

# His Cross - Your Cross

by Erlo Stegen

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*The sermon explores the significance of carrying one's cross as a true disciple of Christ, emphasizing self-denial and the legacy of faith.*

**Duration:** 1:05:12

**Scripture:** Matthew 7:21, Matthew 8:11-12, Matthew 10:34, Matthew 19:14, Matthew 25:40, Mark 15:21, Luke 22:44

**Topics:** "Cross"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the suffering and exhaustion of Jesus during his crucifixion. He emphasizes that Jesus fought this battle alone, even though his disciples were supposed to support him. The preacher highlights the intensity of Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane, where his sweat drops were like drops of blood. He also addresses the importance of living a righteous life and warns against allowing immorality. The sermon concludes with a reflection on Simon of Cyrene being forced to carry the cross and the unlikely alliance between Herod and Pilate during Jesus' trial.

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## Transcript

Let us pray. Lord, we thank you for this opportunity to be together, being together around your word, and the word today regarding your passion, your suffering because of our sin. Be with us, Lord, and bless us.

Amen. Our text we find in Mark 15. In verse 21.

Then they compelled a certain man, Simon, a Cyrenean, the father of Alexander and Rufus, as he was coming out of the country and passing by, to bear the cross. We'll stop reading there. This is an amazing matter.

If we go deeper into it. The Lord's trial had gone through the night. He had been tried by Herod and Pilate.

They had started with Herod. Herod said, Go to Pilate. Now, in fact, these two people, Herod and Pilate, were enemies.

But now, where the Lord Jesus appeared, suddenly they became friends. Do you hear that? These two had been enemies. They had no love for each other.

But suddenly when the Lord Jesus appeared and when it revolved around Him, suddenly they found common ground and they were the common enemy. And they became one against the Lord. So, one in

evil.

So, I don't want to focus on what happened when He appeared before Herod and before Pilate. I'll to speak about this man who was forced to do something as they were going to Calvary, to Golgotha. That is where people were crucified, condemned to death.

Golgotha is the Hebrew word for Golgotha. That means the skull. Some say it's because there were so many skulls that were lying around there of the people that had been executed.

But we are born again in Jerusalem. We are born again in Jerusalem. We are born again in Jerusalem.

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And some of the things that I will be sharing with you today are not specifically written in the Bible, but this is what historians tell us, what Christian history relates. When they had stripped the Lord of His clothing

and put on what they gave Him to wear, His own clothing, then they led Him out after Pilate had condemned Him to death. On the way to be crucified.

History teaches us that Jesus was carrying His cross and then He fell to the ground because of the way He had been beaten and tortured. Now the Bible does not specifically say that. That is just what the Christian historians say.

But the Bible does tell us about the instance where He went to Gethsemane, where He had taken His disciples up to a point and then He only chose three of them to continue with Him. And with them He went to a point where He told them to wait and watch and pray, and He continued to pray. He went on a little while and He prayed there such a deep and earnest prayer.

And the Bible says His sweat drops were like drops of blood. And He told His disciples that He was distressed and that it was very difficult for Him. He was in a terrific battle.

And He prayed and He said, Father if this cup could pass from Me, but not My will be done, but Your will be done. That cup that He had to drink was filled with Your sin and My sin, the sin of this world. That is what He had to drink.

That was the sin of all mankind which He had to drink. This was what awaited Him. And it wouldn't just be drinking this cup of our sin, but He Himself who was holy, three times holy, would become sin for us.

He being the Son of God. You know of course that Jesus was real man, but He was also God at the same time. As I've told you before, if a child is born, that child doesn't get one drop of blood from the father, oh from the mother, excuse me.

It doesn't get anything from the mother. The body and everything else, yes that's from the mother, but not the blood. So even the smallest unborn child doesn't have a drop of blood from the mother, but every drop from the father.

The Lord's mother Mary had no relations with any man. She was a virgin, but the Holy Spirit overshadowed her. That's how she conceived.

