

The Way of the Cross

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the Holy Spirit based on Scripture and the need to surrender to the cross in order to experience the power of the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 1:26:28

Scripture: Revelation 1:17

Topics: "Cross"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of making a choice to follow God's way. He highlights the concept of falling into the ground and dying, which leads to bearing much fruit. Jesus values sacrifice and looks beyond the quantity of our actions to the level of sacrifice involved. The preacher also discusses the way of the cross, where we may face persecution and remain silent, but ultimately triumph through God's love. The sermon concludes with an invitation to come up higher and embrace the new covenant life, where we can be as Jesus is in this world.

Transcript

I want to read from Luke's Gospel chapter 3, Luke's Gospel chapter 3 verse 21. We have spoken in more than one session, I have anyway, about the power of the Holy Spirit. And I have for a long time felt that the great need in Christendom is to approach this whole matter with an understanding of it based on Scripture and that we should present it in such a way that prejudices are broken down and that people don't miss what God has for them before they leave this earth.

We don't need the baptism of the Holy Spirit to go to heaven. We need only the blood of Christ for that. The blood of Christ prepares us for heaven.

The baptism of the Spirit is to fit us for this earth, for the years we spend here before we go to heaven. And in Luke chapter 3, we read in verse 21, it came about when all the people were baptized that Jesus also was baptized. And while he was praying, heaven was opened.

Have you ever thought when you read that verse, what was Jesus praying about? It's not mentioned, but I think I know because of one reason. Whatever Jesus prayed for was answered immediately. There was never a delay from heaven when Jesus prayed, except when he was hanging on the cross for our sin.

And that was different because there he was an atoning sacrifice. But otherwise, every time Jesus prayed, his prayer was answered immediately. And that's why I know what he was praying for.

He was made in all things like his brothers, so that he could be our high priest, our forerunner, our leader. Christendom, a large part of Christendom, has been so taken up with the fact that Jesus Christ is God, which is true. He was always God from eternity past when he was on earth, and for all eternity he will be.

That they have not considered sufficiently the humanity of Jesus Christ. Theoretically, they acknowledge, yes, he became a man, but it's the fact that he came in our flesh, which is an important confession. John makes much of that in his first letter.

Why is that so important? Because he's God, we worship him. Because he became like us, we can follow him. And because he became like us, he had to pray.

There was no need for him to pray. There is no greater challenge to prayer. No verse in scripture can challenge you to prayer as much as this one fact, that Jesus prayed.

It says in Hebrews 5, 7, He prayed with loud crying and tears at times, and he was heard because of his godly fear. We know what he prayed for because it was immediately answered in verse 22, The Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. That's what he was praying for.

He taught us to pray for the same thing. How much more shall your heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him? We never ask, we never receive. You have not because you ask not.

You ask and receive not because you ask with wrong motives. But he prayed, even he had to pray for the Holy Spirit to come upon him. He wasn't any holier in his 31st year than he was in his 25th year.

But something happened from that day. His ministry began. And he did things in his ministry he had never done for 30 years.

And as a preparation for that ministry, even the Son of God, when he came on earth, needed the Spirit of God to come upon him. You know, logic asks so many questions here. Didn't he always have the Holy Spirit? Wasn't he born of the Spirit? If John the Baptist could be filled with the Spirit from the mother's womb, how much more Jesus? Yeah, there are so many questions here.

I don't attempt to answer them. Through the years as I've tried to work out a theology of the Holy Spirit, I find I'm always confused. I don't know.

It's like the wind. We can get the benefit of it, but to produce a doctrine of it, I don't even attempt it. I want to live in the good of everything that the Bible promises me in the Christian life, even if I can't explain it.

Explanation is not necessary. My digestive system works even though I don't understand how it works. I don't need to understand.

I mean, if you're a doctor, it's good to understand it. But I know doctors who can explain it whose digestive system doesn't work. So it's not the explanation that's important.

The important thing is that it should work. So I'm not particularly keen on getting a clear, pigeon-holed explanation step by step about the Holy Spirit. I don't want to go outside the boundaries of Scripture.

That would be dangerous. I don't want to experience anything in my life that Jesus never had or the apostles never had. I don't want to... You know, when I see so many things going on in the world today claiming to be the ministry of the Holy Spirit people falling down and making noises and all kinds of things and people have asked me how to know.

I said, here is a four-fold test which I have recommended to all the people in our churches. At least one of these it must pass. One.

Did Jesus have it in his life? Did Jesus teach it? Number two. Did the apostles experience it? Did the apostles teach it? Very simple. If it fails on all four counts I say, I don't want it.

I don't care what it is. It may or may not be. I know the Spirit gives different experiences to different people but it's a dangerous ground for me.

