

# The Cross: Your Profession or Possession?

by Derek Melton

---

*Derek Melton emphasizes the necessity of not only professing the cross of Christ but truly possessing and applying its transformative power in daily life.*

**Duration:** 1:05:23

**Scripture:** Matthew 13:22, Luke 9:23, 1 Corinthians 1:17

**Topics:** "Cross of Christ"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of bearing the cross of Jesus Christ in our lives. He highlights the example of the Apostle Paul, who endured hardships and even imprisonment for the sake of the gospel. The preacher encourages believers to embrace the cross and allow it to work in their hearts, even in the little things of life. He challenges listeners to prioritize the kingdom of heaven over the temporary pleasures of this present world.

---

## Transcript

the cross. Is it just your profession or is it in your possession? Turn with me in your Bible to 1 Corinthians chapter 1. Verse 17 says, For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. For the message of the cross, the King James says that the preaching of the cross, and this is the new King James, it says the message of the cross.

I like the preaching of the cross better. The preaching of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved. The King James says for those of us who are saved, the new King James says, for those of us who are being saved, it's the power of God.

It's the power of God. Let's pray. Father, I need you to season every word that comes forth from my lips with grace.

And Father, I just pray that you season this heart with grace, Lord, or that I might speak gracefully, not eloquently, but Lord gracefully with grace in my heart, Lord, regarding the cross of Jesus Christ. Father, I pray that you would give us an ear to hear that which the spirit has to say into the church or give us a heart to receive. Lord, give us a spirit of revelation of understanding.

Lord, teach us the ways of Christ. Father, I pray that the truth will overtake deceit, deception, trickery and lies. Lord, let the truth of the word of God come forth today and shine brightly, incandescently and powerfully illuminate our hearts and illuminate the word of God.

Help us today. Help us to be teachable. And Lord, help me to be up to teach.

And we give you praise in Jesus name. Amen. Christ didn't send me to baptize, the apostle says, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Jesus Christ be of none effect for the message of the cross.

The preaching of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but unto us who are being saved. It's the power of God. You know, the Lord's been speaking to my heart.

There's a lot of messages about the cross that are preached here. And as powerful and as important as doctrine is. A doctrinal cross won't save you.

A doctrinal cross will not save you. The doctrinal cross is to position you for the application of the cross that you take up your cross and bear it. We are living in a generation that speaks of the cross without bearing of the cross and take some sort of comfort in the agreement with the doctrine of the cross of Christ.

But yet they have no participation with it, no cooperation, no submission to it. And beloved, you're better off to have no knowledge of the cross than to have the knowledge of the cross and to push it away from yourself. Amen.

Turn with me to Luke chapter nine. We all know this verse is very famous. In fact, one of my favorite, it says in the 23rd verse, then Jesus said to them all, if anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself and take up.

Not agree with take up, take up his cross daily and follow me for whoever desires to save his life will lose it. But whosoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world and is himself destroyed or lost? There's some important terminology here that I think that sometimes that we fail to to recognize this cross must be taken up.

In the Greek, this means to raise up from the ground. A literal bearing of the cross, and it's not a tangible cross as Jesus bore that is hoon of wood held together by rope or nails or whatever form, as it might be. But this is an inward cross.

It is a losing your life to the mandates of the word of God to where you are reckoning yourself dead, dead to sin, dead to the pursuit of everything that you pursued before Christ and allowing the cross to work within your life to redefine you, your purpose, to redefine your belief system, to redefine your lifestyle to the perfect will of God. Love it. I know that there is in churches such as these that do preach the cross of Jesus Christ.

I've talked with brethren that that pastor churches that preach the cross and they all experience the same. I've spoken with my dear and beloved friend, Pastor Pete, up at Lighthouse Baptist Church, and that he is a cross preaching preacher that we talk in privately about those members that are among us that can give a great shout of amen unto the preaching of the cross, but give no heed to the application therein. They do not apply the cross that they amen so loudly in church.

They have the doctrine of the cross without having the possession. They profess the cross. They talked across, but they are not willing to embrace the cross because it costs.

It requires beloved. The cross takes your total life or it takes none of it. There was none of Jesus Christ spared on Calvary.

It consumed and it, it, it capsulated his total life. It required his total life. And if the cross of Jesus Christ is not requiring our total life, beloved, we are not shouldering his cross.

It's an artificial self-made man-made cross. In fact, many times we make a cross in the likeness of the God that we serve. And most oftentimes that God is us.

We shoulder across that's convenient. We shoulder across that's comfortable. We shoulder across that is familiar.

