

# (Disciples of Jesus) the Way of the Cross

by Zac Poonen

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*To be a true follower of Jesus, we must be willing to learn and be humble enough to keep our hearts open to all of God's people, and take up the cross daily to live the life of Jesus.*

**Duration:** 1:20:16

**Scripture:** Exodus 20:12, Matthew 5:44, Matthew 6:33, Luke 14:26-27, John 2:4, Galatians 6:14, Ephesians 3:18

**Topics:** "Surrender To God", "The Cross"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of surrendering our will to God's will. He encourages listeners to let go of their own ambitions and plans and instead seek God's guidance in every aspect of their lives. The speaker highlights Jesus as the ultimate example of surrendering to God's will, even unto death on the cross. He urges listeners to make a daily commitment to die to their own desires and allow God to determine how they spend their time, money, and resources. The speaker also emphasizes the blessings that come from choosing God's will over our own and the assurance that behind every cross there is a resurrection.

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## Transcript

Lord Jesus, Learners and Followers, and I hope, my brothers and sisters, that all of us will be learners and followers till the end of our life. That there will never come a time in our life where we feel we have learnt it now. There'll never come in our life a time in our life where we feel, now I can teach everybody else, I've got nothing more to learn.

Once that happens, you know you've missed the road. There's no person on earth, no believer, who can ever say that I have learnt it all. And many people have, after learning something, felt that, well now I know everything, and they've started backsliding.

Always take the position that God can speak to you from the least member of the body of Christ. If you take that position, that the least member of the body of Christ can teach you, then you'll be saved. Now, you know, whenever you hear something like this, our mind begins to take it as a doctrine.

We have a tremendous tendency to take everything that we hear and put it down as a rule. Our love is to live by rules rather than by life. And Adam went to the tree of knowledge of good and evil rather than the tree of life.

It is a tendency that we find in all of us to live by rules rather than by life. It's much more difficult to live by life because you've got to be in touch with God the whole time. It's much easier to live by rules where you've understood a rule and you seek to follow it.

So you see, for example, we say something like, every brother and sister in the body of Christ is valuable. Of course, that's true. Every brother and sister in the body of Christ is valuable.

And there's something that we can learn from every member of the body of Christ. It's absolutely right. And like I said the other day, if you take this position that every brother and sister is superior to me in some area, in the area where God has gifted him, he's superior to me.

And in that area I can learn from him. That is like saying, even if you've been a believer for 30-40 years, see, a very muscular man, his hands cannot see as clearly as the eye of a little baby because the hand was not created to see. So even though he's a muscular 30-year-old man, that little baby's eye can see more clearly than his hands.

That's just an illustration. That in my area where God has gifted me, I may be tremendously gifted and very, very strong. And another brother who's just a year old in the Lord, who's gifted in a totally different area, can, in that area, bless me.

And if I am humble enough to adopt that attitude towards all of God's people, I will become a very, very wealthy person spiritually. And I don't mean just all of God's people in our churches. We work together in little groups because it's much easier to work in little groups than with thousands of people in a church.

God wants to build families and not organizations. But there are many other believers out there in other groups, and I, for one, want to keep my heart open to every godly person there is on the face of the earth to see something I can learn from them. Now, as I said, we can make this a rule, and the way we apply that rule in the assembly is we say, OK, now we're going to get everybody to get up and speak.

That's not the meaning. Just because we got to learn from one another doesn't mean that everybody's got the ability to speak. And then what happens? We say, we got to learn from another, we got everybody to get up and speak, and a lot of the meeting becomes very, very unedifying because we are following a rule book.

A rule book which says we got to learn from everybody. But is it only in the meeting that you learn from everybody? I'll tell you quite honestly, my testimony, that I've learned a lot from believers who are much younger than me in personal fellowship with them. It's not only in the meeting that we learn from people.

The meeting is a time for edification, and it says, let all things be done for edification. And not everybody has the gift of edification. That doesn't mean they can't be a blessing to me.

But who said the meeting is the only place? What about personal conversation? I have been so immensely blessed in the last 27 years through personal conversation with so many, many, many brothers in the churches. I've learned a lot. It's not what they shared in the meeting.

They may not have much gift in the meeting. So don't make a rule out of this and say we're going to learn from everybody and have a very unedifying meeting by getting a whole lot of people to stand up and say things when they don't have any gift to say anything. That may not be their gift.

Don't force a hand to see. Don't force a ear to see. That's not their gift.

The eye can see, the tongue can speak. But our heart must be open to all of God's people because like it says in Ephesians, let me read you this verse. Ephesians chapter 3. It says here in Ephesians chapter 3 that we may be able, verse 18, to comprehend with all the saints.

Now listen, with all the saints, with every believer you can ever come across. What is the breadth and length and height and depth to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge? That means the love of Christ cannot be understood by knowledge. It's as you fellowship with all of God's children and you hear how God has dealt with that brother and how God has dealt with that other sister and your heart is open in love.

A fellow may belong to another denomination, so what? God's worked in his life and I'm blessed when I hear their testimonies. My heart is open to be blessed by them, to hear how God has challenged them and encouraged them and from their testimony I learn something about the love of Christ through them which I would have missed if I had not been willing to listen to that young brother as he shared his testimony with me or something else that he saw in God's word. I can think of numerous instances where I have been enriched.

