

# Take Up Your Cross Daily

by Erlo Stegen

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*To follow Jesus, we must deny ourselves, take up our cross daily, and follow Him, dealing with sin in our lives through the power of the cross.*

**Duration:** 49:18

**Scripture:** Matthew 16:24, Luke 9:23, Romans 6:23, Galatians 2:20, Philippians 3:18, 1 Timothy 3:2, Revelation 3:20

**Topics:** "The Cross", "Sanctification"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the power of the cross in dealing with sin in our lives. He shares a story of a minister who had a life-changing encounter with God while crying out for forgiveness. The minister realized the weight of his sins and pleaded with God to deal with sin in his life. The preacher highlights the importance of carrying the cross daily and allowing it to continually work in our lives. He encourages believers to have a fresh and vibrant spiritual life, comparing it to the enticing smell of freshly baked bread that attracts people.

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## Transcript

We pray, Lord, that you will be in our midst. You said and promised that you will live among them and walk amongst us. We pray, Lord, that that promise will go into fulfillment in these moments.

Be with us, our Lord, in your grace. Amen. Let's turn to God's word, Luke chapter 9, verse 28.

23, not 28. 23, verse 23. Then he said to them all, If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

Here, there are three things which are spoken about. If you want to follow the Lord, the first thing is you must deny yourself. The second point, you need to take up your cross daily.

And thirdly, follow him. I'd like to speak more about taking up your cross daily. What does it mean to take up your cross? What does that mean, to take up your cross? Someone may say, well, to take up your cross means to deny yourself.

Yes, there is an element of sacrifice and denial to take up your cross. But what does it really mean to take up your cross? And to take up your cross daily. Alright, let's get back to our text.



That was what God purposed with the cross, to deal with sin. If God wouldn't have burdened the Lord Jesus with our sin on the cross, for Him to carry our sin, then the cross wouldn't have meant much at all. It would have been like an ornament today.

You cannot separate this cross with sins being dealt with. Now Jesus says, you should every day take up your cross. Now even if you should say, well I take up my cross daily, you're carrying your own cross, but if the cross of Jesus hasn't worked in your life, then it is worthless.

The cross has to do with sin. The cross deals with sin. The cross of Jesus Christ deals with sin in our life.

I got a phone call this morning. Dr. Albie was on the line. He's in Namibia.

He's busy preaching there now. I haven't got my watch here, so I don't know till when you're going to sit here. Now the minister there, where Albie is preaching, said, well brother, I once went to Sizabantu.

And I came there with some black preachers. That was this Germany who came there. He says, when I got there to Sizabantu, I went to the reception and asked for a place to sleep.

I sat for two and a half hours before I could get a place to sleep. After two and a half hours, they eventually showed me where I would sleep. I don't know where they eventually stayed in my house.

He says, eventually when he got to his room, he went in there, he took his Bible and just threw it onto the table. He was annoyed, irritated, and angry. And when he threw the Bible onto the table, it opened.

And then he went and looked, and a word stood out. A bishop should be without blame. A bishop should be without blame.

Blameless, spotless. And he fell onto his knees next to his bed and cried out to the Lord and said, oh God, forgive me. And while he was there crying to the Lord, suddenly he saw all his sins that he had committed throughout his life, like a film being played off before his eyes.

Like Billy Graham said the other day, all of a sudden, all his sins came before him. And he cried to the Lord, he said, oh Lord, I'm a sinner. I'm the greatest sinner.

He says, oh God, please deal with sin in my life. The cross hadn't done its work. He could still get angry, annoyed.

He could still get annoyed and irritated and angry. God dealt with sin on the cross. If we speak about the cross, we cannot forget that cross.

So God dealt with sin in his life. Now this was a minister who had 50 different churches or congregations under him. When he went home, still on the way in the car, As they were driving along, it was noticeable that some of the people in the vehicle hadn't used any deodorant.

And in his heart he thought, what type of people are these? And then he said, God spoke to him. When he got home, he went to his wife. He said, my wife, I have never repented in my life before.