We shoulder across after our own devising because the cross of Jesus Christ is all consuming and all requiring. And there will be none of you left when the cross has finished his work. The doctrinal cross will not save you.

Although the doctrine of the cross is imperative, it will not save you. The word of God says, in fact, Jesus Christ himself said that he that comments after me must take up. You must bear that cross.

You must surrender to its terms. God himself up on his throne has established the terms of the cross and you and I cannot change it. We will agree to the work of the cross until it requires something of us that invades our privacy, that invades our home, that invades our comfort.

And then we say, no, we say no. I made mentioned in our pastoral meeting this morning that we have a it's almost a devilish mindset and ideology concerning our homes. He's like, I'm treading on dangerous water.

But it is true. We need to address this. If the cross doesn't invade your home, the cross isn't the cross.

Many times we don't want to share our homes with those that are need when God in his wondrous providence ascribes a situation to bring the cross into the workings of your home life to where you would have to forfeit. Your precious individuality, your precious. Personal time, your personal space, and to have some brother or sister that is in dire need of help to come into your home and for you to nurture them in Christ.

But we have this almost devilish mentality that, no, we're going to have this. This home of ours is set apart from our spiritual life and we can't let it invade there. But I'm very familiar with the discomforts associated with having your home infiltrated by others.

The beloved, it's works the cross in us. We can't leave the cross at the front door. We can't leave the cross of Jesus Christ in the local church.

Beloved, there are people that are in need, that need to come into our homes for us to nurture them. And I thank God for the glorious and wondrous opportunities the Lord has set before us over the years of Stacey and I to be able to have people into our home. Kendra, what would you have done if you couldn't come into a home when you graduated as a little girl with nowhere to go? And there are others just like you that need somewhere to go.

And well, we've set this sanctum up, this sanctuary up in our home. We won't let the cross invade it. Jesus, you can have every part but this part.

But what we don't know is that we don't have, Jesus has no part unless he has all of it. The cross invades into your home. It invades into your job.

It invades into your comfort. It invades into your privacy. It invades into your shower with you, into your bathroom.

It goes with you everywhere you go, every place you trod and works the work of Christ. And beloved, I am in fears that we have a good amen to the doctrine of the cross and we're failing at the application of the cross in our hearts and in our lives. And beloved, the cross of Christ, it goes over every parameter.

It takes and swallows and holds within its own paradigm every area of your life. And beloved, there are areas of our life the cross is going to go after. And beloved, you can reject the cross.

You can push away the cross and you can amen while you're doing it. And you can come up, you say, well, oh, and you can come up and you can misuse scriptures just like the devil and try to justify your sin and try to justify your stubbornness and your rebellious spirit. And try to use scripture, even your own scriptures that you write, a man's home is his castle and it can't be invaded.

I know that there's a cost. Tell me about it. My children grew up having to share their daddy with other kids.

Stacey and I had to learn to manage dealing with our children and dealing with other children that the Lord in his perfect providence has brought in for us to let the kingdom of God and his love to, to, to wrap arms around others that were in need. And beloved, let me tell you something. I'm not up here tooting my horn because I still face challenges for my home to be invaded.

Still, there are needs to where my, to where I'm needed for my life, for my heart, for my love to go out to others, others that I don't know, others that I've not met yet, but yet the Lord has ascribed to come into my path that I share his son with and his love of God with and the provision of Christ with, and even the provision of my, of the blessedness of my life where with the Lord has, has given me. And it's the cross of Jesus Christ that works in me to lay down my comfort, to lay down as it might be my rights that I try to uphold in my own home. Take up your cross daily.

It means to elevate it, to elevate it, to elevate the cross. It means to take up on oneself and to carry what has been raised. You know, one of the greatest, I believe temptations of Jesus was, was not in the 40 days of wilderness, although those were, were great and weighty temptations.

I believe one of the greatest temptations that faced Jesus Christ was whenever he was on his cross being 100% God and 100% man. And I've heard before in, in a song that Jesus had the power to summon 10,000 angels and to destroy the whole world and to set himself free. And he had the power to do that.

He had the power to do that. Turn with me to Mark 15, just over a couple pages. I want you to see this great temptation that faced our Lord.

And that's going to face us as well. One short passage, verse 30, save yourself and come down from the cross, save yourself and come down from the cross. Is that in your Bible? I believe that that is one of the

greatest temptations that you and I face as believers, that we are called to take up, to pick up, to mantle, to carry the cross.

