

Our Cross-Walk

I. Slide#1 **Announce:**

- A. Family Camp Video -
- B. **Greetings to Marleen** in from Albania, and **Cindy Arnhold**.
- C. **Israel Info Mtg** - Sun 1:30pm in front office. No need to come if you were at the 1st.
- D. **Children at Risk** - in new room at 3pm. Updates, prayer, & we will be watching a short video of *Christine Caine* to encourage us in our fight against injustice.
- E. Pray for...
 1. **Haiti Teachers Team** w/HEF - Des & team leave tonight.
 - a) 150 Haitian Teachers; representing 17 schools; representing 4500 students.
 2. **Mercy Projects Ukraine summer camp** - Zach & Jonny G. [8-12yrs; 100 kids; B.S. & classes]
 3. **Mercy Projects Armenia/Georgia summer camp** - Jeff T [prob w/orthodox priest]
 4. **Pastor Rob Taylor** CCBrentwood Tenn - Out running, 500' from home found laying in the street. Heart attack.
 5. **Pray:** We don't come here because we're **suppose to** but because we **need to**...

II. Slide#2 **Intro: Our Cross-Walk**

- A. **Last section**(vs.31-33) we talked about **His cross**...and as if this was not enough *shock* for one day, Jesus has another for His disciples & the crowd...**now for our cross**.
 1. If you're serious about following Me...you must take the same path...it's a cross-walk.
 - a) **It's costly...but worth it** – No fine print here friends.
- B. Jesus turns to the crowd & challenges them w/some of the most **solemn & searching** words that ever fell from His lips.
 1. **Understand the make up of this group:** some hanging upon his every word; **others** interested in Him; **others** attracted by Him; **some** loved the association with his popularity; **some** enjoyed the miracles; **some** the occasional free lunch; **they all** felt they wanted to be with Him *in some way*.
 - a) But Jesus battles a *thoughtless, hasty* profession of faith.
 2. **What would you say if Jesus spun around this morning, pointed at you, & asked you, in front of everyone, "Why are you following Me?"** - What would you say? [Oh, & you had to tell the truth!]

III. Slide#3 **OUR CROSS-WALK (34)**

- A. He gives **3 conditions for true discipleship: Deny Himself, Take up his Cross, Follow Me**.
- B. **Slide#4a Deny himself** – If we cling to our rights, our privileges, our life selfishly...we lose in the end.

1. **Negatively**, One must **deny himself decisively saying no** to selfish interests and earthly securities. (BKC)
 - a) Self-denial is **not** to deny one's personality, to die as a martyr, or to deny "things" (as in asceticism).
 - b) **Rather** it is the denial of "self," turning away from the idolatry of self-centeredness **and** every attempt to orient one's life by the dictates of self-interest.
 2. Maybe the reason we **aren't** making much progress in our Christianity is because we're still trying to **give the orders**?
 3. **Slide#4b** To deny self is to **surrender**.
 - a) **There is a Moment** of surrender @ Salv.; **& a Practice** of surrender (sanct), which is *moment-by-moment & lifelong*.
 4. **So, to deny self is to: say no** to yourself; **relinquish** all claims to your life; **and renounce** your right to run your life.
 - a) You know Christian, **you don't belong to yourself**. 1Cor.6:19,20 **Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price.**
 - b) Jesus Christ has absolute claim on your life. You are no longer to live a **self-centered** life **but** a **Christ-centered** life.
- C. **Slide#5a Take up his cross** – our *crosses* are **not** simply trials or hardships. Nor is it a call to give up certain things. Our cross is not an unfair boss, nor a difficult child. Our cross is not even an illness nor a handicap...**but** it is a call to DIE. [Paul said, **I die daily** 1 Cor.15:31]
1. **Positively**, one must **take up his cross, decisively saying yes** to God's will and way.
 - a) Across comes from specifically walking in Christ's steps, embracing His life.
 - b) **It's when** we bear the **disdain** because we are embracing *the narrow way* of the cross. **It's when** we live out the **business ethics of Christ** in our marketplace **&** the **sexual ethics of Christ** in our world. **It's when** we embrace weakness instead of power. **It's when** we extend ourselves in difficult circumstances for the sake of the gospel.
 - c) It's not **the difficulties in your life** that are cross-bearing, **but the difficulties for Christ's sake** which are.
 2. **Slide#5b The cross an instrument of death**.
 - a) Crucifixion was used by Rome to express its mastery over its subjects.
 - (1) It was complete submission of the victims will, to the will of another.
 - (2) Let everyone know Rome was supreme, that they were dominated by Rome.
 - b) **Am I willing to surrender my life** to Jesus?
 - c) **Am I willing to put my life under** complete subjugation into the will & desire of another...**that being Jesus**?