I want to limit myself to these four. What Jesus experienced and taught or what the apostles experienced and taught. That's it.

But I point out this passage because many, many years ago when I was seeking God for the power of his Holy Spirit and I was disappointed with what I saw in churches that preached the baptism of the Holy Spirit and I never felt free to join those churches. The Lord directed me and I was studying his word and seeking God in prayer in my room many years ago to this passage and pointed out to me when Jesus received the Spirit coming upon him it was when he was baptized in water in Jordan and that baptism symbolized a surrender. Jesus was surrendering himself to death and burial.

You know baptism we are told in Romans 6 symbolizes death, burial and resurrection. And John the Baptist said I can't baptize you and Jesus said no you have to do it. It must be so for only thus can we fulfill all righteousness.

And there Jesus gave himself into the hands of someone to be immersed. Symbolically surrendering himself to death and burial. And what the Lord said to me that day was the way of the cross is the way of power.

That's when the Spirit came upon Jesus. And what the Lord said to me at that time was as long as you walk this way you will have my power resting upon your life and your ministry. But if ever a day comes in your life when you think you've gone beyond this or learned this thoroughly that day my power will depart from you.

God spoke to that to my heart 36 years ago. And I haven't forgotten it. It opened my eyes that day to understand not just the cross on which Jesus died but the cross on which I died with him.

I've tried, that's another doctrine I have tried for years to understand and explain. I can't explain it. I just believe it.

I never saw Jesus dying for me on the cross. But I believe it. Why do I know? How do I know that when he died he took the punishment for all my sins? There's only one way in which I know that.

Even if there were history records historical records that pointed out that somebody called Jesus was crucified on outside Jerusalem okay, but it still wouldn't the historical records wouldn't tell me why he was crucified. There's only one way that I know that it was for my sins that he died and that he took the

punishment for all my sins and that's because the Bible tells me. I don't know any other way.

How do I know Jesus rose from the dead? I've never seen him. It's because I believe God's word. And it's when I believe God's word that he took the punishment for my sins and that his blood was shed for my sins when I believed it I had peace.

My sins were forgiven. Now the same scripture says your old man was crucified with Christ in Romans 6. Paul says in Galatians 2.20 I am crucified with Christ. I believe it on the basis of the same book the Bible that tells me he took my sins.

Maybe I can't explain how he took my sins but he took it. Think of this verse for example. I find it very difficult to explain Romans 6.21 God made him or is it 5.20 God made him who knew no sin to become sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

What does it mean Jesus taking my sin I can understand, ok he took the punishment for my sin I can understand that but what does it mean when it says Jesus who knew no sin became sin on Calvary's cross I can't understand that but I said Lord I don't know but it just shows me your tremendous love that you you became that for me that I might become the righteousness of God in you I don't want to explain it or analyze it or any such thing and so in the same way when God's word says that I in some mysterious wonderful way even though I was born only in this century I was crucified with Christ 2,000 years ago I believe it my sins were committed in this century but they were taken 2,000 years ago so I suppose it's possible even if I live in this century for me to be crucified with Christ 2,000

years ago and I want to accept that now when I accept that I'm saying Lord I agree with you that this old nature of mine that I have received from Adam cannot be repaired cannot be improved cannot be modified or changed in any way it has to be condemned it has to be crucified it's fit for hanging crucifixion was reserved for the worst criminals of that time other criminals were given lesser sentences but crucifixion was for the worst and I'm agreeing with God there that this nature I've inherited from Adam is fit for the worst punishment possible it's fit only for death what I need is a totally new nature not an improved one it's not you know there's a song one chorus in which one line goes like this oh thou spirit divine all my nature refined it's not true it's not possible I never sing

it that way I always sing that song oh thou spirit divine make all thy nature mine my nature cannot be refined it has to be crucified and when to choose the way of the cross just means I agree 100% with the sin of my nature with God's condemnation and judgment when he condemns sin in the flesh on Calvary's cross I say Lord I agree with it 100% when he put my old man to death on the cross I say Lord I agree with it 100% and how do I show my agreement with words that's easy it doesn't mean a thing the only way to show to God and to man that I agree with God's judgment of my nature on the cross is by taking up the cross every day in other words by reckoning myself to be dead that's what it says in Romans chapter 6 I began with Luke chapter 3 because I wanted to see the connection that I

believe I have a personal conviction I'm not here to judge anybody I'm not here to condemn anyone my personal opinion is that the biggest mistake that the Atlantic Gospel and charismatic movement have made is in not pointing their people to the way of the cross that would have been a mighty movement if they had pointed people to the way of the cross you see the connection Jesus chose the way of the cross and the spirit came upon him the spirit led Jesus to Calvary and the spirit will lead you and me to the cross always there's a very close connection between these it's when the rock is smitten in the Old Testament that the rivers began to flow you know I used to think of when I was younger I used to think of Moses

