

Fourth Requirement for Spiritual Progress-the Way of the Cross

by Zac Poonen

The way of the cross is the way of spiritual progress, requiring daily death to self and denial of our old nature.

Scripture: Matthew 9:16-17, Luke 9:23, Romans 6:6, Romans 15:4, 2 Corinthians 4:10, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 4:22-24, Colossians 3:9-10, Hebrews 10:20, 1 Peter 2:24

Topics: "Self-Denial", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes that Jesus, as our Forerunner, has opened the 'new and living way' for us to dwell in the Father's presence, which requires us to carry the dying of Jesus in our own lives. He highlights that true spiritual progress comes from daily denying ourselves and following the way of the cross, as exemplified by Jesus who never pleased Himself. Poonen explains that the essence of holiness is self-denial, and without it, we cannot truly follow Christ. He warns against trying to improve the old self, which has been crucified, and encourages believers to embrace the new man in Christ. Ultimately, the way of the cross is essential for overcoming sin and achieving spiritual growth.

Transcript

Jesus, as our Forerunner (One Who has run the same race ahead of us), has opened a way for us to enter the Father's presence and dwell there all the time. This way is called "the new and living way" (Heb.10:20).

Paul speaks of it as "always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus" (2 Cor.4:10). He once said, as his personal testimony, that he was crucified with Christ and lived himself no longer. It was Christ that now lived in him, because he himself had died on Calvary. This was the secret of his amazing life and usefulness to God.

Jesus always walked the way of the cross - the way of death to Self. He NEVER pleased Himself even once (Rom.15:4). To please oneself is the essence of all sin. To deny oneself is the essence of holiness.

Jesus once said that no-one would be able to follow Him, unless he decided to deny himself DAILY and to die to himself DAILY (Lk.9:23). That is clear. It is impossible to follow Jesus if we don't deny ourselves daily. We may be cleansed in Christ's blood, have received the Holy Spirit and have a deep knowledge of the Word. But if we don't die to ourselves daily, we cannot follow the Lord Jesus. That is certain.

Jesus once spoke of those who seek to patch up an old garment with a new patch. This He said would tear the garment. What was needed was to get rid of the old garment and get a brand new one. In another parable, He spoke of making the tree itself good, if we wanted the fruit to be good. It was no use just cutting off the bad fruit.

All these parables have basically one lesson: The old man cannot be improved. He has been crucified by God (Rom.6:6). Now we must agree with God's judgment on him, and put him off, and put on the new man.

The way of the cross is the way of spiritual progress. If you are not overcoming sins like anger, irritation, impatience, lustful thinking, dishonesty, jealousy, malice, bitterness, and the love of money etc., the answer lies here : You have avoided the way of the cross.

A dead man does not stand up for his rights. He does not fight back. He does not care about his reputation. He will not take revenge. He cannot hate anyone or have a bitterness against anyone.

This is what it means to die to Self.

This way of the cross, like all the other provisions that God has made for our spiritual growth, is also something that we need DAILY, if we are to make spiritual progress.

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