So I want to encourage all of you to always be humble enough to keep your heart open to all of God's people. Don't have a prejudice against someone saying, I can't learn anything from them. No, if a person is a born again child of God according to this verse it says with all the saints only we can understand the greatness of the love of Christ.

And if you keep your heart open you may not be able to work with all of them. I find that with lots of believers I'm not able to work because they have different convictions they have different opinions and views on money matters on matters of doctrine, baptism and things like that they have different opinions we cannot work together but that doesn't mean I can't keep my heart open to them and fellowship with them. So we've been thinking about discipleship always being willing to learn and God doesn't always speak to us directly He can speak to us through others of His people.

So to be a learner means my heart is till the end of my life I'm going to say I haven't learned fully all that there is to know about the love of Christ and I want to learn it. And God can teach me through so many people in different places people who are completely different from me. If you cut off some brother just because he's poor or uneducated but he loves the Lord you are going to be poor.

One of the reasons I have made an effort to learn the Tamil language even though I still make lots of mistakes but my Tamil brothers forgive me for that is because that is the only way I could fellowship with brothers who I believe could enrich me. Yeah and I'm I want to be enriched otherwise I would have been a little poor. If you cut off somebody saying Oh I can't speak that language well can you speak it a little bit? That's all I could do.

I spoke it a little bit with all types of stupid mistakes but I got enriched. I'm not bothered whether my grammar is right and they are not bothered whether my grammar is right. We are interested in fellowship.

And those of us who are seek our honor so much that we say no no no unless I can speak the language perfectly I will never speak. You will be poor all your life because you seek your own honor. There is a tremendous amount of honor seeking in the church.

You don't realize how much you seek your own honor and because you seek your own honor you are so poor. Brother, sister, die. Die to seeking your own honor and seek fellowship.

Open your heart and even if it's in broken words seek fellowship and you will be enriched. So we were looking at Luke chapter 14 in the conditions of discipleship and we saw that the first area is in relation to our family members that we don't let an attachment to our family members hinder us from being disciples of Jesus Christ. The Lord expects us to be radical towards father, mother and I say we got to understand this in balance.

The only person who can learn to hate his father and mother who is the person who has first learned to honor his father and mother. You got to go through the old covenant to come to the new covenant. You got to be under law before you come under grace.

The law is our schoolmaster to lead us to Christ. That's what the Bible says. So you got to first learn to honor your father and mother which is the Ten Commandments.

That's what Jesus did in Nazareth. Then you can learn like Jesus to say to his mother what am I to do with you woman? My hour is not yet come. He said that when he was 30.

But who was the one who said it? One who had honored his mother for 30 years. Now if you've never learned to honor your father and mother you're not ready to hate them. There are a lot of young people in the world who are delighted by the message of hating father and mother.

That's the message I want to hear. I want to be in a church where they teach us to hate our father and mother. In fact I started doing it long before I came to this church.

Well you did it wrongly. That's not message not for you brother. It's not for you.

You got it all wrong. If you haven't honored your father and mother in the days when you were at home. You're not fit to receive that message.

You got it all wrong. You got to honor your father and mother all their life. But when it says, when Jesus said you got to hate what he means is that you must not let them or their tears or their pleadings prevent you from following Jesus and doing what God wants you to do.

You shouldn't let their pleadings make you marry an unbeliever when Jesus says don't be unequally yoked with unbelievers. That's the meaning. You got to love Jesus so supremely that father, mother and even wife and children take second place.

They all come down. No brother and no sister if Jesus takes the place of Jesus in your heart. And you got to preserve that.

You got to preserve that. Some of you young people may come one day to the place where you fall in love with somebody. And today you may be a disciple of Jesus because you haven't fallen in love with someone.

And you're absolutely sincere. But your sincerity will be tested in the day when you fall in love with somebody. And you want desperately to marry that person.

Boy or girl. And then you'll discover whether you're a disciple of Jesus. I've seen lots of young people who become backsliders as soon as they are married.

They hated father and mother but they don't know how to hate their wife. That's also a condition of discipleship. That wife is not going to hinder me from becoming a disciple of Jesus.

I've seen umpteen young people who became backsliders as soon as they were married. Why? Why do you have to become a backslider when you get married? Every step... If God led you into marriage your marriage should lead you closer to Him. How can God ever lead me into a step that leads me back? Then God didn't lead you into marriage.

I know my marriage led me closer to the Lord not away from Him. And everything that God leads you into will always take you closer to God. It has to be.

So what we've got to fit the Lord first. And that's the first condition. And then we see there's one part of it which I left out.

It says in Luke 14.26 You've got to hate even your own life otherwise you cannot be my disciple. Luke 14.26 Now the reason I left that out was because it carries on into the next verse. And that's what I want to speak about a little bit today.

Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. Now in a perfect world where Adam lived in Garden of Eden there was no need for a cross. There was no need for death.

The word death was not needed in the Garden of Eden. But as soon as Adam sins death became necessary. In fact it says that God killed some animals and clothed Adam with those skins.

And in front of the Tree of Life He put a flaming sword to go round and round that Tree of Life which was not there before Adam sins. As soon as Adam sins the sword came around the Tree of Life teaching us that sin because we are in sin if you want to come to the Tree of Life there is a sword there. A sword that fell upon Jesus on the cross and a sword that must fall upon us if you want to get to the Tree of Life.