It is to transcend everything in our life. It is a governed. It is to lead and to guide every decision that we make every breath that we take the cross of Jesus Christ.

Everything that we do should be measured on the other side of the cross. The decision is made after the cross has had its effect, but the enemy is still echoing through darkness. The very same echo that resounded into our beloved Savior's ears, save thyself and come down from that cross, forego the discomfort, alleviate yourself from the pain, save yourself from this non-essential suffering.

But yet beloved, the cross of Jesus Christ is the will of God. It's the life of God. Is it? Listen, it's the sovereign declaration of God through his son expressed to his people.

If you desire to be a follower of Jesus Christ, a disciple, a Christian, you must take up your cross and follow him. And it's done so daily. I think that just wonderfully expresses to the people of God, the frequency of the visitation of the cross in the life of a Christian daily, daily, the blood.

There is a voice out there that so many that call themselves by the name of our beloved, that call themselves by the name of Jesus Christ, give heed to and surrender to its power. And it's the voice that says, save thyself and come down from the cross, save yourself from the cross. I remember a story and Elisha had a group of young prophets.

They were going to sacrifice. And I was reading this in the old Testament. These are a young group of, of, of preachers and training in the place of sacrifice was not determined by the decision of any man, just as our place of sacrifice, the life of sacrifice is determined by the whole holy calling of God.

But these young prophets all turned back and none of them went with him. And I was not really understanding why none of the young prophets went with Elisha to make the sacrifice until I started doing a little research. And the place of sacrifice was down through this deep valley and they had to go up this steep and treacherous terrain to get to that location.

They weren't willing to go through the hardship to get to the place God had chosen, but yet they still want the title. How much different are we? We want the title of a Christian, but we're not willing to shoulder a cross that brings us to the place where we are like Christ. And only the cross of Christ working in your heart, your life will affect the nature and the character of Christ.

I think sometimes that we fear the discomfort, but yet we're wholly ignorant and unaware of the glory of the cross that with every cross, that there's a resurrection at the very nature and the character of God is cultivated in our hearts. The cross is meant to put you, the very thing that put Jesus on the cross, the cross of Christ is to put the death in your heart and in you, everything that did indeed crucify our Lord, every attitude, every decision, every inhibition, every demented and degraded and depraved work of Adam's transgression that is gripping the inside of your character in your heart. That's maimed you to where you look more like Adam than you do.

Jesus, the cross of Christ will, and is the only work that will change you into the likeness of God's son. Thank you for that one. Amen, brother.

It's true, but yet we have this taunting voice, save thyself and come down from the cross. Well, listen, the cross of Jesus Christ can be surrendered. The cross of Christ can be surrendered.

We see this pattern in the Bible. We can, listen, the cross of Christ is surrendered whenever its demands are neglected. I'm going to say that again, so it sinks in.

The cross of Jesus Christ is surrendered when the demands of the cross are laid down or disobeyed. See, we lay the cross down and we pick up other enterprises. Turn with me and your Bible to 2 Timothy.

One of the challenges of the whole issue of the cross is that we can involve ourselves with other enterprises and forfeit the cross, but yet fall into a whole guise of deception, a whole gamma of deception, because we still hold fast to the doctrine. Do you see this? We're not following with the cross shouldered. We're following with a head nodded.

There's no cross on our shoulder, but we're still nodding our head and agreeing with the doctrine of the cross. And we lay down our cross because we pick up other things, other interests, other enterprises. We engage or we involve ourselves with other things in this world, in this life, and it chokes away the cross.

But yet we're still following in our minds after Christ, but there's no cross on our shoulder, only in our intellect, only in our mind, only in our doctrinal agreement center. And it's deceptive. We're deceptive.

We have no cross. There is no glory. There is no true work of grace because the work of grace is in proportion to the cross.

But yet we have this profession with the cross of the cross before me, the world behind me. But yet we're going to look it around. There's no cross on you.

You've picked up other things. And in so doing, you've laid down the cross, the will of other things, the desire for other things, the involvement, the engagement into other enterprises have, have taken the place of the cross. But the danger is we're unaware that the cross is absent because we are shaking our head and agreeing that the cross is good.

Are you with me? Second Timothy chapter four, verse 10 for Demas has forsaking me having loved his present world and half departed for Thessalonica Crescens for Galatia Titus for Dalmatia. And only Luke is with me. Let me tell you something about Demas.

Demas was a bearer of the cross of Jesus Christ. He was in prison with Paul for the gospel sake. He was in chains.

He was a fellow prisoner of the Lord. He was a fellow co-labor together in this great gospel that Christ has called us unto. This man was no novice.

