**Jesus Help Me Bare My Cross**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Matthew 16:21-28**

**Wednesday Evening**

**October 21, 2020**

Saints, Jesus invites every person to follow him; they must have a willingness to put aside selfish ambition, to shoulder their cross, and to follow. To “put aside selfish ambition” means to surrender immediate material gratification in order to discover and secure one’s true self and God’s interests. It is a willingness to let go of selfish desires and earthly security.

**Powerpoint > Jesus Carrying His Cross**

This attitude turns self-centeredness to God-centeredness. “Self” is no longer in charge; God is. To “shoulder the cross” was a vivid illustration of the humility and submission that Jesus was asking of his followers.

**21 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.**

**22 Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"**

**23 But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."**

**24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.**

**25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.**

**26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?**

**27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.**

**28 Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."**

**21 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.**

Saints, the phrase from then on marks a turning point. Jesus began teaching clearly and specifically what they could expect so that they would not be surprised when it happened. Contrary to what they thought, Jesus had not come to set up an earthly kingdom. He would not be the conquering Messiah because he first had to suffer and be killed. For any human king, death would be the end. Not so for Jesus. Death would only be the beginning, for he would be raised on the third day.

**Revelation 19:11-16**

11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. 15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Jesus knew from what quarters the rejection would come: the leaders and the leading priests and the teachers of religious law. These three groups made up the Jewish council, the Jewish supreme court that ultimately sentenced Jesus to be killed. Notice that opposition came not from the people at large, but from their leaders—the very people who should have been the first to recognize and rejoice in Messiah’s arrival.

**22 Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"**

Saints, this was too much for Peter. Having just confessed his heartfelt belief in Jesus, Peter certainly found it most unnerving that the king would soon be put to death. So he took Jesus aside and corrected him. Peter sought to protect Jesus from the suffering he prophesied.

But if Jesus hadn’t suffered and died, Peter would have died in his sins. Great temptations can come from those who love us and seek to protect us. Be cautious of advice from a friend who says, “Surely God doesn’t want you to face this.” Often our most difficult temptations come from those who try to protect us from discomfort.

**Matthew 5:10-12**

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

**2 Timothy 3:12-13**

12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. 13 But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

**Acts 9:15-16**

15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. 16 For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake."

**2 Corinthians 11:23-31**

23 Are they ministers of Christ?--I speak as a fool--I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. 24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep;

26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—

28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation? 30 If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity. 31 The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying.

**23 But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."**

Saints, in his wilderness temptations, Jesus had been told that he could achieve greatness without dying. Peter, in his rebuke of Jesus’ words about dying, was saying the same thing. Trying to circumvent God’s plan had been one of Satan’s tools; Peter inadvertently used Satan’s tool in trying to protect his beloved Master. This would be a dangerous trap to Jesus, so Jesus rebuked Peter. God’s plan included suffering and death for the Messiah. Jesus would fulfill his mission exactly as planned.

**24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.**

Saints, Jesus invites every person to follow him; they must have a willingness to put aside selfish ambition, to shoulder their cross, and to follow. To:

**“put aside selfish ambition”**

means to surrender immediate material gratification in order to discover and secure one’s true self and God’s interests. It is a willingness to let go of selfish desires and earthly security. This attitude turns self-centeredness to God-centeredness.

**“Self” is no longer in charge; but God is**

And so let’s look at:

**“shoulder the cross”**

It was a vivid illustration of the humility and submission that Jesus was asking of his followers. Death on a cross was a form of execution used by Rome for what they considered dangerous criminals. A prisoner carried his own cross to the place of execution, signifying submission to Rome’s power.

**Following Jesus, therefore, meant identifying with Jesus and his followers, facing social and political oppression and ostracism, and no turning back.**

For some, taking up the cross might indeed mean death.

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To

**“follow” Christ is also a moment-by moment decision, requiring compassion and service.**

Following Jesus doesn’t mean walking behind him, but taking the same road of sacrifice and service that he took.

**25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.**

Saints, the Christian life is a paradox: To attempt to keep your life means only to lose it. A person who “saves” his or her life in order to satisfy desires and goals apart from God ultimately “loses” life. Not only does that person lose eternal life, but he or she also loses the fullness of earthly life promised to those who believe.

By contrast, those who willingly give up their lives for the sake of Christ actually find true life. To be willing to put personal desires and life itself into God’s hands means to understand that nothing that we can gain on our own in our earthly lives can compare to what we gain with Christ.

Jesus wants us to choose to follow him rather than to lead a life of sin and self-satisfaction. He wants us to stop trying to control our own destiny and to let him direct us. When we give our lives in service to Christ we then begin to discover the real purpose of living.

**26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?**

Saints, to reinforce his words in 16:25, Jesus asked his listeners a rhetorical question.

What good would it be for a person to gain the whole world (that is, to have power or financial control over the entire world system of which Satan is the head), but lose his or her soul (that is, to lose eternal life with God)? Every person will die, even those most powerful or most wealthy. If they have not taken care to “save” their lives for eternity with God, then they gain nothing and lose everything.

**Hebrews 9:27**

“And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment…”

Saints, many people spend all their energy seeking pleasure. Jesus said, however, that a world of pleasure centered on possessions, position, or power is ultimately worthless. Whatever a person has on earth is only temporary; it cannot be exchanged for his or her soul. Believers must be willing to make the pursuit of God more important than the selfish pursuit of pleasure. If we follow Jesus, we will know what it means to live abundantly now and to have eternal life as well.

**27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.**

Saints, Jesus, here again using the self-designation of Son of Man, said that he will come again, but at that time he will be in his exalted state as King and Judge. The judgment referred to here is positive, involving the Son of Man’s loving acceptance of true disciples. While Jesus called his followers to deny themselves, take up their crosses, and follow, he also promised great reward. Their self-denial and discipleship would not be wasted. Their repayment would come in the glorious future Kingdom of God.

**28 Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."**

When Jesus said some will not die before seeing the coming of the Kingdom, he may have been referring to

**1. Peter, James, and John, who would witness the Transfiguration a few days later**

**2. Those who would witness the Resurrection and ascension**

**3. The Holy Spirit’s coming at Pentecost**

**4. All who would take part in the spread of the church after Pentecost.**

Some people reading this passage have assumed that Jesus was promising that the disciples would not die before he came back to set up his glorious Kingdom. Perhaps the disciples themselves at first thought that Jesus was referring to his glorious rule on earth. But the disciples have died, so this passage must be interpreted differently.

Jesus’ Transfiguration, which immediately follows, was a preview of that coming glory. At the Transfiguration, Peter, James, and John saw Jesus’ glory, identity, and power as the Son of God. Thus, certain disciples were eyewitnesses to the power and glory of Christ’s Kingdom. Jesus’ point was that his listeners would not have to wait for another Messiah because the Kingdom was among them, and it would soon come in power.

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**The Little Video >**

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

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**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let's Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace." '**