Listen to this. There is no way to get to the Tree of Life today except via the sword. And that's the cross.

The cross that slays that Adamic life that we have all inherited. And if you avoid that way of the cross you will not partake of the life of Jesus. No matter what experience you have of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit no matter what knowledge of Scripture you have you cannot partake of the life of Jesus if you avoid that sword falling upon you.

And Jesus said it's something we have to experience every day. There are certain things we need every day. We get baptized in water just once.

But the cross is the one thing that Jesus said we have to take up daily. In Luke 9.23 He said if any man comes after me let him take up deny himself and take up his cross daily. That means every day of my life.

If I want to be a disciple of Jesus I have to say Lord I want to die to the life of Adam today. I carry around with me a thing which the Bible calls the flesh. And if I don't allow the sword of God to fall upon that every day of my life I can never live the life of Jesus.

Whatever experience we may have had whatever understanding of truth or doctrine or anything we may have had there is absolutely no way to the tree of life except the sword falls. The sword fell on Jesus and Paul understood it. He said I also am crucified with Christ.

And when we begin to taste of this wonderful tree of life the more we taste of the life of Jesus we begin to love the cross. We begin to love the sword falling upon us because we discover that the sword is only cutting out the cancers from my life. It's not cutting out the good things in my life.

It's cutting out the cancers. It's cutting out this wretched life of Adam. And I love the cross.

For example let's talk of it in practical terms and not in symbols. Supposing somebody does some harm to me and I'm sure all of us sitting here have experienced somebody who has done some harm to us or we imagine that somebody has done some harm to us whatever it is. Somebody has done some harm to us and you know as I know how the life of Adam would react when somebody speaks evil about you.

For example if somebody has spread a bad story about you or spread a bad story about one of your children you know how the life of Adam would like to react to that person. And supposing that person is somebody in your local church you know how the life of Adam will react to that. And you get a delight in reacting.

That's the life of Adam gets a delight in paying him back in the same way he paid me. That's what the life of Adam wants. And you choose that way.

You're saying to God whatever you may have said in the meeting makes no difference. In that moment when the life of Adam invites you in a certain direction and you follow it you're saying to God in that meeting God I've had enough of your life give me a few moments to just react to this person with the life of Adam then I'll come back. That is the moment when God really finds out what you really want.

Today in the meeting when you say Oh God I want the life of Jesus God says no I don't that's just emotion. You think you're sincere but you're not really sincere. It's emotion because you heard a stirring message somebody worked up your emotion you say Oh God I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit I want eternal life I want the life of Jesus and you, I really believe you think you are sincere but God says let me test it out.

You know just like supposing a child said Mummy I do very well in maths except in the examination I know everything about maths but examination day I somehow forget everything I've learnt. All the other days of the school year I know everything about maths. But every time on examination day I don't know somehow that day I forget everything.

What would you tell that sincere child who really believes that every day of the year he knows everything about maths except on examination day. You'll tell him listen all the other days you think you know but examination day tests you. And that's how it is.

It's when that person has done some harm to you or done some evil to you that's the day, that's your examination day. Till then you are not examined. And every day you sat in the meeting and you thought you are wonderfully spiritual just like that child sits in school and says I know all about maths.

Ya ya, he really thinks that he knows everything about maths just like you sit in the meeting every day and you think you are very spiritual until the examination day comes and you fail and you say Oh well, I failed

only that day. That's like the child saying Listen mummy, I failed only on examination day don't forget all the other days I didn't fail only on examination day I failed and that's how you say that happened only once brother just once but that is the only time you were tested all the other time you sat in the meeting you were not being tested.

That is the moment where God asked you Do you want to take up the cross? Now today if God were to come down right now and say How many of you want to take up the cross every day? Oh, all of us would raise our hands Yes Lord, sure and I believe you are absolutely sincere but you don't realize how much you love yourself you don't realize how much you love your Adamic life the cross teaches us to hate that life now I just want to draw a little distinction here we don't have to hate ourselves we got to hate the Adamic life it is Hinduism and heathen religions that say I got to hate myself I got to hate my appetites I got to hate and Roman Catholicism in the early days used to teach people to hit themselves and hurt themselves you know how people crawl on roll on the ground and hurt themselves because they think hating yourself is the way to become spiritual it's not true I don't hate myself the Bible says nobody hates himself Ephesians 5 but this Adamic life this flesh that's what I got to hate there's something in me Jesus never you read the Bible he never said you got to hate yourself he said you got to hate your life he said that life you got from Adam that's the thing you got to hate you know if you keep on hating yourself instead of hating that Adamic life what will happen to you is you'll become a person who's got very low self-esteem and say oh I'm good for nothing I'm just rotten some people have misunderstood what Jesus said he never said you got to hate yourself he said you got to hate your life that life you got from Adam but instead of that they don't read the scriptures properly that's the problem in fact all the stupidity comes because people don't read the scriptures properly and they hate the wrong thing do you think Jesus went around hating himself and saying oh I'm good for nothing I'm useless I'm good for nothing I've heard some believers say that they think they're being humble they're not being humble they're just listening to the devil true humility if you want to learn humility and the cross is the thing that brings us down to humility why do I say that? it says Jesus humbled himself Philippians 2 and became obedient unto death even the death of the cross that is the death of humility so the cross that death brings you to the death of humility and if you really came there you would get such abundant grace from God because God gives grace to the humble that you get victory over sin otherwise you got it wrong I think a lot of people whom I met in my life have understood the cross wrong the cross is the most important thing we've got to understand and I hope this evening if you will take a little pains to try and understand you will hate what you should hate and not hate what you shouldn't hate God has not asked me to hate myself why should I hate myself?