This man was working together with Dr. Luke and the apostle Paul for the preaching and the establishment of the kingdom of God and the generation that they were born and lived in. In fact, he was in prison and locked up. He was in chains.

It says it right here in this passage here on down. Paul says in, in, uh, verse, what was it? Uh, Colossians four, three talks about, I'm in bonds. Verse 14 in Colossians says, Luke is Luke and Dina Demas.

They're here with me. And they greet you from prison. These laborers of the gospel, they're sending their greetings and their love from prison.

But yet we find here and Timothy that he, he forsook him loving the present world. The cross was laid down. In fact, if you start doing a little looking into this before the apostle Paul, he was being called unto martyrdom shortly after this dissertation, we find the apostle Paul laying down his life and receiving that crown that was laid up for him, this crown of righteousness, but then the demons didn't want any part of it.

The cross had its work to a particular point. This is, I'm not prepared for this. And he forsook him.

This as it says in Philemon 24, the apostles of Demas is my fellow laborer. He called him a brother, a fellow laborer in the gospel dispensation, a preacher of righteousness. And here we see the storm and the dark cloud getting darker.

And the apostle Paul, knowing that his days were limited and numbered and that the cross of Jesus Christ in his life and his heart would require his life, that he was going to be martyred for the cause of Jesus Christ. And Demas says, I have no part of it and left him and forsook him having loved this present world. I've read a lot of ideals from different learned men about Demas.

Some say that he didn't recant and go back to an illicit ungodly life, but that he just wasn't willing or ready to leave this, this present life. But I know this is much the same with Judas. You find after their act of treason, their name is never mentioned again in the oracles of God.

And you find this synonymous all throughout the Bible that these that have have violated and broken covenant with God that have forsook the purposes and the plans of God for their life, that you find they're never mentioned again. You don't find Judas mentioned again, do you? Judas, he kind of went out and hung himself. There's not much more to mention, but you never hear of Demas again.

The apostle Paul goes down through the corridors of history being celebrated as a saint of God, giving his life for the gospel's cause and a man of God that carried his cross. He listened to this very day. The apostle Paul's life is glorifying Christ.

And who's talking of Demas in a positive tense? He unshouldered his cross, having loved this present, his present world. He loved the system of this world. He loved the influences of this, of this world.

His heart returned to its former love, his former love. The word of God says at first, John loved not the world and the things that are in the world, that if you love the world and the things that are in the world, the love of the father is not in you. Beloved, the cross of Jesus Christ requires the passion and the love for the things of this life in this world.

If we are still inebriated, intoxicated with the fanfare of this life, beloved, you are not a friend of the cross. You're an enemy there of the cross. I know this is very strong, but it's not as strong as the cross.

If you can't bear up under preaching like this, you'll never bear up under the true cross and the assertion of its influence in your life. But Demas bore his cross until the cost become too great, and the great cost was martyrdom, and he wasn't willing. You know what I find ironic? Nowhere does it indicate throughout the scriptures that Demas ever forsook his profession of the cross, but he did forsake the possession of it.

And so we can be singing songs and lifting our hands and listening to preaching about the cross and shouting hallelujah, amen. Pastor, that's good preaching. And all the while the cross is foreign to you for you've not taken it up because your hands are full of so many other trifling and trivial things.

Matthew 13, 22 says that the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches, they choke, they choke the word and it becometh, he becometh unfruitful. The cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches beloved, what happens is, is that everything that your hands are upon in this life must release to take hold of the cross. Your hands must wrap around and the cross wraps itself around you.

You are not free to do that which you will, but only that which the father has given by his sovereign providence, only that which delights the heart of the father. The cross itself brings you into chains and makes you a fellow prisoner of the Lord to where you are subservient to the will of the Lord Jesus Christ in good times and in bad. In providences of glowing warmth and in providences of darkness and coldness, in providences of great graces being exercised unto favor and also where graces are being exercised unto unfavor the cross of Christ.

There is a delirium, a spiritual delirium that falls upon those that hear about the cross, that hear and agree with the doctrine of the cross, but yet refuse to bear that cross daily because they're bearing the things of this life in this world. We have to fit in with the people of this world. We're not separate.

We're no different than those that are bound by the chains of sin. We join in with their ungodly gossip, their slandering. We partake of their forbidden things and we should be mantling and carrying a cross and being separate and being persecuted because the cross is an offense.

We are different. Are you too good to join in with us? Well, we can't be too good to join in with them, so we'll get down off the cross and just join in. The cross is a work of God in your heart and your life that places an immutable distinction between you and a sinner.

