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?
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, “/
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.

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.

1. 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?"

2. 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)

1. Goat: Hey sheep, do you know what my ranking is amongst all the other goats?
2. Sheep: No I don’t.
3. Goat: I’m #13 in all the herd. What # are you sheep?
4. Slide#22a Sheep: I don’t know my # goat. But, I am loved by my Shepherd.
5. Goat: You’re a dumb sheep. Why do you follow that guy? Can’t you run your own life? Have you no sheep pride?
6. Sheep: I try not to. I did try to be in charge of my life once.
7. Goat: Now you’re talking. How did it go?
8. Slide#22b Sheep: Not so well. I got lost. Master had to leave the flock & come find me.
9. Slide#22c Goat: Ha, dumb sheep. I bet you got your little sheep hiny beat!
10. 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!
11. Goat: Oh. Hmmm, did I tell you I’m #13 in all our herd?

   a) 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
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.