

## From the Pastor's Heart

*Anyone who wishes to follow Me  
must deny self,  
Take up the Cross, and follow Me.  
Matthew 16:24 (paraphrase)*



Brethren,

Hear what the Spirit says to the Church!

Jesus has many lovers of His heavenly kingdom, but few cross-bearers. Many desire His consolation, but few His tribulation. Many will sit down with Him at table, but few will share His fast. All desire to rejoice with Him, but few will suffer for Him.

Many will follow Him to the breaking of the bread, but few will drink the bitter cup of His Passion. Many revere His miracles, but few will follow His shame to the cross. Many say they love Jesus when all goes well with them and praise them when He does them a favor; but if Jesus conceals Himself and apparently leaves them for a little while, they fall into complaining or become depressed.

They who love Jesus purely for Himself and not for their own sake, bless Him in all trouble and anguish as well in times of consolation. Even if He never sent them consolation, they would still praise Him and give thanks.

Oh, how powerful is the pure love of Jesus, when not mixed with self-interest or self-love! Are they not to be considered untrustworthy who always look for comforts? And they who think only of their own advantage, do they not show themselves to be lovers of self rather than of Christ? Where will a person be found ready to serve God without looking for a reward?

Dear followers of the Savior of the world, hear these words. Let them burn indelibly into your heart and mind. Know that they who give all to Christ will bear the greatest testimony of perfect love and transform the world in humble obedience to His Divine Will – which is found only in Christ.

He Lives!

*Pastor Bill*