- d) Am I willing to *place my plans, my will, my desires* to be secondary to the will of Jesus?
- D. Slide#6 To **Take Up** our cross is not to hang **on** it, **it's** our life long journey **TO** the cross.
1. Condemned prisoners were generally made to **carry** the crossbar of their cross **to** the site of execution. **It is our Cross-Walk.**
 2. The Trappist monk **Thomas Keating** once said, "The cross Jesus asks you to carry **is yourself.**" It's all the pain you inflict on yourself, it's the pain you inflict on others."
- E. Here He **sifts out** the true Christians from His fair weather followers.
1. Gal.2:20 **I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.**
 2. **Take up your cross** is also called: *consecration, making Jesus your Lord, dying to self, yielding to the spirit.*
 3. Slide#7 What matters is not what you **call** it, **but** that you **do** it.
 4. God wants your life...All of it.
 5. **Surrendered people obey God even when it doesn't make sense.**
 - a) **Abraham:** followed God's leading w/o knowing **where**.
 - b) **Joseph:** trusted God's purpose w/o knowing **why** everything happened the way it did (*i.e. sold into slavery; trumped up rape charges; 2 yr prison sentence*).
 - c) **Hannah:** waited for God's perfect timing for a child, w/o knowing **when**.
 - d) **Mary:** experienced a miracle w/o knowing **how**.
 6. Slide#8 Gal. 6:14 **God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.**
 7. **First** he must **give up all right to himself; that is,** cease bothering about self-preservation, self-aggrandizement, and self-protection against ridicule, and abandon self-assertion as a way of life.
 - a) Slide#9 This is how **the world** is crucified to **me**.
 8. Slide#10 **Second,** he must **take up his cross:** that is, settle for a life into which the world's favor and esteem do not enter. Only criminals going to execution - people from whom the world's favor has been totally withdrawn - carried crosses in those day.
 - a) Slide#11 This is how **I** am crucified to **the world**.
- F. Slide#12 **Follow me** - Whoa follow you? – If **you're** going to the cross...then that means... we're-going-to-our-cross.
1. Slide#13 **Giuseppe Garibaldi**, the great Italian general/patriot/politician [led 1,000 volunteers in the capture of Sicily and Naples (1860)] appealed for recruits in these terms, "I

offer neither pay, nor quarters, nor provisions; I offer hunger, thirst, forced marches, battles & death. Let him who loves his country in his heart, & not w/his lips only, follow me."

2. Jesus didn't come to make **life easy** but to make **men great!**

G. **Slide#14 Recap: Overall thought: Treasure Me** more than your own **comfort** and your own **safety**.

1. **Deny yourself:** The **opposite** of **self-denial** is the idol of **self-gratification**.

2. **Take up your cross:** The **opposite** of **cross-bearing** is the idol of **self-preservation**.

3. **Follow Me: Trust** and **treasure** Jesus enough to **follow him...**even when it is **costly**.

a) Phil.3:8, **I count everything as loss** because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the **loss of all things** and **count them as rubbish**, in order that I may *gain Christ*.

IV. **Slide#15 THE PARADOX OF THE CROSS (35)**

A. **Embrace the paradox of the cross!**

B. It is a simple fact of life that *those who try to get all finally lose all, while those who give all actually get all in the end!*

1. **In light of eternity, things that seem so important now, have no value at all.**

2. There's nothing more powerful than a person who has nothing to lose but everything to gain.

3. **Slide#16 Jesus says, Losers are keepers!**

a) **Finders, keepers, losers, weepers:** is the **adage** with the premise that when something is **unowned** or **abandoned**, whoever finds it can **claim it**. [idiom relates to **an ancient Roman law**]

(1) But Jesus says, **Losers are keepers**.

b) Yes, this is the exact opposite of **the spirit of our age...**where the world screams, *"Save yourself. Love yourself. Pamper yourself. Live for yourself."*

c) We live in a **society of keepers** that ultimately become a **society of losers**.

