



## Repentance Tabernacle Church

RepentanceTabernacle@gmail.com  
www.RepentanceTabernacle.org (984) 369-5171

### Take Up Your Cross!

**Scripture:** Matthew 16:24-26; Mark 8:34-37; Luke 9:23-25

Jesus predicts His death the first time. He did not talk with His disciples about the cross until they had come to know He was the Christ (Matthew 16:21). You will never be able to endure the suffering of the cross unless you have first been convinced that Jesus is the Christ. Once you have settled your relationship with Christ, He will introduce you to your cross.

Crucifixion was a common Roman method of execution, and condemned criminals had to carry their crosses through the streets to the execution site. **Following Jesus, therefore, meant a true commitment, the risk of death, and no turning back.** Therefore, it meant bearing your cross (Matthew 10:38-39); self-denial (Luke 14:26-27); leaving all (Luke 14:33); fruitfulness (John 15:8) and Christ is our example (Hebrews 12:2). Moreover, standing up for the gospel caused the disciples to be stoned to death, head cut off, put on the Island of Patmos, martyred upside down, and imprisoned. Jesus said: *"No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God"* (Luke 9:62).

The possibility of losing their lives was very real for the disciples as well as for Jesus. Real discipleship implies real commitment—pledging our whole existence to His service. If we try to save our physical life from death, pain, or discomfort, we may risk losing our true eternal life. If we protect ourselves from the pain God calls us to suffer, we begin to die spiritually and emotionally. Our lives turn inward and we lose our intended purpose. **When we give our life in service to Christ, however, we discover the real purpose of living.**

When we don't know Christ, we make choices as though this life were all we have. In reality, this life is just the introduction to eternity. How we live this brief span, however, determines our eternal state. What we accumulate on earth has no value in purchasing eternal life. Even the highest social or civic honors cannot earn our way to heaven. **Evaluate all that happens from an eternal perspective, and you will find your values and decisions changing.**

Sin is unprofitable, leads to worldliness, spiritual loss (Luke 15:13); false foundation (Luke 6:49); imperfect service (1 Corinthians 3:13, 15); and breach of trust (Matthew 25:27-28). However, if we **"take up our cross,"** we may lose earthly treasures but secure spiritual treasures (Matthew 19:21); our self-sacrifice is a paying investment (Matthew 19:29). In the Word of God let us know that Paul gave up all, and won the great prize (Philippians 3:8).

**Your "cross" is God's will for you, regardless of the cost. Taking up your cross is a choice; it is not beyond your control.** You may have health problems or a rebellious child or financial pressures, but do not mistake these as your "cross to bear." **Neither the circumstances you face nor consequences of your own actions are your cross.** Your course will be to voluntarily participate in Christ's sufferings as He carries out His redemptive purposes (Philippians 3:10). Paul said he rejoiced in his suffering because he knew that by them, he was able to participate in the suffering required to bring others into Christianity maturity (Colossians 1:24).

We tend to want to go immediately from "denying ourselves" to "following Jesus." But you can never follow Jesus unless you have first taken up your cross. There are aspects of God's redemptive work that can be accomplished only through suffering. **Just as Christ had to suffer in order to bring salvation, there will be hardships you may have to endure in order for God to bring salvation to those around us.** There is no Christianity without a cross. If you are waiting for a relationship with God that never requires suffering or inconvenience, then you cannot use Christ as your model. God's will for you involves a cross. First, take up your cross; then you can follow Him.

As you take up your cross today, praise God for bringing you this far in life and for everything He has done through you, enabling you to touch the lives of others. **If you are struggling to take up your cross daily, pray and ask for God's help, He is your ever-present help in your time of need. If you want to be where He is, if you want to be with Him, if you want to walk with Him, if you want to live in His presence, you must deny yourself and take up your cross daily. The choice is yours!**

**May you be blessed to take up your cross and follow Jesus Christ!**