I'm a child of God I'm a son of a king God doesn't hate me why should I hate myself?

God loves me immensely and therefore you know I myself made this mistake that's what I'm telling you you know we think that if I keep on saying rotten things about myself oh I'm such a terrible sinner and I'm good for nothing and I'm this and I'm that that's humility if that were humility then Jesus should have been saying that I never see Jesus saying that I never see the apostle Paul saying that he says in me, in my flesh there dwells no good thing that's ok I know that in my flesh there dwells nothing good that's alright but Paul didn't go around hating himself and hating himself and having such a low opinion about himself that he would have been absolutely useless to God I think that's what happened to many people sitting in our churches they have such a low opinion about themselves,

they think that almighty God can never love somebody like me and there's so many things wrong with me I've made this mistake, that mistake I'm always doing wrong and you meet them brother, sister, I'm doing it wrong I'm doing it wrong, you see them 20 years later they're saying the same old thing now you've got to

stop saying that you see I'm a child of God God knew everything about me before he took me up before he married me he knew what type of a wife I was going to be and he still married me, Jesus Christ he knew everything about my future and he still accepted me he's never ever going to turn around to me one day and say oh I never knew you'd do that oh boy you went and did that eh I never thought you would do that people talk to us like that, but can you imagine Jesus saying that to

you as if he doesn't know the future, he knew all about us when he first chose us and he's the best husband in the world knowing all that you know about your husbands today would still marry him isn't it wonderful that Jesus knew all about us and he still said I want to marry you so there's no need for me to feel I'm worthless good for nothing, don't ever say that God wants to reduce me to be a nobody so that he can fill me with his glory and I'm not worthless do you think somebody something that you bought in your house paying a tremendous amount of money supposing you bought a very very expensive house or you built a very expensive house worth 40 lakhs or something like that, would you say that's worth nothing how would you ever say ah that's nothing no, that's the most expensive thing

you ever bought in your life and I'm one of the most expensive things that God ever bought in his life you know one of the most expensive things that God ever bought in his life you're looking at him right now and that includes you too that's what gives me a tremendous sense of worth before God that I'm one of those very very expensive things that God paid such a tremendous price to buy and I want to say to you my dear brother, sister, I don't care how many times you've failed, I don't care how many mistakes you've made, how many blunders you've made, how many stupid things you've done in your life, I still want to say to you today in Jesus name you are precious to God, God paid a tremendous price for you but you don't believe him you believe all the lies the devil's been telling you and

you think that hating yourself and hating yourself and hating yourself is humility, but it's not humility because you're not getting grace for victory, wake up if that was humility you should have got fantastic grace by now to get victory over sin because God gives grace to the humble, why aren't you getting that grace, why are you defeated, because you've not got humility, that's not humility that's just demeaning yourself, demeaning yourself, you got that teaching from some group, some christian group, which has got heathenism and christianity all mixed together you didn't get it from the bible, show me one verse in the bible which says you got to keep saying that to yourself Jesus said learn humility from me learn from me, for I am humble of heart so I don't learn humility from all

these groups talking about humility I learn humility from Jesus and I never see Jesus going around with his head hanging down saying I'm rotten, I'm good for nothing I'm useless, I'm useless, I'm useless I never see him saying that even once and I am not going to say that even once you say but Jesus didn't sin like me that's right but still he was the humblest person on the earth which teaches that I don't have to sin in order to be humble who said you got to sin in order to be humble, Jesus never sins and he's the humblest person that ever walked on this earth and the devil is full of sin and he's not humble so sin doesn't make anybody humble the devil is full of sin and he's full of pride and Jesus never sinned and he's totally humble sometimes we think oh if I sin because I sin so much

I'm humble, that's a false humility, no learn humility from me Jesus said you know Jesus found his greatest joy let me say this, in being nothing so that his father can be everything that is true humility father you know I want everybody to see you in me Jesus lived like that on the earth he said I don't want people to see me father I came here that other people might see you and know you as a good loving God and the only way that can happen is that I'm nothing so that you can be everything in my life, it's like emptying the

glass so that it can be filled to the glory of God, that is humility and now we're to follow Jesus and learn from him and say Jesus Lord I want people to see you in me, I don't want them to see me, so I want to be nothing so that you can be everything that's why Jesus

said don't take titles like Rabbi, Father no no no no because that will exalt you no go down let's be nothing so that I can be everything in your life and the brother and sister who's understood that Lord I want to be nothing so that you can be everything, you know supposing God has gifted you in some area it's very difficult I'll tell you honestly very difficult to exercise a gift any gift in such a way that you don't make other people feel small it's very easy to preach with such tremendous gift that everybody else feels small then you're not preaching like Jesus you're preaching yourself but if you can say Lord I'm ready to exercise any gift but I don't want to exercise any gift in such a way that I try to show that I'm bigger than you I'm not bigger than you, I just want to be a