miting the rock and a little trickle flowing out how many people were there

600,000 men plus their wives and children it must have been 2 million people can you imagine a city of 2 million people how many square miles would that take 10, 20 square miles sorry 100 square miles perhaps and no trickle would satisfy the water needs of 2 million people living in 100 square miles flowing out of that rock that is the way for the rivers of living water to flow the rock has to be smitten something inside has to die that's myself we don't realize how strong our self is how important we make ourselves to be and that's what hinders the rivers of living water from flowing we make other people to be small by our bigness something about Jesus my dear brothers and sisters which we really have to learn Jesus said learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart have you just

taken that as a verse or do you sit at Jesus feet and say Lord teach me what it is to be gentle teach me what it is to be humble in heart there is one aspect of it that when Jesus never made other people feel small he didn't over all them with his gifts and his abilities make them feel inferior if I follow Jesus I will never make any brother even someone converted today feel inferior to me he is equal to me I am clothed with the righteousness and I am accepted before God and he is clothed with the righteousness of Christ and that's the only way he is accepted before God I can't stand before God and say well Lord I have served you for so many years so faithfully on the basis of that I deserve hell what shall I say even if I have lived in faith faithfully for God for 60, 70 years and at the

end of it when I stand before God what shall I say I am damned but Jesus died for me that's all do I recognize that in my relationship with other brothers and sisters if self is slain nobody will feel inferior to me in my dealings with them I will never make them feel small because they have failed or because they have fallen in areas where I have not perhaps fallen haven't managed it to do it so well as I have managed perhaps there is so much of this in Christendom Christendom is full of leaders who make other people feel inferior and small you are a great man of God or a woman of God if you can make other people feel equal to you for that the cross has to do a deep work of slaying all this sense of self importance all this sense of how much I have accomplished for God and everything my

old man is fit only for crucifix not for display and that's why when we present Christ to other people by our life or by our words it's so important to draw the attention away from ourselves to Jesus I must say that one of the most difficult things is to hold up the light of the world in such a way that the hand that holds it is not seen to blow the trumpet of God in such a way that the person blowing the trumpet is not seen but that should be our goal that God allows us to be crucified by other men and that's why God allowed Jesus to bear the cross all through his life I mean the physical cross he bore on Calvary but there was another cross inwardly he said if anyone come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross every day and follow me Jesus took up the cross only one day of

his life and tells us to take it up every day for 40 years that's impossible he took it up himself every day and we need to ask the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to see that when he was tempted he died so that he would respond in love it says in Romans chapter 6 knowing this verse 6 I want to say that we should no longer be slaves to sin this is the secret of victory over sin to accept the cross in our life and therefore it says therefore even so consider yourself verse 11 to be dead to sin reckon yourself to be dead to sin in all situations I'm called to reckon myself to be dead to be crucified with Christ it's no longer I who live but Christ lives in me what does that mean in practical terms if somebody insults me speaks evil about me behind my back or spits on my face or does anything

what does it mean to reckon myself dead think of a dead man here we've come for his funeral and somebody says you're a good for nothing fellow I always knew you were a rotten chap no change of expression on his face not at all you kick him no response or the other way around you praise him boy you are a prophet no change of expression still it doesn't make a difference whether you call him a prophet or a devil he is dead now a lot of people who have heard or have read about these things they are not really choosing to die they are playing dead you know children sometimes play dead somebody tickles them or kicks them hard enough and they say hey what are you doing it's like that most Christians are just playing games in this area but I want to say to you that if you are really serious and

you ask the Holy Spirit to really help you in this area it can become a reality and your life will be entirely different thereafter you know what Paul speaks about the power of his resurrection that I may know him and the power of his resurrection there is a resurrected life that we can live even now on earth a resurrected body I will get only when Jesus comes that I have to wait for but resurrection life can gradually penetrate into different areas of my life where the life of Adam ruled once that's the message of the gospel but the point is there cannot be a resurrection without a death it's only those who choose to die who will have a resurrection you choose to die in an area then you will have a resurrected life you choose to be crucified with Christ and it will be no longer you but