The cross. And if there is no cross in application in your life to where it is upon your back, beloved, you are no different than they. There is no distinction.

The distinction is drawn by the cross that's at work in our heart and in our life. Do not deceive yourself. Do not fall into this, into this, this, this deceit that you are a follower, a disciple of Christ without bearing his cross because you carry none of his character and you carry none of his likeness.

If you are not bearing his cross, don't deceive yourself. Your agreement with a doctrine isn't doing anything for you. Galatians 6, and I want to say this again, that if we cannot bear up under the outpouring of gospel truth, you'll never bear up underneath the actuation of the cross in your life.

Remember what it said about the preaching of the cross? For us who are being saved, it's the power of God. It's the power of God, the power of God for what? For transformation in your life, transformation in your heart, transformation in your countenance, transformation in your conduct, transformation in every area of your life that you will have put on Jesus Christ. Beloved, listen, there is no putting on of the Lord Jesus Christ without the daily shouldering of his cross.

Strike it from your memory. You will not have the likeness of Christ. You will not be able to carry on that great legacy of Christ.

If you're not bearing the cross, if it's not working in you, in your heart, in your lifestyle, bringing you under discomfort in many, many ways, causing suffering in many, many ways, but yet producing the very countenance of the one that gave himself for us. Verse 14, but God forbid, Galatians 6, 14, but 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. God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of Christ, because it's the cross of Christ that crucifies me to the world and the world to me.

You know, we will look at there, there are Christians or people that call themselves Christians, that their churches, and this might floor you, but this is true. And it's in the West coast and it's coming this way rapidly if it's not already here and probably is, we're already serving cappuccino in church. But in the church, they've set up liquor bars.

And the Christians, they call themselves Christians, they go there and they drink. And this is all done in the church, what they call it. It's not a church, don't get me wrong, it's not.

It's a whole Jezebel thing. You know, we look at that and we're like, man, Lord, don't let that be here. You know, it all starts off in little bits.

We're already got churches that got cappuccino machines and heck, you just come in, get you a big old fat donut, sit there and chomp on it while the pure word of God's coming forth. Actually, it's probably not pure there, but what have we done to the house of God? We've made it a den of thieves. What is it going to take for us to try to get people into our glee club? Where's the reverence? Where's the fear and the trembling? Where's the hallowedness? Where's the glory in that? You know, it all starts out in small increments.

In the emergent church, the pastors sit with their people and they watch pornography movies. And it's all okay because it's just expression. Beloved, do you think that our holy God approves of that? And we all look back at that and we think, man, that's a wretch.

Boy, that's terrible. But beloved, listen, whenever God's dealing with our lives and our hearts to shoulder our cross and we continue with the mantle of this world and the yoke of this world around our neck and our hands involved in the pleasant things of this life and we reject the cross, don't think you're any different than them. Don't think you're any different.

You might as well be there guzzling down your vodka with them because you're no different because you're a persecutor of the cross. You're denying the cross, but yet the danger is, is that you still have a profession on your lips that's, that's in synonymous with what's in your heart. Is in synonymous a word or unsynonymous? Your profession and your heart are foreigners.

They're opposites. There's no congruity. There's no agreement.

And I know that's pretty strong, but the cross is strong. Beloved, listen, the cross requires of you what you have no power to give it. And all you can do is fall prostrate at the feet of God.

Say, God, I can't carry this on my own. Then God sends his spirit to help you through. God sends his grace to work in your heart and he brings you through in the nick of time with the wondrous effectual work of God's grace.

But many times we get to the hard spots and this cross is requiring something of me that I can't bear. And we, listen, and we turn and we walk away from the cross and we skip down an illicit path, clapping our hands and saying, the cross before me, the world behind me. And we're skipping down an illicit path leading to perdition, singing about the doctrine of the cross, clapping and skipping with no cross shouldered, but yet intricately involved with and engaged in the affairs of this life that have totally and absolutely disqualified us from being a soldier in the kingdom of God, in the army of our Lord.

You know what the chief cause is of getting yourself down from the cross? You know what the chief cause is of the voice of save thyself, come down from the cross? It's the love of the world. It's the yielding to the influences of the world. That's the chief cause.

The instrumental cause of the forsaking of the cross of Jesus Christ. And it's just deceitful. I want to continue to reiterate.

There are so many that name the name of Jesus Christ that are unaware of this deceitful presence, but yet the worldly influences assert more strength. The worldly and temporal influences assert more influence on their lives than the cross does. The cross is set against this world.