nobody so Jesus can be everything that's taking up the cross that's taking up the cross, it's a wonderful thing the more you take up the cross the more you go down the more Jesus fills your life isn't that wonderful that is the cross it's so that the life of Jesus can come up in me I empty myself of the life of Adam it says Jesus emptied himself I've got to empty myself of the life of Adam that's why wherever I see the life of Adam I say I don't want that I don't want that, I hate it I hate that life of Adam, I don't hate myself but I hate this life of Adam which the Bible calls the flesh which I'm carrying around with me I hate it and every time I hate it and I put it to death something of the life of Jesus comes forth, so as I said when somebody has spread some false story about me or

my children or done some evil to me and the life of Adam comes up and it wants to react in a particular way I say no, I'm going to be nobody here I'm going to be nothing so that Jesus can be everything and then when I meet that person I can act as if he never did any harm to me and he didn't because all things work together for my good in any case, so how can he do any harm to me how wonderful it is you can go around like that meeting everybody on the face of the earth and you're not afraid to meet anyone why is it you avoid meeting some people isn't it because the life of Adam comes in you and says yeah, I don't want to talk to him there are people who can sit like that in a church and talk about taking up the cross and they haven't understood the ABC about the cross and I want to tell

you this you can't be a disciple of Jesus then because Jesus said if you don't take up the cross you cannot be my disciple completely out of the question you cannot be my disciple if you don't take up the cross the cross is the way of life you know like we tell unbelievers listen, after you die you won't get another chance to accept Jesus, you won't get another chance to repent you know what Sadhusundara Singh used to say he really understood that he said after you die you won't get another chance to take up the cross to follow Jesus this is your only opportunity to take up the cross you know the devil has so made us misunderstand what the cross the cross is meant to make you rich rich with the life of Jesus I have read the biographies of some of the greatest saints whatever biographies

are available in English through the years I would encourage all of you young people to read biographies of great saints of God, when I was a young Christian and I started earning money I used to use my money every month to buy a little biography of some saints of God and I used to read that and I discovered that the greatest saints of God in the history of Christianity were people who understood the way of the cross and embraced it and said that's the way I want to go and that brought a longing in my heart I said Lord I want to be a saint of God too I want to go the way of the cross and that's what opened up the way for me too I want to encourage you to ask the Lord to show you this way of the cross the glory of it the wealth that

can come into your life through it the riches that can

come into your life if you choose this way in every situation you are becoming poor every time you assert the life of Adam it may be just in your home towards your husband or towards your wife every time you do it you may say oh thank God I didn't lose my testimony nobody from the church heard me lose my temper or yell at my wife or husband or do this wretched thing in my home you are getting a satisfaction out of that you don't realize you may not have lost your testimony but you lost something of the glory of Jesus that could have been yours at that time and that should make you weep before God even if you haven't lost your testimony and I believe God tests us like that sometimes you know when we are in situations where nobody whom we know is around us it could be in a bus or a train

I'm giving my own testimony where I've been in a bus or a train or it could be in an office that you are working in or somewhere and you react in an un-Christ like way in a way you say something and you are satisfied that nobody saw you not for me I have wept I said Lord I'm sorry nobody saw me so what I displeased you you saw me you saw that I was not a good testimony for Jesus there I didn't take up the cross I should have died there but I didn't die I asserted myself and I dishonored you I brought dishonor to your name even though nobody in the church saw me I couldn't care less whether people in the church saw me or not Father you saw me Lord Jesus I grieved your heart I didn't go the way you wanted me to go and there God sees that you really want to go the way of the cross that's the

time He tests you to see whether you find a satisfaction that nobody in the church saw you behave like that or that you have a grief that even though nobody saw you you brought dishonor to the Lord's name and you know the reason why you don't grow spiritually could be that why so many years have gone by and you've always been happy that your testimony was not lost and God says this fellow is not interested in following me he's only interested in his testimony let him have his testimony and that's all you'll have and that's all some of you have got I'm sorry to say that's all some of you got a good testimony in the church what's the use of that if you don't have the glory of Jesus in your life I tell you I couldn't care less for my testimony in the church I want the glory of Jesus in my

life what's the use of having a testimony in the church if I don't have the glory of Jesus day by day choose that way my brothers and sisters weep before God every time you did not take up the cross when God gave you an opportunity God gave you an opportunity to die to let that flaming sword fall upon you so that you get one more fruit from the tree of life and you didn't get it you avoided the flaming sword you went around it and you escaped ok, but you didn't get the fruit from the tree of life either and you go on like that for many years what happens you don't grow spiritually you don't go more Christ like you don't get greater revelation from God your life is not becoming more and more useful to God you know when the Bible speaks about being filled with the Holy Spirit filled is a

relative term you can fill a cup like I said the other day you can fill a bucket you can fill a river how does our capacity increase when we are born again it's like a cup I take the cup of salvation the Bible says and God fills it you can be filled with the Spirit the day you are born again but it's only a cup if you want that cup to become a bucket and a tub and a lake and a river and many rivers you got to take up the cross every time God gives you an opportunity every time you take up the cross your capacity increases something of the life of Adam is slain the cup has become a a mug ok it's not yet a tub or a bucket or a lake or anything but it's become a little bigger the cup has become a a mug ok it's not yet a tub or a bucket or a lake or anything but it's become a little bigger