And that's why He is called the Son of God. He has got that most precious blood. So the body He got from His mother.

So He was full man, but His blood is divine. So that's why He is also God at the same time. And a person's soul is in His blood.

If you remove the blood, the soul departs as well. So the soul is not in the body, in the flesh. So the Lord Jesus had to come and take all our sin upon Himself, all our lies, hypocrisy, all the evil that we do and have done.

And I can imagine when this blood had to come into contact with all that evil, all that sin, what a terrible battle that must have been. No wonder His sweat drops were like drops of blood. That drained Him of all His strength.

So that an angel from heaven had to come down and strengthen Him because He had no strength left. And His disciples had all fallen asleep. They were supposed to have been there to support Him, to pray and watch with Him, but they had fallen asleep.

He was alone in this battle. The Bible says He fought this battle alone. He being three times holy, but He had to face this on His own.

So that He was absolutely exhausted by this time. That's not history. That we know because He was already exhausted when He was They'd beaten Him in the worst possible way.

They had plowed His back with what they call a cat, with many different like tails, but each one with a rusted piece of metal at the end sharpened. And with that it went into His flesh and then they ripped His flesh out so that His lungs were exposed. You could see Him breathing.

So Pilate and them had been busy with this trial through the night. Because Jesus was crucified at nine o'clock in the morning. And you remember how Pilate has ordered the soldiers to take Him to be crucified.

But that was after he had washed his hands, saying, I'm innocent of the blood of this man. Because his wife had written him a letter to say, have nothing to do with this man. He is innocent.

I had a terrible dream last night regarding him. The fact that he washed his hands and said, I'm innocent of the blood of this man helped him nothing. Because he was guilty.

He had sinned in a terrible way. And it's like many people today who sin and then they wash their hands and say, well, I'm not. I'm not guilty.

I'm innocent. And we men are strange people. His wife had warned him, said, don't have anything to do with this man.

He's innocent. And he should have been cautious then. When his wife tried to help him, she didn't listen to him.

He didn't listen to her. When Eve spoke to Adam, Adam listened to her and accepted what she said to him. It's strange how we men listen to our wives when we shouldn't.

And when we shouldn't, then we listen. So when Pilate had condemned him to death and told them to crucify him, he had to carry his own cross. And they put that crown of thorns on his head.

And they didn't just put that crown gently on his head. They put it on in a very rough and cruel way and even struck him on the head that those thorns would penetrate into his head. And then according to history, then he went and as he was on his way, he fell under the weight of the cross.

Not that the Bible says that specifically, but that's what history teaches. Saying that he was so exhausted that he fell. And then history says that he also got to a certain point and he lent against a Jewish man's house because he was so tired.

The owner of the house was furious about it, they say. He came out and he pushed him away that he went flying to the other side. That's not what the Bible says.

That was just according to Christian history. And as he was in this state, that man came along who was coming back from his fields. That was at nine o'clock in the morning.

His name was Simon. He was from Cyrene. He was a Cyrenian.

That's a country in Africa. Today known as Libya. That's a place where Africans live.

So they got Simon to carry the cross because even the Lord's enemies at that point realized that he couldn't anymore. Now why was he chosen? Now there are those that say that at that time, all of Jerusalem was in turmoil. No one was sleeping anymore.

And Simon, because he didn't want to have anything to do with what the enemies of the Lord were busy with, he just went out to his field to go and work there. But as they were going out of Jerusalem, he was on his way in. And some say that they may have gotten hold of him, this man who had said, I don't want to have anything to do with the Lord.

I don't want to have anything to do with what's going on here. I'm going to go to my field. And that they, for that reason, said, let's get hold of him because he's not working together with us.

They were upset because he wasn't working along with them in their group, fighting against the Lord. So they forced him to carry the cross. He didn't want to.

But then they forced him. So they forced him to carry the cross and then the Lord could just follow until they got to Golgotha. Now Simon had two sons.

The first son's name was Alexander. And the second one was Rufus. It's noteworthy that the names of his two sons are actually mentioned.