It's other worldly. It'll transform you into the likeness of Jesus Christ. In fact, there is no mirroring of the likeness of Christ without the cross being applied daily.

The cross is set against this world. The world is set against Christ's cross. The apostle says we are persecuted because of the sake of the cross.

Why is it that we are not persecuted? The cross is not on our shoulders. I think we all need those t-shirts. Don't blend.

And listen, there is a small regiment of strange and narrow minded folks that love discomfort, that boast themselves in an aggressive, but yet flesh driven denial of self, but yet the celebration of it in their own minds. And it's not a real cross. You can't celebrate yourself whenever you have the real cross because it takes your life.

You can't celebrate yourself. But there is a small set of people that like to boast of their suffering and their consecration. And it's a group of folks that have a little different mindset.

And it seems that they have a cross, but they have no cross because the true cross would require of them their self-celebration. When the cross is at work in your life, the only celebration there is, is of the faithfulness and the goodness of God, who at times you can't even see, but you submit to the cross because our Lord has commanded it. There's times whenever you have the cross and you can't see the goodness of God.

You can't see the faithfulness of God because God hides it. He hides it. Why does he do that? The cross, the cross requires of you everything, every sometimes beloved, every comfort the cross requires it.

That's why we're so big on fasting. It helps us to become acquainted with discomfort for a greater cause, the cross. So as the cross begins to abound in our life and our heart, the influence and the grip of this world and its practices and its ideology and belief begins to wane.

As we embrace the cross, it begins to diminish. And my concern is this, is that we so strongly profess the doctrines of the cross of Jesus Christ, that we so strongly resist the actual bearing of the cross of Jesus Christ, that we're deceived. We have a love affair, an illicit love affair with this world.

And beloved, the fact of the matter is, is that it's the proof, the proof's in the pudding. The illicit love affair that we have with the world is proof that the cross has been forsaken, that it is not at work in our heart and our life. And beloved, good doctrine is not profitable as long as it remains doctrine and not in practice.

It must be absorbed into our hearts, it must be absorbed into our lifestyles before it bears forth any fruit. Second Timothy chapter two, verse three says, you must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

Beloved, it says enduring hardship. Beloved, it's the bearing of the cross of our savior Jesus Christ. The bearing of it, allowing the cross to work its work deep in our heart.

It's in the little things of life where the cross begins to work its work. When the cross is requiring something be laid down, comfort, the sanctuary of the home being opened up to help those in need, the wallet being opened up to help those that are without and lacking. The cross requires us to be a people that are distinguished and set apart from those who mock and hate the name of our Lord.

The cross at work within our heart empowers us to be a witness of Christ, but a self-absorbed person that has no shouldering or no effect of the cross in their life at all will keep Jesus all to themselves. Beloved, I am concerned that we are so entangled and so involved in the affairs of this life that the cross is of no effect to us and the cross is the power of God unto salvation. The cross is the power of God, not the agreement with it, the bearing of it, not the doctrine of it, the actuation of it.

It's the bearing of the cross daily. The doctrine is good if it takes you to the cross and helps you to shoulder it. Listen, the cross at work in our life will place the value of others above our own self.

Fasting a few days will be a great pleasure to someone that has a cross and a great inconvenience for those that don't, that don't have a cross. The cross requires that God of the belly to be laid down. The cross, it requires it.

The work of the cross places the value of others above the value of your own self and comfort. Listen, the work of the cross in your life will motivate you to get up earlier and to seek God more. The cross at work in your life will give you overwhelming and vehement desires to seek God in prayer, even in corporate prayer with the people of God, but resisting the cross will bring you into slumber and the love of slumber will cause you to push away the cross.

We're still sometimes hoping that we can keep from neglecting the so great of salvation, even though we're refusing to shoulder our crosses. Christians get offended because they don't have a cross. Christians can't get along with each other because they don't have a cross.

They are still reigning and ruling, not Christ. The cross would require it. Still bitter and unbelieving, still fearful and doubting because there's no cross.

Unwilling to engage in prayer, unwilling to commit. Why is it the churches like this have 60, 70 people on Sundays and you have 15 on Wednesday because you only got about 15 people carrying a cross? So,

well, pastor, I ain't coming back no more. You just made me mad.