and then you go on that way one day it becomes a bucket and two three years later it's like a tub and when you are filled as a tub it's different from being filled like a cup the day you are born again do you want that increase of capacity God places you on earth in different situations and you know I love to think that the Holy Spirit has such an interest in me that he doesn't put me in a classroom he gives me private tuition isn't it wonderful that he gives us private tuition he doesn't give a general syllabus for everybody he's got a specific syllabus suited especially for you because he knows your temperament, your personality your weaknesses, he knows mine he knows my temperament, my weaknesses my personality and he's got a special syllabus designed especially for me and he arranges

all the circumstances in my daily life so that I can be enlarged in my heart and he takes me to some situation and he whispers in my ear die die, and I say yes Lord, and lo and behold my capacity is enlarged because behind every death there is a resurrection why is it that Jesus said I lay down my life nobody can take it away from me I lay it down of my own choice because he was absolutely sure there'd be a resurrection are you sure? if you believe that every time you die, you'd get a resurrection, we would have chosen death much more often than we did now let me tell you my testimony every time I've died, I got a resurrection, please believe me and that's made my life tremendously rich, it's given me discernment of God's ways, understanding of God my father in a way that I would never

have known if I had not taken up the cross, behind every death there is a resurrection we have not experienced that because we are not willing to die, do you think Jesus would have been raised from the dead if he didn't die? no no Jesus was certain my father will raise me up go ahead and kill me go ahead and kill me, he said in three days I'll come out we won't be afraid to die if there's a resurrection but if you have some doubt yeah, I don't know whether I'll get raised up or not it's like baptism would you allow an enemy to baptize you? tell me supposing your enemy says I'd like to baptize you, come you won't let an enemy baptize you, the fellow may not lift you up out of the water he'll just put you down and leave you there why did you submit to baptism, many of you were baptized why

did you allow somebody to dip you in the water because you knew he won't leave you there, he'll lift you up that's why we all submitted to baptism do you believe your heavenly father is better than and more reliable than that fellow who baptized you is he more reliable than the fellow who baptized you or not, what do you say yes then, why can't you submit when he arranges some death for you in some situation in your office or in your home or in the train or the bus somebody cheats you, somebody does something to you and the father says, die let me dip you now, what are you going to do resist no remember the day of your baptism and say, father do it you will definitely come out, be sure of that and choose the way of the cross the way of humbling yourself the way of going down death to

self, lord i want nothing of my self life i don't want to choose my will in anything you know jesus said in john 6 38 this is another part of taking up the cross john 6 38 john 6 in verse 38 he said i came from heaven not to do my will, but the will of him who sent me i have looked at it like this when i was converted, i never knew how long i was going to live i still don't know how long i am going to live but now i can look back over nearly 45 or 44 years since i was sure of my salvation, i don't really know when i was saved, i was sure of my salvation about 44 years ago now when i look back i can say one thing god did a better job with my life than if i had planned my life myself i can say that definitely so i am very thankful that i allowed god to plan my life and not i myself my own

plan would have been to become a big shot in the military or make a lot of money become a big man but god had some other plan and now when i look back i say god your plan was so much better so it's

something like this supposing i have inherited a lot of money say i inherited 10 lakhs of rupees and i don't know how to invest this money if i just keep that 10 lakhs of rupees in the bank gradually the value of money will go down and i get 4% interest every year and gradually i will have to be very careful about my expenditure but supposing there is a chap who is very brilliant in investing money in businesses and different things which are absolutely reliable and who has had a reputation for years that he never loses anybody's money he is a reliable person and if you give your money to him

to invest he will give you 20, 30, 40, 50% interest every year don't you think you would be a fool to keep your money in a savings bank and get 4% interest when that fellow will give you 50% and he is reliable definitely you would be a fool to try and manage it yourself you would say brother can you handle this money for me and he asks how much i say all of it all of it because i trust you that's what i did with god more than 40 years ago that's what i am asking you to do with your life you are trying to invest your life you have been trying to do it planning your life making your ambitions choosing this, choosing that choosing the other thing how much have you produced how much interest have you got from your life how much have you produced from your life jesus didn't choose that way he

said from the day he came to earth he said i will not do my will father my will can never produce the best result from my life always your will i wish i could convince myself more thoroughly of it and convince all of you thoroughly because this is the cross the central central part of the cross is death to my choice to my will in everything supposing you got 4 weeks vacation you take leave from your work do you want to ask god how to spend those 4 weeks or do you plan those 4 weeks yourself and you say well if i ask god oh boy he will mess it all up he will tell me to go here and go there i want to enjoy myself god please leave me alone let me just enjoy myself for 4 weeks vacation i really want to enjoy myself i can plan it you really think so you really think that you can plan your

vacation better than a god who loves you who cares for you we think so that's why we don't consult god because we think god is a spoil sport he is only come to mess up people's life the devil always says that don't go and ask god if you got job for example you know people come to me and sometimes say brother zack i got an offer for this job and this job both are in bangalore i said you have to do anything wrong in any of these jobs no i don't have to do anything wrong i said which one pays the higher salary he said this one i said take it is that spiritual we always have the idea you go to god, god will always say which is the lowest salary one take that who told you that lie about god it's the devil god wants you brother lord i am looking at a two bedroom house and a one bedroom house,