I'm unconverted. And the wife said, oh no my husband, you're such a fine Christian, you've got 50 congregations that you are in charge of. Don't say you are unconverted.

He says, hey, keep quiet. I'm unconverted. It's a pity that so many people call themselves converted.

And they're not really genuinely converted. Converted to something else. But not from their sin.

He says, I'm not saved from apartheid. I'm not saved from irritability and these things. I'm an unconverted man.

It's a pity that Christianity is of such a shallow standard. And that's why you can't experience revival. You can be right in it and you run away from it.

You can't stand it. Because you are full of sin. You can be right in a revival wherever you are.

And think you're a perfect Christian. But if God reveals himself to you, you'll find that your righteousness and righteousnesses are like filthy rags before him. And you can understand that you can live for a whole week and nobody is touched by your life.

For a whole week, nobody gets converted. For a whole week, nobody is touched by you. You can say, well, I haven't got heathen around me.

They didn't be around you. There are many in the world. And they can be miles away.

And God can use you to revolutionize those people. But it's sin in your life and nothing else. And that has got to be dealt by the cross.

And let the cross of Christ be your cross. That's the best cross. And let the cross of Christ be your cross.

That's the best cross. And that minister says, that's what he experienced. Albi says, that's what this minister experienced here at Sisavanto on his way back home again.

It changed that minister's life. And that man has one heart, one soul with us. The cross brought us together.

When I heard that someone had to wait for two and a half hours before he got his place to sleep. Obviously for me that's not an easy thing. Then I remembered how Mary and Martha, when their brother was dying, they had to wait for four days before the Lord Jesus arrived.

And when he eventually did arrive, they said to him, why he is rotting already, he's smelling, it's a bad stench. And the Lord said, but why don't you believe? Because God can change this situation where he's smelling already, a bad smell. But God can reveal his glory out of that and through it.

So there is such a thing that there's denying yourself on the one side, following him on the other side, but then also taking up your cross. Don't be distracted by the people that are leaving. Hans Kalle is leaving and others are going as well with him.

The cross of Jesus works and it deals with sin. That sin that has been at work in your life. But those sins were dealt with on the cross.

Not in a half measure, but perfectly. The sin being dealt with in your life, not that you don't exist, you still live. Paul says, yes, I don't live, but Christ lives who? In me.

You don't stop existing and God wants you to be, to show forth the glory of God. I mean, the Lutheran church, they even took some songs and they changed them. All the songs like, Where it says, When your I is no longer there, you must be dead.

But in this I, you should be something to their God. They take the songs where it says, They say, no, that I mustn't be there. It's selfish.

You mustn't just say I. That I will be there and it must always be there unless, of course, you're dead. Otherwise, there'll be no I, if you're dead. Or where it says, I will follow Jesus.

They say, one shouldn't say, I will do this or I will follow him. But what needs to happen is that in this I, the cross must have done its work. Paul said, follow me.

He didn't say follow Christ. He says, you follow me and don't be ashamed of me as I follow Christ. You've got to be sanctified, made holy.

And you yourself have got to be to the glory of God. But sin must have been dealt with in your life. No grudges, no pride, no resentment.

Or lusts of the flesh. In you, Christ must be seen. That you say together with Paul, I forget what lies behind and I stretch forward to what lies ahead.

I am stretching forward. And that I has got to carry the cross daily. I thought of something often these days.

It's a pity that people's spiritual lives grow old. Your spiritual life should be fresh. Not older than one day.

Fresh in Jarlo. Uma unabalungati in unosugolotu and Jarlo. Ufane lukuti, ufane nesinguestala, sesa balkuni.

Goda wabakonosugu laposipuma ezigo. Uuzwe ipungelimnandi. Your spiritual life shouldn't be like old stale bread.

But it should be like freshly baked bread which has that wonderful smell. There are even some supermarkets which have a machine that sends out an odor that is exactly like freshly baked bread, and then people are drawn by this wonderful fragrance, they go and buy the bread, and all the time it's not the bread that's giving off that odor, it's just this machine. People are attracted by that smell of freshly baked bread.