Christ that lives in you but you have to choose that way the way of the cross in all situations death to self reckon yourself dead I want to point out this passage in Revelation the book of Revelation in chapter 4 there is a little expression we read here where John says after these things I looked and behold a door standing open in heaven the first voice which I had heard like the sound of a trumpet said to me come up here come up higher it's a beautiful word come up higher we know that Christendom was in a pretty bad shape by the end of the first century all the other apostles had died John was the only one alive and he looked around and he saw elders who had a name that they were alive but they were dead like the elder in Sardis in another church the elder was tolerating a Jezebel to

run the show in the church in Thyatira in another church they were so rich and they had so much that they didn't realize that in God's eyes they were wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked all the way down from the elder down to the other one down to the last one and in another church they were very careful to obey the rules they had rules and regulations and they kept all the pigs under control but they had lost their first love there was no love in their heart beginning with the elder down to the last person and he was grieved Lord, what is going to happen to your church? he had a burden and the Lord said to him come up higher when we see things like that it's good for us to be lifted up to heaven's viewpoint where the Lord says look at these things from my viewpoint like I

said the other day let the things that burden God's heart burden our heart and let the things that don't bother God not bother us anymore there has to be an elimination of a lot of things from our lives that don't bother God that should stop bothering us altogether and the things that bother God should bother us see I can either carry my burdens or God's burdens I can't carry both if I come to God with a lot of burdens of my own I can't carry His but if I learn to cast my burdens on the Lord I can take His burdens where I eliminate from my life those petty trivial things that happen every day of our lives which have no eternal value which have no eternal significance which don't disturb God one bit but which can disturb us so much a little loss of money here the excitement that comes from

gaining a little money there or somebody insulted you or you heard somebody spread a story a false story about you or your family these things don't bother God shouldn't bother us the Lord says come up higher

and the only way to come up higher is by dying to this life here it's a wonderful way we read in Revelation chapter 1 how before the Lord showed John the condition of those churches He first gave him a revelation of himself and John fell at his feet as a dead person and he saw Jesus and then the Lord said now I'll show you the condition of these churches we always need to have that vision of Jesus otherwise we can be so hard on backslidden people and we don't help them we always need to keep before us this vision of Jesus that John had and then we can see the condition of the

churches so we can help them the Lord says to us come up higher when Jesus came to earth and died on the cross it was not just the fact that he died for our sins you know in one place Jesus said my father worketh hitherto and I work for our sins we read in Genesis chapter 1 that on the seventh day God rested and then man sins and ever since that time God has not rested he's been working Jesus said that my father worketh hitherto and I work and when Jesus came to earth he revealed a principle that we see in the heart of God that in a sin cursed earth there is only one way that God can serve man and that is by the principle of sacrifice that was what was manifested on Calvary and if we are to adequately represent God in the sinful world that principle of sacrifice must grip us and anyone

who has not been gripped by that for more than one thing he will not represent God adequately it has many many applications if there is no sacrifice in your life you cannot serve God because Jesus manifested that as a basic principle that's the only way God could serve man and that's the only way we can serve our fellow men now when we look around we see Christians becoming rich through preaching the gospel you understand why they haven't understood the first thing about God they haven't understood the first thing about the way Jesus went when we see Christians seeking a life of ease on this earth where Jesus suffered and served we can say they haven't understood A.B.

Simpson wrote a poem where he said there's no time for me in this life to look for ease and comfort for this is not the path my blessed master trod but strenuous toil each hour and power employed always and all for God always and all for God all the great men of God who have walked with God who have understood God's ways have understood that if I am to serve the Lord if I am to be effective for God this principle of sacrifice must characterize every area of my life the principle of self-denial for the sake for Jesus' sake not you know there are heathen religions that practice self-denial I'm not talking about that I'm not talking about fasting as a means of becoming slimmer I'm not talking about that at all I'm talking about this principle that Jesus manifested that it's only by sacrifice

that we can serve that's why we read in Mark's Gospel chapter 12 when it says here he sat down opposite the treasury in Mark 12 41 and he was watching how the multitude were putting money into the treasury read that carefully very carefully he sat opposite the treasury and he was watching and he watches even today not how much people were putting in but it says he was watching how they were putting in not how much it was but he was watching how and even today as he watches he doesn't watch how much we do he watches how we do is there the element of sacrifice there and then he saw the large rich people putting in large sums and a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins which amount to a cent she is putting more than all the others because they put in out of their surplus but she

out of her poverty she put in all she owned Jesus appreciated that it's not how much we do he was never interested in statistics apply this not only to giving money but to Christian work we can say we are doing this, this, that and we can give much but there may be no sacrifice in it we may do a lot of things but there is no sacrifice in it then we have not understood the way of the cross and then we shall not have that power resting upon us that rested upon Jesus the spirit came upon Jesus to lead him along the way of the

cross all through his life when I was a very young Christian I think I was about 22 or 23 years old clearly from a verse in 2 Samuel chapter 24 and that's been a guideline for me through all these years and I think keeping it before me has protected me from many many