which should i take one bedroom house definitely that's not god, that's the devil he is portrayed such a evil picture of a loving father before your eyes that he always thinks that god will always make you choose the miserable one lord i am thinking of marrying this very pretty girl, there is another one who is not so pretty, definitely marry the ugly one that's how a lot of people find god's will what a lie and you know that's how you feel about god you laugh because it's true in your life, in the different situations you feel that i better not ask god because he will mess up my life he always makes me choose the dirty things which i don't like the most difficult things the most miserable way and the most painful thing that's a lie that's not the cross that's not the cross taking up the

cross doesn't mean i marry an ugly girl or choose the lowest salary or live in a small hut, that's not the cross not at all the cross is saying lord i don't want my will i want yours, because i know that you will choose the best for me, he may not let you marry that pretty girl because she is so proud she will make a mess of your life maybe that's why he will say don't marry her because he wants you to have a beautiful

life and he may want you to marry a girl who is beautiful inwardly who loves Jesus who will make your life so supremely happy and you won't regret his choice so if once I am convinced that God desires the best for me don't you young girls can you believe that your dad, if your dad is in the church and he is a good father don't you think your dad desires the best for you I

am sure supposing your dad plans something for you don't you think that will be the very best for you and you young boys don't you think if your father who loves you plans something for you that will be the very best I am talking about your earthly father would you have any doubt about that no why do you have a reluctance to choose the will of God in everything I am not talking about something I am talking about everything I am talking about for example you get some extra money so you got an increment or a bonus and you say Lord do you want to ask God how to spend that money oh I better not ask God because He immediately tell me to put it in the offering box and I don't want to put it in the offering box I was planning to buy a refrigerator with it I want a refrigerator God will never

allow me to believe buy a refrigerator He tell me to give it for some work in North India or something like that best is don't ask God so we don't get into conflict if I ask God and He says that and I say no it will be a problem so best leave Him alone leave Him alone let me do my own thing you know back in the back of our mind we feel that is what God will do and that is why we are reluctant to die to our own choice I will tell you something if God does not allow you to buy something at a particular time you can be absolutely sure it is for your good I will give you I have said this before I will give you a testimony about a very little choice I made in my life 42 years ago that it was a very little thing that changed the direction of my life I was a young Christian just baptized I was

earning a lot of money as a naval officer I wanted to buy an accordion and those were days when accordions were not being imported into India you couldn't get accordions anywhere you still can't get it but I said Lord it is amazing I am really surprised that at that age I was only 21 years old I was asking God to find out if it is His will whether I should buy an accordion but I am very thankful I asked God about it and I said Lord do you want me to buy it or not I never heard any voice from heaven and I didn't know how to find God's will does God want me to buy an accordion or not I didn't know how to find God's will the only way I knew was like Gideon asking for a sign I said Lord okay I ask you for a sign if when I go in there and I ask for the price the price is below whatever money

it was I don't remember those days 550 rupees or something that was a lot of money 42 years ago if it is below that price I will take it if it is above that price I won't take it so I went in and it was just a little bit above the price and I had that much money but now was a test between God and me will I keep my word or will I say I have got enough money Lord I am sure extra 25 rupees and all doesn't really matter right I kept my word I said God I said something to you I will keep it and though I want very much to buy it and it is the last accordion in the shop and by next week somebody would have bought it I won't buy it and I went to my room if I had gone to my room that day with that accordion I would have spent the next 3-4 years learning the accordion instead of that I spent the

next 3-4 years studying God's word because I didn't have an accordion today I know that was the better choice God didn't give me what I wanted thank God for all eternity I will thank Him that He never allowed me to buy an accordion that day in 1961 because I wouldn't be standing here I'm absolutely sure I wouldn't be standing here I'd be doing something else I'd be a musician and probably lost my soul in the pursuit of music I've seen a lot of people lose their soul in the pursuit of music so when God denies you something that's for your very best and little by little I haven't always made the right choice sometimes I've made

wrong choices i'm sorry to say that, but i've repented but whenever i've taken up the cross whenever i've said god i don't want my will i want your will i've always

found he's given me it's painful it is painful but he'll give you something wonderful at the end of it so my brothers and sisters how can i encourage you in all situations to humble yourself turn the other cheek don't retaliate don't speak evil of the person who speaks evil of you if somebody scandalizes you commit it to god if somebody harms you commit it to god who judges all things righteously god will deal with those who harm you don't worry about that the bible says god says vengeance is mine i will repay says the lord you think the lord will not repay when he has said i will repay he will repay oh! if you are a true faithful disciple of jesus listen to this everyone here if you are a true faithful disciple of jesus whoever if anybody harms you i would not like to be in his shoes in

the day when god repays him it will be terrible it will be that's not your job your job is to forgive him love him be good to him god will repay him paul said alexander the copper smith has done me much harm i will do nothing to him the lord will repay him that's it don't waste your time trying to pay back people that is god's business your business is to love them be good to them, forgive them pray for those who persecute you bless those who curse you do good to those who harm you and you know we have to build a church full of disciples like this what is the use counting your numbers and saying now 300 people are coming to the meeting so what are they all people who are taking up the cross are they all people who always say not my will but thine father tell me what to do with this extra

