, not lagging too far behind, but following at the right pace.

The Generational Impact

Simon's encounter with the cross transformed not just his life but his entire family's destiny. His sons, Rufus and Alexander, are mentioned in Scripture, and the Apostle Paul later referred to Rufus as "a choice man in the Lord" and considered Simon's wife like a mother to him.

One moment of obedience created generational change. When our children see us carrying our cross daily, it impacts them for eternity.

How Do We Keep Pace with Jesus?

The key is focusing on keeping pace with the Lord, not the world. We don't march according to worldly standards but according to God's plan. Sometimes His plan moves quickly, sometimes slowly, but we must stay connected through daily relationship.

Getting too far behind Jesus means we lose sight of His direction. Getting ahead of Him leads us into places we shouldn't go. That's why daily check-ins with God are essential—just like checking in with your boss at work.

The Cross as a Point of Separation

The cross creates what we might call a "BC/AC moment"—Before Christ and After Christ. This separation point is more important than our physical birth because what good is being born if we're destined for hell? We must be born again.

The cross represents the pain of submission to God's plan rather than sickness or disease. Sometimes it's difficult to lay down our will and follow God's will, but the reward is worth it.

Winning by Losing

Here's a paradox that doesn't make worldly sense: we win by losing. By surrendering our lives to Christ, we actually gain true life. Many people focus on what they think they'll have to give up instead of what they'll gain.

When we surrender our hearts to God, He doesn't break them—He wants to heal and fill them. God uses the cross as a tool for our justification, meaning we're declared "just as if we've never sinned."

The Power of Daily Surrender

Taking up your cross daily means developing the mindset: "He died for me, I died with Him." This becomes a chain-breaker in our lives. We have no past but the cross and no future but the realm of glory God has prepared.

The Romans used the cross as an instrument of justice, but God transformed it into a tool for our justification. Through faith in what Jesus accomplished, we are redeemed—bought back from Satan's ownership—and justified before God.

Life Application

This week, commit to taking up your cross daily through intentional surrender. Each morning, before checking your phone or starting your routine, spend time acknowledging that your life belongs to Christ. When faced with difficult decisions or challenging circumstances, ask yourself: "Am I following Jesus' pace, or am I trying to lead or lag behind?"

Consider these reflection questions:

- What "baggage" am I carrying that I need to leave at the cross?
- How can my daily obedience impact my family for generations?
- What am I focusing on giving up instead of what I could gain through surrender?
- Am I keeping pace with Jesus, or have I gotten ahead of Him or fallen behind?

Remember, one decision with follow-through can change everything. The cross isn't just a symbol of what Jesus did—it's a daily invitation to die to self and live for God. When we embrace this truth, we discover that losing our life actually means finding it.