pitfalls and snares I've seen a lot of young people zealous devoted you see them 20 years later either they are backslidden or they become big people very important people they are no longer the humble, broken servants of God they were when they started God has blessed their ministry so many wonderful things God has gifted them and it's gone to their heads they've become big because they haven't understood the way of the cross Christendom is full of such people in 2 Samuel 24 and David went to offer a sacrifice to the Lord and he came to the threshing floor of one of his subjects Araunah and he wanted to offer a sacrifice there because God told him to offer a sacrifice there Araunah said you can take whatever you want King 2 Samuel 24-22 take the oxen for the burnt offering take the yokes

of the oxen for wood you can have it all free and everything and give it to the king but the king said no, I'll pay for it because if I take it free from you and I give it to God it would not have cost me anything and he said I will not offer to the Lord that which cost me nothing and that's the word the Lord spoke to my heart never in your life offer to me that which cost you nothing and I said Lord help me if I serve you it must cost me something other people need never know about it it's enough if you know about it but it must cost me something are you willing to offer a sacrifice like that not just once but consistently I want to urge you my brothers and sisters let there be secret places in your life that no one knows about secret areas where you have sacrificed where you have died

and you never talk about it nobody ever knows deep trials and testings that you have gone through which you never share with anyone one of the greatest challenges in my life has been the fact about what all he suffered in 30 years I'm sure he suffered a lot I've tried to imagine a home a poor home with no private bedroom to retreat into when the temperature gets hot in the rest of the house it was a poor home where Jesus lived with four younger brothers and two younger sisters and those brothers converted younger brothers how they would taunt you and tease you particularly when you are good and upright and holy they taunt you even more he never sinned I can imagine him walking down as a little boy down the streets of Nazareth and old men sitting there and telling one another you see that

boy the one on the other side that's Mary's son he went through that stigma all those growing years Jesus said when the Holy Spirit has come he will take of the things of mine and show it to you but he never spoke about it himself he never spoke about his sufferings or what all went on if we ask the Holy Spirit to show us the glory of Jesus he will show us these things these are the things that have challenged me in my life the things of Jesus and shown them to me and challenged me to go that way in daily life I want to ask you ask the Holy Spirit to show you the way Jesus went this is the whole secret of the Christian life looking unto Jesus how he voluntarily chose the way of the cross you read one sentence like he submitted to Joseph and Mary that's all but think of all that is

involved in that one sentence I've heard people say to me I can't submit to that brother he's not spiritual Jesus could have said that about Joseph and Mary it didn't matter one bit whether Joseph and Mary were spiritual God told him to submit and he submitted as a little boy he was like us at every stage of life you can see the footsteps of Jesus one of my sons was sharing a word in our local church a couple of months ago when he was home and he said something that stuck in my heart I'd never heard it like that before he said that the Lord had shown him that at every stage in life he could see the footsteps of Jesus you know 10 year old footsteps 12 year old footsteps Jesus' footsteps were not so big that a little boy couldn't put his

foot in them he was also a little boy small footsteps

and as they grew bigger bigger footsteps always the way of the cross what all did he suffer when he had to obey Joseph and Mary the new covenant father I think of all the mistakes I've made I can imagine how much more it must have been for old covenant parents who didn't have the Holy Spirit didn't have the Bible didn't have tapes or conferences or anything they must have made so many mistakes and he suffered under them and he never sinned he never despised authority what an example he never spoke about it but the Spirit of God and the glory of Jesus I pray that there will be in all of our lives secret areas where we've had to be broken because God was dealing with us I say to young people I've said this in all of our churches if God has not succeeded I mean if God calls you in your

teenage years and he's not succeeded in doing a thorough work of breaking in you well I don't know whether God will be able to give you authority and give you a fulfill his ministry through you when God calls a man or a woman in their teenage years the primary thing he seeks to do in their life in the years before he commits a ministry to them whether they're 30 or 35 is breaking breaking the strength of their self and one of the ways in which he breaks us is by putting us under authority and as we submit to that authority we are broken and broken and you resist it God cannot commit authority I've seen it again and again and again I know there are people who abuse authority I know Christendom is full of people who are abusing their authority etc that's got nothing to do with you God is

sovereign I remember the years when I was a young person now you see I have sometimes violated this principle that Jesus never said anything about his past life and I sometimes said it and I said Lord should I say it or not but I haven't made it a rule but I say it sometimes and I remember when I was in an assembly as a young man and God had given me a gift of ministry as I said when I was about 22, 23 and here were elders in that church who were double my age and they saw the gift I had and how people responded to what I was saying and they were jealous and they wouldn't let me speak and they asked me to sit quietly there and the Lord said sit quietly keep your mouth shut and I sat there not one or two days years I've had experiences subsequently where in churches where I've had in our