They want to go and they buy it, they are drawn by it, attracted by it, they even prepare to pay for it. And I was sad these days when I had to think of certain people and even certain congregations where they were alive, on fire for the Lord, but today when you look at them and you see them, it's just become, allow me to say it in this way, it's just become a church. That's all that remains.

There's no vibrant life, you don't see the life of God there, that you can feel the presence of God when you're there. Or are you like that preacher who, after he had waited for so long, took his Bible and he threw it down there because he was upset. Jesus says if you want to follow me, deny yourself, take up your cross daily, and follow me.

Paul says with tears I have to say that there are some who live and yet they are enemies of the cross. It will take all the strength you've got, and I'm telling you, you haven't got enough strength. You'll need Christ and his grace to take that cross daily, and you.

Then sin will start coming in daily. And then you find a child of the Lord no longer free, depressed. And you find a person saying, oh, it doesn't help anymore, and it's getting too much for me, I'm just going to give up.

Jesus has never said that it will be easy when you become a Christian. In fact, there's nothing as heavy as a cross. But at the same time, there's nothing as wonderful as the cross.

But you need to deny yourself so that you are prepared to take up the cross. If you don't deny yourself, you won't be able to carry the cross. Because the cross means that you no longer have any rights.

We live in a time of rights, where even the government fights for the rights of everyone. Fighting for the rights of young people and the rights of women probably won't take long anymore, and the men will start fighting for their rights, and the workers fight for their rights. Everyone fights for their own rights, but the day you embrace the cross, then all those rights fall away.

I can't be treated like that. I'm just like dirt. They're just trying to break me.

What does the cross do? Have you ever had a vision of the cross? And a person taking it up daily, what that person will be like? I'm just like dirt. They're just trying to break me. What does the cross do? Have you ever had a vision of the cross? And a person taking it up daily, what that person will be like? And a person taking it up daily, what that person will be like? When you carry the cross, people can spit on you.

They'll mock you. They'll kick you. They'll mistreat you.

You cannot do anything because you're carrying your cross. And don't carry it just last year or ten years ago, and remember those wonderful and golden times. Have you taken it upon you today? That you take up your cross today.

That sin is dealt with in your life today. That no evil is found in your life and in your heart today. That you're dead to sin, dead to the world.

Dead to the fashions of the world. And dead also to your own ego, your own will. Dead to sin.

Even the world, when it entices you with sin, it doesn't attract you. When someone curses you, you bless him. When someone speaks evil about you, you speak good about him.

Sin has been dealt with, and it's being dealt with daily in your life. It can't take roots. Take up your cross daily.

Then you will never grow weary. You won't lose strength. You will have strength to carry on if you carry it daily.

We've seen many people starting their Christian life and walk, but they don't get very far. They get lost on the way because they don't carry the cross daily. Let's never part with the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us be people who deny ourselves, people who take up our cross daily, and people who follow the Lord Jesus. It would be wonderful if we'd be people that listen and then obey what he tells us. And then when people look at your life, one can see that this person carries the cross of our Lord Jesus.

May it be so. Don't just kick the cross. Like the Lord said to Paul, you're just kicking against the pricks.

But rather you should carry the cross, and God will help you. The Bible says... Mortify your members. Kill them.

Killing your sin. And may the cross symbolize that. The cross that you are carrying.

That you are killing your members, your evil members. And God is saying it to you personally, not to someone else, but to you. Kill it.

Let us stand and we'll bow our heads and pray. Lord, we'd like to say, take your camera and take a photo of each one of us. That it can become evident whether we are carrying our cross or not.

Are we people that deny ourselves and follow you by taking up our cross? Lord, work in a wonderful and amazing way. That we will do what you tell us every day. That we won't miss a day.

And that we don't even go and say, well, we fast and we pray, and all the time forgetting to take up our cross daily. We say, we're seeking your face and all the time you're telling us, get up and take up your cross. Lord, by your grace, help each one of us.

That we'll take up our cross, even though it's heavy and it's difficult. Amen.

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