Because later, one finds these names coming up again. And so they are later mentioned again. And the history says that they actually, after their conversion, became missionaries and they, together with their father, spread the gospel.

Now it was very difficult for Simon to carry that cross. Because Jesus was to be nailed to that cross. Now others say that they chose Simon because he was an African.

They thought it's better that not one of their own people carried the cross. Let it rather be an African. We don't know.

Maybe one day when we're in heaven, we'll hear the real story. Because this is what history teaches us. But we do know that Simon was reluctant to carry that cross.

He didn't want to, but they had to force him. He was forced to carry that cross. God's word says that every believer has to carry his cross.

If you don't carry your cross, the Lord's cross, you're not a Christian. You're just a raw heathen. You're not a disciple of the Lord Jesus, because a disciple of the Lord carries that cross.

But this cross that he was carrying was to bring about death. And so it is. Everyone that carries that cross has been condemned to death.

You have absolutely no rights of your own anymore. During this time we hear so much about human rights and the rights that we have, and we fight for those rights. But as a disciple of the Lord Jesus, we have no rights.

You have to deny yourself. We hear from history that the Lord lent against that man's house. That man had absolutely no compassion.

He pushed him away ruthlessly. The Lord Jesus at that time, he had no rights. He was carrying his cross.

He couldn't defend himself, fight for himself. He just had to deny himself. But Simon of David carried the cross to the point where the Lord was to be crucified.

Simon had to carry the Lord's cross where the Lord was to be crucified. But the cross you carry, you're carrying for yourself to be crucified on it. You will need to die.

You know what God's word says? If you want to be a disciple and a follower of the Lord, you need to take up your cross. Perhaps a wife is a Christian. In a family, the wife may be a Christian, call herself a Christian, but when the husband speaks to her, she backchats, she fights with him, argues with him.

But a disciple of the Lord Jesus doesn't fight for himself. In a family where the child is a Christian, the parents don't want him or her to be a Christian, but the child learns to carry that cross. He doesn't fight, but denies him or herself.

If they throw stones at the child, the child doesn't throw stones back. If they curse the child, the child blesses them. Now even though it was so difficult for Simon to take up that cross and carry it, yet eventually he agreed, he submitted, he carried it, and through it he received a great blessing and even his sons were blessed through it.

Jesus had no sin, he carried our sin. But he never said, well it's not me, it's him. He carried that sin as if it were his own.

He carried it as if it were his own. He carried the cross as if it were his own. He carried it as if it were his own.

But by carrying that cross, he received a great blessing. He profited with heaven itself. And even his sons later, it's said they became pillars in the church.

Now I don't know whether you took note of the fact that he was from Africa, up north there. I can never understand it, why Africans reject the gospel. Some say, oh it's just a white man's religion.

I can't understand it because Africans were so involved in the whole Lord's story and even here where an African carried the Lord's cross. I can't understand it, why Africans reject the gospel. Some say, oh it's just a white man's religion.

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They are just like you, their hands are like yours, they are just like you, yet they are real Jews. We don't know how it came about but it is like that today, it's a fact. So it's sad when people say, when Africans say, well Christianity is just for the Europeans or the whites.

Herod was a white, but he wanted to kill Jesus. When Herod wanted to kill the Lord, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph and said, flee to Africa, because Africa was to save our Lord. Africa saved the Lord's life, but sadly today a big part of Africa rejects the Lord.

An African carried the cross, but today many Africans reject the cross. And I pray that God will bless Africa, because Egypt saved our Lord's life and an African helped carry my Lord's cross. When I was young, I went down to Makroka in the beginning years ago.

A black man came to me and he said, I love you whites, because look here I'm wearing a shirt, and I couldn't be wearing this shirt if it wouldn't have been for you who discovered how to make a shirt. And so I love you, we need you, come and stay here and help us. And it's strange that a man who says he doesn't want Christianity because it's just the white man's thing, he'll say that and then from there go to the bottle store and buy himself some brandy, some Smirnoff, and he'll drink that.