And you think that's going to affect something other than you? The true saints of God are marching towards the kingdom of God and those gates that God set before us and his wonderful son and listen in the host of the multitude or alone. And the truth saying that God goes on forward, whether there's 10, whether there's five, whether there's none, or whether there's 110,000, listen, the truth saying that God keeps marching and he's not affected by people that are unwilling to take their cross and to get offended and suck their thumb and run back to the pits of hell from whence they came. You may think this is uncalled for, but it's called for something needs to shock the church and waking up and getting that cross on and going forward, losing our lives for this gospel sake.

Listen, we got 230 kids that God has placed into our care. How many of them are we going to mentor and help? Well, it's time consuming. I just don't really have time for that.

You don't have time for it because you're at the mall. You're going out to eat. You're doing everything you want.

Your hand is in the till of this world. This is a sickening measure and you don't have time for the kingdom of God and to help those he's placed into our care because you're so self-absorbed and wicked, but yet you're so religious. You amen everything that looks like a cross.

I sent out a plea a couple of weeks ago. I have a 16 year old boy whose mom is a meth addict. His daddy has nothing to do with him.

This child has nobody. And I planned for someone for this church to help take custody of this boy so he can come to Thunderbird. Not one, not one response.

No one wants to take on that kind of responsibility. No one wants to shoulder that kind of a cross. Well, he might steal something from our home.

He might hurt us. Don't you trust God? I don't want to serve a God that's so small. He can't protect me.

I don't want to serve a God that can't keep me. Listen. And there's nothing in the house that I lived in that I wouldn't just give to him anyway.

He stole the whole thing and it helped him. We'll rebuild the pastor. You look angry.

I'm concerned about our hearts. I'm concerned that we're so preoccupied with so many enterprises that we cannot give ourselves to the call of Christ to bear our crosses. I am sick on the inside and I'm sure that the thought goes around that well, somebody else probably has already stepped up to the plate, but nobody stepped up to the plate.

Nobody. And the reason that we didn't step up to the plate was because it would be an inconvenience for us. And the reason that I'm bringing this up before us is I want us to see where we are.

We're in need of that cross to be applied in our life. Listen, I'm talking to one little small situation that we couldn't rise to the occasion to. We talk about going to the nations and suffering and enduring martyrdom.

I'm telling you, we are not prepared for that kind of commitment. We get begged every cycle by Thunderbird Youth Academy for our people to mentor boys and girls. We look at it as a hindrance, but the

Lord looks at it as an opportunity that we can share the gospel and that we can commit our love to someone that he sent his son for.

They may come into your house and actually say a dirty word. They might even get on your computer and look at pornography. They might, but you know what? God may open a door for you to minister grace to them that they might be gloriously and radically born again because of the cross of God at work in your life and to deliver them from all of the filth of this present age.

Beloved, the body of Christ is at sleep. We are self-absorbed. I'm even, I am, beloved, us, me, you, us.

This gospel that we are very familiar with has set before us a cross that we are very unfamiliar with. We have knowledge and beloved much of it, but we need the cross. We need the cross.

I need the cross. I need the cross. When the spirit of God deals with my heart, then I need to fast a few days.

I need to bear a cross and fast. Listen, and to keep my mouth shut about it, don't go bragging about it. So my fasting is not for myself, for the glory of man.

I need to shoulder my cross when there's opportunities where little boys need a home, to where those doors fling wide open, then I give them of mine own that they may have. Share with them love, share with them encouragement, share with them, impart it to them, teach them, set an example before them, serve them, serve them by the cross of Christ. Listen, if you take in a Charles Manson and he cuts your throat while you're asleep, guess where you get to go? Do you love this present world more than you love the kingdom of heaven? Worst case scenario, they're not going to cut your throat.

And if you're worried about it, put a lock on your door. They're not going to hurt you. Listen, God has set him before us so many opportunities, but listen, the opportunity is not an opportunity until the cross is on your back.

It's not an opportunity because you won't take it. It's the cross at work within you that says, yes, it's the cross within you. Even though you have all these thoughts, save yourself.

It's going to cost you this much. It's going to take away from your family time. Oh, family time.

Oh, I'm making casual joking of that. You know why? Because it's absurd. It's absurd.

Listen, that's absurd. It's just an excuse to say, I don't want to do what God wants me to do. It's an excuse.

I've had people say to me, Derek, you don't need to be doing that. It's costing you your family. Good.

Well, as you see, my son is here today and God's using him and my daughter's back there teaching children's church. Yeah, it cost us, all right. It cost us our life.

We laid them down and guess what? We're talking about this. First, John, there's nothing that you lay down and give up in this life that God doesn't honor you and bless you with much, much more in the life that is to come and even in this life. Listen, if I would have saved my family from all that and I'm not tooting my horn.

