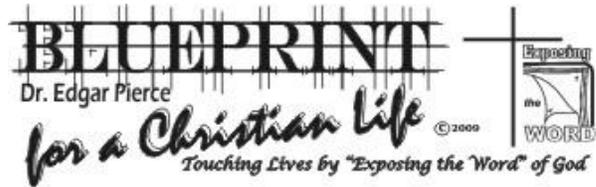


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6- Getting on the Jobsite (Answering the Call of the Cross)

Luke 14:27-30 & Matt 16:21-26

Have you ever passed a building that was only partially constructed? Oh, the walls were standing but the roof was never put on. Perhaps the walls and roof were there but there were neither windows nor doors. You know, you have seen these buildings. Did it not leave you wondering what happened? Why was it not complete? Perhaps they just did not stay on the jobsite long enough to finish it.

Jesus spoke to a multitude of men and women who were tagging along.

Luk 14:27-30 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? 29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, 30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

He was telling them to make sure they were ready to build and to get on the jobsite and continue.

Then another place Jesus told us that we as believers have to get about the business of answering the call of the cross.

One of my favorite movies is "The Call of the Wild." The gist of the movie is about a dog that responds to his nature to answer the call to run with the wild wolves. He only responded to what he was.

In ***Luke 9:51*** it is said of Jesus that ***"...when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem."*** I

submit this was a call of the cross. Jesus was going to the jobsite.

What is the call on our lives as Christians? Is there a call to service, to suffer for the cause of Christ? Are we comfortable in our irresponsibility? Have we become complacent in our Christians service?

"When I make people comfortable in their irresponsibility, I'm heading away from the cross.-- Fred Smith, Leadership, Vol. 13, no. 3.

Does the nature of what it cost for our redemption call us? What was the call of the cross for Jesus? Let us look at our text in Matthew to see the call of cross for Jesus and us as His followers.

Matt 16:21-26 "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. 22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. 23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. 24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. 26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own

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soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

I- The Call of the Cross for Jesus:

Matt 16:21 "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."

The cross of Christ is a subject that has been expounded over the centuries by men as they preached the gospel. **Phil 2:8** "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

The cross was one of the most humiliating things that could happen to anyone. We get offended and think it is too much to bear when some says, "boo!"

Heb 12:2 says, "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

In our text we see that Jesus deliberately set out toward Jerusalem knowing that the cross awaited Him. He attempted to explain this to the disciples. He felt the call of the cross. Why we may ask? May I suggest a few reasons for the call of the cross to Jesus?

First, it was the plan of God. **Rev 13:8** "...the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." God had planned the cross to be the instrument of sacrifice before He created the world. The cross was always God's plan. It was the very reason that Jesus came. It was a natural call because of who He was in His inner being.

Second, He had to do what we could not for ourselves. Notice with me **Rom 3:10-12**; "There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

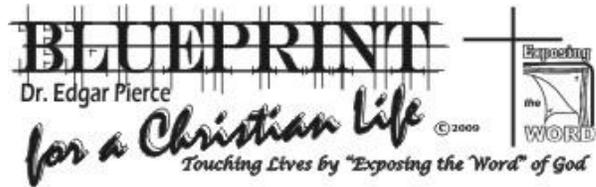
Rom 3:18-19 There is no fear of God before their eyes. 19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."

Rom 5:6-9 "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly....8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." The cross of Christ compelled Him because He knew there was no hope without His sacrifice.

He set His face toward the cross. Notice it says He knew He must suffer many things. **Matt 16:21** Not only was Jesus coming to Jerusalem knowing He would be killed but also knowing He would suffer prior to death. Jesus embraced the cross for our salvation. He did not have to go except for the compulsion of need. He was not crucified because He did not have power to overcome His foes.

Only Matthew tells us this. **Matt 26:53** "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" He answered the call of the cross. He was on

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the jobsite making it possible for us to build our Christian lives upon His sacrifice. Will we answer? Will we get on the jobsite?

II- The Call of the Cross for Believers:

Matt 16:24 "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*"

When Jesus was being taken to be crucified there was a man who was conscripted to carry the cross of Christ.

Mark 15:21 "And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross." This is a literal taking up of the cross. Is this what it means to take up our cross? We see men today who carry a cross across the US. Is this the meaning? Some men even go so far as to have themselves crucified. Is this the meaning of taking up the cross?

I believe every Christian should hang on a cross for at least thirty seconds. Their lives will never be the same. -- Actor Bruce Marshiano, who portrayed Jesus in the Matthew video series. Christian Reader, Vol. 34.

In our text we clearly see there is a call of the cross for believers. May I suggest that there can be no cross without suffering? We cannot sanitize the cross and take all the suffering out of it for Christ. Neither can we truly sanitize the cross and take the suffering and sacrifice out of the Christian life and call. It may not be physical suffering, in may not be emotional suffering but it will involve at times giving up our will or conforming our will to His.

In ***Acts 5:40-41*** we find the early church suffering because of their faith. "When they had called the apostles,

and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

The apostle Paul a man who certainly was acquainted with suffering for the cause of the cross said in ***2 Tim 3:11-12*** "Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. 12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

This brings us a good point. A soul searching point. One that requires us to look inward at our lives. When we suffer is it for the cause of Christ or of our own doing?

1 Peter 4:15-16 "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. 16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."

1 Peter 3:14-17 "But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; 15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear...17 For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing."

So this points out that we must make sure we are attempting to live as God

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would have us to do and when we suffer it will be for the cause of the cross not because of our sin.

Clarence Jordan, author of the "Cotton Patch" New Testament translation and founder of the interracial Koinonia farm in Americus, Georgia, was getting a red-carpet tour of another minister's church. With pride the minister pointed to the rich, imported pews and luxurious decorations. As they stepped outside, darkness was falling, and a spotlight shone on a huge cross atop the steeple.

"That cross alone cost us ten thousand dollars," the minister said with a satisfied smile.

"You got cheated," said Jordan. "Times were when Christians could get them for free."

-- Michael Jenkins, Itasca, Texas. Leadership, Vol. 5, no. 3.

The call of the cross I believe we need to see is not an option for us. Remember that the call is something within us. It is a natural thing for a Christian to answer the call of the cross. So how do we answer the call?

By fully submitting our whole being to God to use. Two times the apostle Paul in the letter to the Corinthians spoke of us being bought. We were bought by the cross of Christ and the Christ of the cross. Notice first **1 Cor 6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.** We are

to be sold out to God with our whole being. Have you surrendered to Him all that you have? Your life, your possessions, your job, your time and energy. Have you surrendered your all as you answer the call of the Cross. Are you on the Jobsite?

Lets now look at the second place Paul said we are bought with a price. **1 Cor 7:23 "Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men."** One of the other things that is evident here about the call of the cross is that we should seek to please God and not men. In the book of Acts we have an illustration of this. In **Acts 5:27-29** Peter and the Apostles had been put in prison for preaching. They are called before the Sanhedrin and notice their response. **"And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, 28 Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. 29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men."**

Have you answered the call of the cross for your life? Will you surrender today to the call and say Lord here I am, all that I am for you to use as you see fit?