(1) Ours is **a society of losers!** :)

(2) **Lose your life for Christ's sake, for His gospel's sake, for Pete's sake!**

C. **Slide#17** Drifting snow and bitter cold threatened the lives of Indian evangelist **Sadhu Sundar Singh** and his **Tibetan companion** as they crossed a Himalayan mountain pass. Fighting the *"sleep of death"*, they stumbled over a mound in the trail. It was a man, half dead. The **Tibetan** refused to stop but continued on alone. The compassionate **Sadhu**, however, shouldered the burden the best he could. Through his struggling, he began to warm up, as did the unconscious man. But before reaching the village they found the Tibetan - frozen to death. The principles that Jesus taught are still true: *whoever shall save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it.*

V. Slide#18 THE PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN IN A NUTSHELL (36,37)

- A. If a man has forfeited his soul, *the whole world* could not buy it back.
- Slide#19 It is said that about 200 years after the death of the great conqueror **Charlemagne** the emperor Ophello had his tomb was opened. The sight the workmen saw was startling. There was his body in a sitting position, clothed in the most elaborate of kingly garments, with a scepter in his bony hand. On his knee lay the Holy Scriptures, with a cold, lifeless finger pointing to Mark 8:36: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and loose his own soul?"
 - Many years ago a primitive tribe observed a custom of electing a king every 7 years. During his reign he was given authority to do whatever he wanted. But there was one hitch. At the end of his brief reign he was put to death to make way for a new leader. Believe it or not, there were always men who were willing to exchange their lives for 7 years of **power** and **indulgence**.¹

VI. Slide#20 ASHAMED OR PROUD? (38)

- A. (38) If we deny Him **now**, He will deny us **then**. The opposite of being **ashamed** is being **proud**.
- B. Slide#21 A very cool goat & a sheep got into a conversation the other day... (my musings)
- Goat: Hey sheep, do you know what my ranking is amongst all the other goats?
 - Sheep: No I don't.
 - Goat: I'm #13 in all the herd. What # are you sheep?
 - Slide#22a Sheep: I don't know my # goat. **But**, I am loved by my Shepherd.
 - Goat: You're a dumb sheep. Why do you follow that guy? Can't you run your own life? Have you no sheep pride?
 - Sheep: I try not to. I did try to be in charge of my life once.
 - Goat: Now you're talking. How did it go?
 - Slide#22b Sheep: Not so well. *I got lost*. Master had to leave the flock & come find me.
 - Slide#22c Goat: Ha, dumb sheep. I bet you got your little sheep hiny beat!
 - Slide#23 Sheep: No, He wasn't **mad** at me, just said that He **missed** me. And told me to follow Him, & He showed me the way home. I love Him and am proud to call Him my Shepherd/Master. I'm not embarrassed to be seen being led by Him. And, come to think of it...I actually, do have **sheep pride**...I'm proud of **Him!**
 - Goat: Oh. Hmmm, did I tell you I'm #13 in all our herd?
 - Slide#24 Connection: The opposite of being **ashamed** of someone, is being **proud** of them. Admiring them. Not being embarrassed to be seen with them.

¹ Daily Walk, August 6, 1993

(1) So Jesus is saying, "If you are embarrassed by me and the price I paid for you (and he's **not** referring to ***lapses of courage*** when you don't share your faith, **but** a ***settled state*** of your heart toward him) - **if** you're not proud of me and you don't cherish me and what I did for you - **if** you want to put yourself with the goats that value their reputation in the goat herd more than they value me, then that's the way I will view you when I come. I will be ashamed of you, and you will perish with the people who consider me an embarrassment."

- C. Slide#25 Am I willing to *surrender my life* to Jesus?
- D. Am I willing to *put my life under* complete subjugation into the will & desire of another...that being Jesus?
- E. Am I willing to *place my plans, my will, my desires* to be secondary to the will of Jesus?

Thomas à Kempis wrote:

Jesus has many who love his kingdom **in heaven**, **but** few who **bear his cross**.

He has many who desire **comfort**, **but** few who desire **suffering**.

He finds many to share his **feast**, **but** few his **fasting**.

All desire to **rejoice** with him, **but** few are willing to **suffer** for his sake.

Many follow Jesus to the breaking of bread, **but** few to the drinking of the cup of **his passion**.

Many admire his **miracles**, **but** few follow him **in the humiliation of the cross**.