

# The Cross and the New Covenant!

by Watchman Nee

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*The Lord Jesus calls us to give up our soul-life and crucify it on the cross so that we can love others with His love, not our own.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 10:38

**Topics:** "Love Of God", "Discipleship"

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## Description

Watchman Nee emphasizes the necessity of taking up our cross and losing our soul-life for the sake of Christ, as outlined in Matthew 10:38-39. He explains that the soul-life, which encompasses our natural love and emotions, must be crucified to allow the divine love of God to flow through us. Nee highlights that true discipleship requires prioritizing God's will over familial love, even when it causes personal pain. The sermon calls believers to love others not through their own natural affections but through the love of God, which transforms relationships. Ultimately, the process of bearing the cross leads to the death of the soul-life and the emergence of a new, spiritual life in Christ.

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## Transcript

In Matthew 10:38 through 39 the Lord Jesus says, "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his soul-life shall lose it, and he who loses his soul-life for My sake shall find it." These verses call us to lose our soul-life for the Lord's sake. The soul-life spoken of here is man's original life, that is, the organic life that makes us a living creature. This life is the life commonly shared by all men created by God and is different from the spiritual life. This life is the life that we brought with us when we came out of our mother's womb. It is absolutely different from the spiritual life which we received at the time of regeneration. The spiritual life is the very life of God Himself; it is divine, supernatural, and is not possessed by man before his regeneration. For His sake the Lord Jesus calls us to give up the soul-life and to crucify it on the cross.

We have said that the soul-life includes our love, emotion, mind, will, and so forth. The soul-life that the Lord Jesus mentions here includes all these things, but in Matthew 10 it seems that the Lord Jesus is paying particular attention to the matter of love. In the previous verses the Lord Jesus mentions an enemy being of one's own household. He mentions how the son will be set against the father, and the daughter set against the mother, and the daughter-in-law set against the mother-in-law. When God's will is contrary to the opinion of our own household, we can do nothing except set ourselves against our most loved ones for the Lord's sake. This is a cross. It is a crucifixion. According to our soul-life, we love those whom we

want to love. We like to listen to them and act according to their will. When those we love rejoice in their hearts, do not our hearts rejoice with them? But here the Lord Jesus is calling us and charging us not to disobey Him for the sake of man's love. At times, God's will may conflict with man's will. Although a certain person may be our most loved one or may be the one who loves us the most, and although hurting such a one is something that we would normally be most reluctant and unhappy to do, for the sake of the Lord we should take up our cross and crucify our love. We should never forget the meaning of bearing the cross; it is not just a suffering but an advance toward the place of crucifixion. The end of bearing the cross is crucifixion.

The Lord Jesus calls us this way in order to remove from us our natural love for men. Hence, in verse 37 He says, "He who loves father or mother above Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter above Me is not worthy of Me." In Luke 14:26-27 He says, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, and moreover, even his own soul-life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple." The Lord used the word hate to show the disciples the kind of attitude they should hold toward the love that issues from the soul-life. Strictly speaking, when believers love their kinfolks, their relatives, or their lovers, they should not love them because they are their loved ones. They should not love others just because these are their lovers or their father, mother, brothers, sisters, wife, or children. This kind of natural love comes from the soul-life. The Lord Jesus wants to remove all of our direct love toward men. The Lord has no intention that we would not love men. His intention is that we would not exercise our own love to love men, but that we would love with His love. What does this mean? It means that we should not love men because they are the ones we would love or because we have some special relationship with them. We cannot love someone just because he is a parent, wife, child, brother, or sister. This kind of natural love should be stopped. From now on when we love these people, it should be because of a new relationship in the Lord. We should love them only because the Lord loves them. We should not love them because we love them. For the Lord's sake, we should love others only through His love received from His hand. Simply put, the Lord's teaching here is that our love toward others should be under His control. If the Lord wants us to love, we should love even someone who is our enemy. If the Lord has not told us to love, we should not love even if someone is our closest relative.

To experience this, the soul-life must pass through death. This bearing of the cross, obedience to Christ, and rejection of our natural affection will cause the believers' natural love to suffer and to feel pain. This suffering and pain is the way to lose the soul-life with respect to its activities of love. When, on the cross before God, the soul-life loses its own love, it will indeed give room for the love of God to be poured out in our hearts. Subsequently, all of our love will be out of God who is abiding in us.

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