own church where I was going as a young man in my twenties where I had taken special meetings keep your mouth shut humble yourself submit to authority keep a good relationship with that elder don't ever let any bitterness or rebellion come in your heart and I said yes Lord and I'll do it those were the years God really broke me crushed me and showed me that I was nothing and as I took that place in the future as time went on authority in my ministry authority over demons authority over brothers not to lord it over them this is the word the Lord has given me about authority John chapter 17 and I'm very very careful I keep this in mind before me always because God has given me authority over many people now and I live in fear because of that it says about Jesus Jesus said in his high

priestly prayer Father the hour has come glorify thy son and then he says in verse 2 even as thou gavest him authority over all men that to whom thou hast given him he may give eternal life and what the Lord showed me was this I give you authority only for one purpose to lead people to eternal life that is the purpose of authority to lead them to be connected with God to lead them to be connected with Christ as the head so that I can fall out and disappear to lead them to partake of God's own nature to lead them to godliness and the Lord has said to me if that is your goal I will give you my authority when you speak I will give you my authority when you are an elder in a church when you are an elder for other elders my authority will back you up in what you say and do if your goal is

nothing but to lead them to eternal life Jesus he says he got authority from the Father to lead people to eternal life not to lord it over people like some big king who's got people to serve him no he wasn't like that he was a servant he was only interested in leading people to eternal life where are we brothers and sisters who are we to think that we are somebody yeah there must be areas in our life in secret where God has succeeded in breaking us and we offer to the Lord that which has cost us something it was when that alabaster vial was broken that the odor of the ointment was in us and until it was broken it was all there but it was inside a lot of us Christ lives in us but that sweet perfume does not go forth because we are not broken God arranges circumstances in your life to break

you in your home in your place of work with a difficult boss it's to break you in the church maybe with an elder who is lording it over you fine allow yourself to be broken it's easy to run away I've seen the people who've run away and I see what comes of their life nothing and I've seen what comes of the lives of those who humble themselves and fall into the ground and die much fruit there is only one guaranteed way of producing much fruit in our life and that's the way of falling into the ground and dying you know this matter of being filled with the spirit this is the way the Lord has shown it to me you can be filled with the spirit the day you're born again but your capacity is only that of a little cup how much can a cup if it's full how much can it contain but if from that day I

faithfully take up the cross and deny myself and take up the cross and die to myself everyday gradually this cup will become a bucket and then when I'm filled it means something more and I continue faithfully along the way of the cross year after year and again can be filled and then it becomes a tank and then it becomes a river and then it becomes many rivers so the new born convert is filled with the spirit and the apostle Paul at the end of his life is filled with the spirit there's a lot of difference there's the full cup and the full river ya both are filled people talk about spirit filled people but what's your capacity you can remain a cup spirit filled till the end of my life that is not God's will He wants you to grow and the only way for our capacity to grow is if you choose the

way of the cross if you say Lord I will never in my life offer to you that which cost me nothing in the midst of an apostate christendom where people have not understood this principle at all God calls people here and there to manifest it in their lives the principle of sacrifice the principle of dying to self of being crushed I want you to turn to Isaiah chapter 53 Isaiah 53 we know that this is a chapter that refers to Jesus and for years I read it like that and it's true but God opened my eyes to see that there were parts of this chapter that were meant for me too there are certain aspects of the cross like his bearing the sins of the world in which I have no part he was crushed for our iniquities the chastening of our well being fell upon him verse 5 he was pierced for our

transgressions smitten of God and afflicted I have no part in that the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all which explain very clearly to me what the way of the cross is for example beginning with verse 2 he grew up before his father he didn't grow up before man brothers and sisters grow up before God he grew up before him like a tender shoot like a root out of a parched crown and he had no form or majesty that we should look upon him nor appearance that we should be attracted to him well as I read that that's what the Lord spoke to my heart don't ever seek to be the center of attraction anywhere move in the midst of my people as an ordinary brother unknown just a nobody in the midst of other nobodies can you be that? we can all be that the day we are converted the day we are

converted we are so small we are so thankful that we got a place in a church but after a while after we become known and people appreciate us for the blessing we brought to them then we can walk in a

slightly different way now if you take the cross you don't look for that there was no form there was no appearance about him that we should be attracted to him I don't want to make myself attractive to people I want to be hidden I want people to see Jesus that they must be attracted to him and I have to get out of the way John the Baptist said I must decrease if he has to increase and you know why he doesn't increase in so many congregations because the preacher is not seeking to decrease the preacher has made himself so big for myself the Lord has shown me even the way you preach you got to

