

# THE WAY OF THE CROSS

## (Gal 2:20)

### INTRODUCTION

The Lord Jesus commanded his disciples to pick up their cross and follow him. 2000 yrs after the act of Jesus crucifixion, its easy for us to forget how excruciating painful crucifixion was. To help us understand Jesus words today, I want us to refresh our memories through this 5 min film clip.

### READING - Gal 2:20

What did Paul mean? Well - in those words Paul summarised the way of the cross - what it means to be a Christian. They way of the cross is crucifixion! The cross was an instrument of death, it was for killing and when Jesus said "pick up your cross and follow me" - it wasn't so that we can nail our troubles or problems to the cross, or so that its presence may comfort us - NO. It was so that we may use it to crucify - and the one we crucify is not Satan - the one we crucify is me. I pick up my cross and follow Jesus, and each morning as I look up at that cross, the person who hangs on the cross is not Jesus - it is me - me as in self - my selfish desires and plans and intentions. "I have been crucified with Christ" I have participated vicariously in His death. When Jesus died - it is my self which died on that cross and in its place - Christ came alive in me.

Paul when on to say in writing to the Corinthians - that I died daily - The act of crucifying self is a daily act - when I get up each morning - I crucify self, I put self to death so that Christ may reign in me. The way of the cross is crucifixion.

But how do we live a crucified life? Well-remember that last frame on the screen of Jesus hanging on the cross lets go back to it and examine it for it tells us 3 things that are true of a crucified man.

### A. FACING IN ONE DIRECTION

As Jesus hang on that cross He was not free to come down, change the direction it lay in and go back up - No -the very act of crucifixion force him to face in one determined direction. Sot it is for us. In Heb 12:1,2 we are given our direction. "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us FIXING OUR EYES ON JESUS, the author and prefecture of faith.

We are to have an all-consuming singleness of purpose, an undivided heart, as we keep our eyes on Jesus in all that we do. David prayed for this in His own life. In Ps 86:11 he prayed "*Give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name*", that I may obey you, that I may be consumed with honouring your name.

The crucified man/woman faces in one direction.

### B. CANNOT TURN BACK

Because of the posture of crucifixion, Jesus could not turn backwards. In Lk 9:57-62 had said you cannot turn back!

### III - OX PLOW & POINT ON HORIZON

We have many illustrations in the bible of people who put their hand to the plough and then turned back.

Lot's wife (Gen 19:23-26) curiosity/nostalgia

Israel (Ex 14:10-14) fear

Sometimes the things that cause us to turn back are good things. The 3 men who came up to Jesus in Lk 9, had seemingly legitimate reasons for wanting to go back.

The first - the basic comforts of life a home, a place to sleep.

The second - an aged father possibly with just a few more years to go before death.

The third - family and the difficulty of leaving them even where a willingness to follow Christ existed. Each of those men said "give us a little more time and we'll join you soon", and yet to all 3 Jesus said:- "*No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.*"

The crucified man cannot turn back!

### C. HAS NO FUTURE PLANS

Again - as Jesus hand on that cross his plans in this earthly life had come to an end. I do not plan for my life tomorrow, if I am going to die today. If I crucify self each morning, then it leaves me free and open to Gods plan for my life without my own plans interfering, and even where God has commissioned me for a task, especially the task of spreading the good news, it leaves me free and flexible to flow in the direction God chooses. Look at Paul's life in Acts 16:6-10.

Paul had a goal - to preach the gospel in the province of Asia, and yet he was a flexible tool in the hand of God - He could use Paul as he wanted because Paul did not have a rigid plan for his own life.

The same attitude is displayed in Paul's words in Acts 20:22-24 as he prepared to go to Jerusalem. God is free to do with my life as he wishes! The crucified man has no future plans.

### **CONCLUSION:**

We need to pause here and examine our won lives. Are your eyes fixed unswervedly on Jesus? If they are not then He world will call and beckon you in a myriad of directions - career, pleasure, drugs, money... It will even call you to turn back to the things you once forsook. It will sell you plan after plan for your life.

But if you are crucified - then the world has no hold on you for it has no hold on you for it has no hold on those who are dead!

Is Gal 2:20 true of your life? Are you a crucified Christian? Pause and allow holy spirit to search. If you have heard the spirit of God telling you of things you must let go of; showing you the need to crucify self each morning, and you want to say "Yes, Lord" - lets pray together, and as we pray, indicate your decision openly by raising your hand.

"Father, I have accepted you as Lord and yet have not picked up my cross daily and crucified self. I want to do that this very moment, may my eyes be fixed on nothing else but Jesus; help me to truly forsake the past without turning back, I nail the plans I have for my own life to the cross and invite you to lead me into your plans for my life". AMEN.

Put name and date next to Gal 2:20 If need be come and see me.