We just have been made decisions and I just love helping people though, but we've brought people in and there's been some real discomforts with that and you all know some of them and we still experience some of them. But listen, and even sometimes with catastrophic failure. Are you with me? That you feel and there's times that I feel catastrophic failure as a Christian, as a parent, you know, taking kids that were just not seeing what we've imparted.

It's not seeing it. I feel so horribly devastated about some of these things and then the voice comes whenever you have opportunity for another one to say, I can't take any more of this pain. But the opportunity is there and the cross has to meet it and there will be pain, but you just have to shoulder that cross and go on and do it anyway.

After some of our experiences, I'm not talking about you, Kendra's like, well, I wasn't that bad, was I? But you all know what I'm talking about. We've gone through some real challenges with some of the kids that we've taken in. We've been burnt.

We've been lied to. We've been talked bad about when we've done nothing but loved and gave. And so whenever opportunity comes, just like this last one, this boy that needs someone to be a legal guardian that has to go before the court and sign the papers.

You know what my heart said? I can't do this again because it hurts too bad and I can't do this no more. Now some of y'all know what I mean. How many times have you heard that, Nanette, in dealing with your grandkids that are going through tough times and you've helped and you've helped and you've hurt and you've cried and you've wept and you've begged and you've pled and your heart says, I can't do this anymore and there's another opportunity for you to help? How many times? I can sit here and name probably 50 or 60 that I know of that's happened to you but you keep doing it.

You keep loving. You keep opening up your home. That your privacy with your husband is being interrupted and you keep doing it.

It's a cross. And with this boy, and I'm closing down because I know it's getting late and you're getting fidgety, the last thing I wanted to do is go and stand before that judge and sign those papers. I didn't want to do it just like you didn't want to do it either.

And that heart the Lord has to conquer through his cross. That heart and that kind of an attitude the Lord has to conquer. And I look inside my heart and I hate me for doing that.

I hate it and it helps me embrace the cross although it hurts. Although you have no guarantees that you're even going to be able to move them and help them in one in one bit. But listen, you become obedient to the cross.

You become obedient to the cross. And I don't have a problem with the cross being in our profession if the cross is in our possession. Amen.

This could be the most powerful and would be the most powerful little solemn assembly of God's people that are called by his name if we would all take our crosses up daily and follow Jesus Christ in practical cross bearing experience. But our attachment to other things is robbing us of an inheritance. And it's high time we loose ourself from these bands that hold us in bondage.

These temporal things of this life enslaved to sin, enslaved to selfishness, enslaved to worldly love and in pursuit and to take a cross up and to go after Jesus. And don't think for a moment I'm up here trying to put you down. I put myself in the same position with you.

I have so much junk in me that the cross must deal with that I've been. It hurts too bad and the cross has to work there or there will be no victory there. Amen.

Pastor Lunk, you know what it'd be like coming to services here if everybody in this church came here at nine o'clock and sought the face of God in intercessory prayer. I mean and wailed, cried out to God with sobbing and with groans and utterings that cannot be even uttered and sought the face of God and cried out in intercession. Do you know what it would be like to come to a church like that? Heaven on earth.

Heaven on earth. We've not experienced it, but it'll be heaven on earth. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

That we would be partaking a little foretaste of what it's going to be like in heaven. I can go on for the next hour or two and tell you why people don't come to prayer. I can tell you why folks don't come to church on Wednesday nights and that they come to church just every now and then on Sunday because the value system is sick.

The value system is sick that we value so many other things and that they are a higher pinnacle than the purposes and plans and places of God. And you will always go with what you value the most. This local church, I'm not talking about the churches down that way, that way, that way, or the ones on the movie screen that don't need any commitment.

I'm talking about this church. This little group of people here at Pryor Creek Community Church is in need of the cross because we've only but yet begun. We've only but yet begun.

Let's stand. Are we still friends? Don't misread what I've said today. The doctrine of the cross is so important and I love it.

But the doctrine of the cross without the bearing of it can lead you into deception. Amen. The Bible warns about it.

There will be many in that day that say, Lord, Lord, I mean on and on and on and on. But there must be the true doctrine of the cross before there can really be an application of the cross. So we're not throwing out the doctrine.

We're going to continue with the doctrine. We're just stirring and crying out for the Lord to do something in us to where we've got the cross on our shoulder and out of the pages, out of the paper, off the paper, and into the heart. That's what we're talking about.

Amen. Amen. Anybody want to pray and dismiss us? Okay.

Vernon, come on up, please.

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**