

Discipleship and the Cross

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."

Matthew 16:21-28

Context: This lesson follows immediately after Peter's confession that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Jesus followed up the confession of Peter with his teaching to the disciples that the Messiah's purpose was to die. This did not coincide with the well-established tenets of the Jewish faith and their biblical interpretation. Every previous Messiah (David, Josiah, Hezekiah) had been a military leader and political ruler. This Messiah, however, did not come to establish a kingdom and overthrow oppression through political force or through weapons of war. This Messiah came with only one weapon in his arsenal: love. Those who would follow this Messiah must not wield any other weapon.

A. Discipleship is connected to the **cross**

Pat Robertson—*"If there were no God, I would still live the Christian life, because it is a good and moral life"*

1. Are you **crazy**?!
 - a. If there is no God, I am going to be really ticked off when I get to heaven.
 - b. God and I are gonna have it out, were it not for one problem... there would be no God.
2. The path of the disciple is marked with a cross
 - a. ...not physical **maladies**
 - b. ...the cross is a **choice**, to take up a difficult challenge for the cause of Christ.
3. Those who would live a Christian life even if there were no Christ, have not chosen a **big enough** cross to carry.

B. And yet... for disciples, the cross is no **sacrifice**

1. The Christian life is not about my sacrifice, but about **Christ's** for me.
2. Because of what Jesus has done, I can give my life in a **ridiculous** fashion
3. Pastor Dave's Pity Parties:
 - a. I have pity parties...
 - ...thinking no-one is giving like me
 - ...no-one sacrifices enough

...no-one else is doing what I'm doing.

b. It is easy to be **resentful**

c. Resentment comes from my **forgetting** the gift of Christ given to me

C. For disciples, the cross is not a **bragging** right

1. Everything I have done **pales** in comparison to what has been given to me.

2. **Story**—Shake hand of recent veterans from Iraq and say “*Thanks*”

I get the same response, “*I’m just doing my duty*”

They appreciate the history of sacrifices made for their freedom

Therefore, their service is a lighter burden than what has been done in the past

Those of us who have not served country cannot appreciate that.

3. If you want to follow Christ...

...you will need to pick up a cross

...it will be a burden

...but, it will be nothing in comparison to the burden carried on your behalf.