Doesn't he realize where that comes from? He'll drive in a bus and a car and an aeroplane, he'll fly, but doesn't say I'm not going to use that mode of transport because a white man invented it. And he goes to a shop, buys himself some deodorant so that it gives us a good fragrance. He doesn't say, well my forefathers used to use cow dung for that, so I'm going to do that.

You see that you're condemning yourself, you will shut yourself out of heaven yourself by what you do and say. There's a man who doesn't live anymore, he lived not far from here, he used to walk around only barefoot and when I asked him why he doesn't wear shoes, he says no, I believe in the ancestors and in their spirits and so I can't wear shoes, I walk around barefoot because of that. The Lord Jesus said they will come from the east and the west, they will sit with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob at the tables, but the children of the kingdom, they will be cast out.

He had a son. Now his son, he had a girlfriend here from another area. And then I told this man, I said that someone had come and stolen here at night.

And they had stolen some matumbes here and this man, he went off and then he went to a certain home and he found this girl peeling the matumbes in the house. And then he asked her, where did you get these matumbes from? She said, I got them from the white man over there. So he said to her, well just put them all into a bag.

Now this girl turned out to be his son's, one could say maybe fiance, but he said, you come along with me. And he brought her, leading her along with his spear and his kiri. And he said, no, look, don't be concerned.

I just don't want my future daughter-in-law to be a thief. So I'm going to arrest you for now and it has to be dealt with because I don't want a thief in my house. And then he brought her here and he reported to us.

He said, I found the thief and I'm going to take her. Please, can you help me with a car? You don't have to do it. Take me to the police station in Cranscob.

I'm going to lay a charge against her. And he said to her, don't worry. I just want you to learn.

I don't want a thief in my house. Now, can I ask you men, you are Christians. You Christian men, would you do such a thing? You wear a shoe and a tie.

This man didn't wear a shoe. He was a heathen. Well, maybe some of those people will get into heaven sooner than you would.

Now time is flying. So they will come from the east, the west, north and south. They will sit with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob at the table.

But the children of the kingdom will be thrown out. So men, what are you like? And you young men, what is your life like? And you women as well. And you grandmothers, you who allow your children, your grandchildren to go out, live immorally.

And all they do is they bring their illegitimate children back. And you care for them. You look after them so that they can carry on with their lifestyle.

Let's leave that. I'm just saying these things just to wake you up, because maybe your mind is also like bewitched. I don't know by what.

So they had to force Simon to carry that cross. He didn't want to do it. He didn't want to be part of what they were doing.

And maybe you meet up with difficulty, things that are hard. And then you say, oh, why must I go through all this? Why must I carry this cross? Yet if the Lord gives you a cross to carry and you carry it, you will get blessings that the others would never receive that did not go through that. You be prepared to carry that cross.

And if you do it, you will receive blessing for it. And even your children will receive a blessing from it. Maybe they will become the future pillars of the church.

But never be party to what the enemies. Baba. Never become one with what the enemy is doing, because you will lose your blessing and what God had for you as a result.

And this, of course, you repent and turn from that. And God can be gracious to you, because even on the cross, he prayed and said, Lord, Father, forgive them for they know not what they are doing. So there's so much that we could say, so much more we could say about this.

There's so much in it. He who has an ear to hear, let him hear. Don't be a fool and end up in hell and burn there forever.

Jesus died for you. He prayed for you. Even though it was difficult, he prayed.

He said, Lord, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing. Let's pray.

Lord Jesus. Your matter is wonderful. Your whole story.

You came down from heaven. You took upon yourself the form of man, became flesh for us. And that precious blood you shed for us.

That we sinners could find forgiveness and cleansing and sanctification through it. Continue, Lord, to work in our hearts and our minds, that we may grasp hold of these heavenly mysteries. Lord, that that great

work which you worked and what you did here on earth will not have been in vain for us.

And that you can rejoice and say, I don't regret having died for these people because of what I see them being now. Amen. Amen.

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