money i got tell me what to do in my vacation tell me how to spend this extra time lord tell me how to spend my life should i buy this or not i have the money to buy it but do you want me to buy it or not are you building a church you elder brothers are you building a church full of people like that no then what is the use of counting numbers that's why i stopped counting numbers long ago you ask me how many believers there are in cfc i say i don't know i got a rough idea because i know how many chairs there are there i don't know how many people are there i don't even know how many exact number of churches we have i don't count them because i say lord it's only disciples that matter to you and it's only disciples that are going to matter to me i don't know how many of the people sitting

in the conference are saying lord i want your will in spending my money i want your will in spending my vacation i want your will in choosing my job i want your will in everything in my life everyday i never want to react the way other people treat me i want to die i don't know how many people are doing that those are the only disciples you know we can look at the register and see how many people came for this conference that's easy that is statistics but how many people sitting here are living this type of life which i just said that is the true church that is the true church and that's a very small number very small number but that little number are the people who keep the light burning and who keep the devil outside remember that jesus overcame satan on the cross if you take up the

cross satan will have no power over you that's the other wonderful thing about taking up the cross you die in the situations that god calls you to satan will not be able to touch you you know that the only part of you that satan can touch listen to this the only part of you that satan can touch is your flesh and if you keep on putting your flesh to death there will be less and less of you that he can touch isn't that wonderful he can't touch the life of jesus in you impossible the life of jesus is so full of joy that even in the midst of that cross he could rejoice and that's the life he is calling you and me to don't call don't say because you have some difficulties in your life that that is your cross difficulties everybody has in their life some people have a very difficult wife and

they say brother that's my cross, my difficult wife, no I'll say why that's not your cross because worldly people have got difficult wives too you see I've got a very stubborn son that's my cross, that's not your cross worldly people have got stubborn children too that's not your cross another reason listen to this the cross is something you choose voluntarily it's not something put upon you it's not something put upon you like the roman soldiers put a cross on that simon of cyrene and said take it, god doesn't force anybody to take up the cross jesus always said if remember this, anything that you have not chosen voluntarily is not the cross, do you get regular headaches, that's not a cross you didn't choose it did you how many of you chose regular headaches no, nobody chooses regular

headaches, anything that you did not choose is not a cross, a cross is something where you can which you can avoid if you want but you don't avoid you choose it deliberately that is the way of the cross and that's what brings enlargement in your life like i said, when somebody treats you badly, there are two ways you can choose you can choose to react the way adam's children react or you can choose to react the way jesus reacted you have a choice and you deliberately choose to die to yourself and love that person, that's a cross but all the things in your life which are difficult your roof is leaking, that's not a cross you didn't choose that sickness, some people say oh brother my cross is my sickness did you choose your sickness worldly people have sickness that's not a cross, so many

people have got a wrong idea what the cross is the cross is where you deliberately choose when you have another alternative you give that up and you choose the way of death to yourself to your pride to your plans to your ambitions to your reputation, to your rights because you say lord jesus that is the way you went every time you choose that you've chosen the cross you know you may be an elder brother and somebody insults you oh i've had numerous experiences like that people who are much much younger than me so speak to me in a rude way i've had that experience in cfc ok what am i supposed to do simple die die i say lord who am i that anybody should speak respectfully to me, let them speak to me as they like i'm nobody i die who's the loser they are the losers not me i become rich die my

brother die to your reputation to your sense of importance to who you think you are to the opportunities you think you should have that god never gave you or some person did not give you the opportunities you have you know even in the church that can be a spirit of competition i want to do that and i want to get the honor especially when you are young oh that spirit of competition that is in the athletic field that you learned in school can come into the church i want to do something everybody must know that i did that i organized that i planned that have you understood the way of the cross those are the situations where god says why don't you die why don't you die and humble yourself let somebody else get the honor let somebody else get the credit work behind the scenes and do the job

and let somebody else get the credit i tell you you will grow up to be a saint you will grow up to be a mighty servant of god if you choose that way because that is the opposite of the spirit of the world where everybody wants to be accepted and to get the honor that's why we don't grow spiritually that's why we don't have revelation on god and his word and prophecy and all the other wonderful things shall we choose the way of the cross from today let's pray well i am sure that we are all emotionally stirred to take up the cross right now but the test will come next week and the week after and when you go home and in different situations in your local church my dear brother sister determine today that you are going to die you are going to go down not up you are going to learn from jesus

who always went down who never threatened when he was suffering say lord i want to go this way all the days of my life because i know that behind every cross there is a resurrection and i want the power of your

resurrection in my life blessed are all those who decide today that's the way you are going to walk everyday of your life let god determine how you spend your days how you spend your vacation how you spend your money how you spend your time he will make much better he can do a better investment of your time than you can do yourself he can make a better investment with your life than you can do with your own life give your life to him say lord choose my marriage partner for me i won't choose that choose the job place everything for me i don't want my will in anything in my life from

today and everyday i am going to say that to you i don't want my will i want to be a disciple that's how jesus lived heavenly father we pray that you will apply these truths to our lives and the different situations that we shall face in the coming days in many many places give us grace to walk in the footsteps of jesus thank you father in jesus name amen [www.cfcindia.com](http://www.cfcindia.com) and You

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