be careful that you don't make yourself so big that people begin to admire you disappear, disappear as far as possible there is no appearance that we should be attracted to him he was despised and forsaken by men Paul said we apostles are the scum of the earth the scum what flows in the sewage lines that's what the apostles were he said to the Corinthians I don't have time to turn to this passage you can read it in 1 Corinthians 4 in 1 Corinthians 4 he said you Corinthians are distinguished we are without honor you are accepted, we are rejected you are honored, we are the scum of the earth God has appointed us apostles that last of all there was only one person underneath them and that was Jesus himself and they were the closest to Jesus and that's why they were down there misunderstood

rejected falsely accused slandered and they keep quiet you know it says he was oppressed, verse 7 and afflicted and he didn't open his mouth like a lamb that is led to the slaughter and like a sheep that is silent before his shearers he didn't open his mouth did not open his mouth silent did not open his mouth we need to know how to open our mouth aloud when we praise God but that's only one side we also need to know how to shut our mouth and be silent and I know the number of accusations that have been leveled against me all across India the letters I get the articles written against me the books written against me and the Lord has always told me keep your mouth shut if they call the head of the house Beelzebul how much more the members of his household have you read that in Matthew

chapter 10 if they have called the head of the house how much more the members of his household are you a member of his household if you are a member of his household what are some of the names that other people have called you because you followed Jesus now don't tell me the names people called you because of your own foolishness that's different I'm talking about the names people called you because you stood up for Jesus Christ I'll tell you some of the names people have called me in the last 20-30 years Satan son of the devil evil spirit antichrist terrorist false teacher heretic diatribes all types of things I'm a member of Jesus household following one who was called Beelzebul following one who was called a winebibber and a drunkard and a gluttonous man following one who was called

a lunatic you read that his own family members said he was insane yeah he kept his mouth shut why is it perhaps ask yourself why is it people have not called us such bad names perhaps because we are so diplomatic like the chameleon we can change colors when we are in different places it's not acceptable we keep quiet about certain things because that's not acceptable in this particular society that's the chameleon you'll never get a bad name then but if you take up the cross and deny yourself and stand up for Jesus you'll suffer I remember reading the story of Henry Susso I don't know whether you heard of Henry Susso he was a godly man many years ago he was a bachelor a godly man he lived in a little room or house in a street and he had a reputation down that street for godliness and he

had a great prayer he said Lord make me like Jesus make me like Jesus and God answered his prayer and I'll tell you how one day he heard a knock on his door there was a woman standing there with a baby and said here is the fruit of your sin and put the baby into his hands loud enough for all the people in the street to hear and the tongues began to wag oh so this is what this man has been up to in secret he'd

never seen that woman in his life he was totally innocent um this woman wanted to dump an unwanted baby and thought this is the best man to dump it on and did that and she went away he closed the door Susso Henry Susso and he took the baby in his arms and said Lord what shall I do and Jesus said to him listen to this I will forgive you for the sins of others you wanted to be me be

like me right ok he said fine he never said a word to anybody down the street he left his vindication in God's hands and he brought up that child as if it was his own and he was broken God delivered him from being bothered years later that woman came down to that same street convicted deeply of her sin of scandalizing a godly man like this and proclaimed through that street that she had told a lie but during those years God had done his work he had answered his servant's prayer he had made him like Jesus how many of you want to be like Jesus praise the Lord are you willing to pay the price he did not open his mouth when they said to him you are casting out demons by the prince of demons Beelzebul he said have you spoken a word against the son of man it's forgiven just be careful you don't

speak against the Holy Spirit and when he was oppressed and afflicted and they made all types of false accusations against him in front of the high priest that is the way of the cross there is a verse in 1 John 4 which I want to point out to you 1 John chapter 4 it's a very lovely verse 1 John 4 it says in the last part of verse 17 as he is as Jesus is so also are we in this world lots of Christians have never stopped to think about that verse as he is so also am I let's make it personal each of us so also am I in this world as Jesus is so also am I in this world this is new covenant life no Elijah or John the Baptist could say that but as the son of God is so I am in this world Jesus said he who receives me so send I you he who receives you receives me he who rejects you rejects me if

you are really walking with God walking in fellowship with God that is really true that he who rejects you rejects Christ and he who accepts you accepts Christ and by this we know who belongs to God and who doesn't he who listens to us is of God those are pretty arrogant statements John said it and a true man of God can say it too if he is walking with God he who is of God will listen to us the others will get offended as he is so are we in this world but that includes not just the authority think of the tremendous authority he was so simple when he spoke little children could understand him but there was a powerful authority in that simple ministry but back of that was a life a life of being broken a secret walk with his father of many many sacrifices which we will never know about till

Jesus comes again a secret walk of self-denial of keeping his mouth shut when he was provoked in his home of being broken under authority in his home for 30 years and that is how he had that authority in his ministry and that is what the Lord wants to do for every one of us there is no respect of persons with God this is not for some special people we may not all be called to be apostles and prophets and teachers and evangelists but we are all called to exercise spiritual authority that even when you speak to a person in personal conversation there must be a spiritual authority behind that and that can only come through a life of taking up the cross in secret every day I have thought of this verse in John chapter 15 Jesus said concerning the Holy Spirit's coming John 15 and verse 26 when

the helper is come whom I will send to you from the Father John 15 verse 26 the spirit of truth he will bear witness of me and you will bear witness also notice the connection there notice the fellowship there he will bear witness of me and you will bear witness of me the meaning the way I have understood that is that when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you allow the spirit of God to speak my word the Holy Spirit will speak to those people and say listen to that that's the word of God and it's not just from a pulpit somebody may come to your home it's open for sisters don't people visit your home you may never stand

in a pulpit it doesn't matter somebody comes to your home and needs a word and you speak a word and the spirit of God says listen to that that's from me says the Lord

you don't say it you don't stand up with proud arrogance like some of these people in some of these charismatic churches and say thus says the Lord I never say that I'm scared be careful of these people who go around saying thus says the Lord and calling it prophecy the arrogance of such people the spirit of God shall I show you the mark of a how a true man of God speaks let me show you 1 Corinthians 7 it's blessed me 1 Corinthians 7 I want to show you just 2 or 3 verses here in 1 Corinthians 7 Paul says in verse 12 to the rest I say not the Lord you see his humility there 1 Corinthians 7 12 this is what I'm saying and he goes further he says in verse 25 concerning virgins I don't have any thus says the Lord I don't have a command from the Lord but I give my opinion as one who has had

mercy from the Lord to be faithful I'm just giving you my opinion brothers and at the end of the chapter he says verse 40 I think I have the spirit of God I would any day listen to such a man than to the man who claims to be thus says the Lord leave it to the Holy Spirit to tell that person that's for me says the Lord you don't have to say it you'll bear witness and the Holy Spirit will take that home and he who has ears to hear will hear and some will always get offended we're not going to be an aroma of life to everyone except to those who do not want to respond to God that will always be true we will be an aroma of life only to those who want to respond to God he who is of God listens to us and he who is not does not the other thing that has come home to me very strongly in relation to

going the way of the cross is this I ask myself when and where did Jesus finally defeat Satan he did not defeat Satan when he was cast out he did not defeat Satan when he healed the sick he did not defeat Satan even when he preached sermons the Bible says in Hebrews 2 and verse 14 he took part of flesh and blood that through death he might destroy him who had the power of death render powerless nullify the power of the one who had the power of death how did he do it he defeated Satan only through death he overcame it says in Colossians and chapter 2 verse 14 that on the cross verse 15 he disarmed the rulers and authorities it was on the cross that Satan was defeated it was on the cross when Satan and his demons thought at last we've got him it's on the cross he said at last we've got rid

of this nuisance of a man who was exposing us and Jesus quietly died and Satan was defeated that is God's way God's way of defeating Satan is not with loud trumpets and pomp and show and crushing him like a man would crush an ant under his foot what's so great about that nothing but when God became man and in weakness allowed Satan through evil men to spit on him and beat him and kill him a picture of weakness and helplessness that's how Satan was overcome and that's the way for you and me that's how we're going to overcome Satan in our life that's how we're going to have authority over Satan Satan's afraid of a man who's taking up the cross everyday because he knows he cannot touch him Jesus said the prince of the world comes and he's got nothing in me John 14.30 the prince of the world

comes and he's got nothing in me as he is so are we in this world the prince of the world comes and he's got nothing in me I'm in Christ I've got authority over him I've got authority over everything that he seeks to do he cannot enter my home I can drive him out of my home I can drive him out of my church he's got no right God is looking for men and women who will take up the cross in secret everyday who will sink into nothingness who are seeking to become smaller and smaller and smaller so that he can exercise his authority through them over Satan and all the inroads that Satan seeks to make into the church so my brothers and sisters when he takes you through deep waters he'll be with you but submit he's got a purpose it says in Isaiah 53 and verse 10 that it pleased the father oh these

words it pleased the Lord to crush Jesus putting him to grief it pleased the Lord to crush him is there another way for me his disciple no I have to go that way too I have to be crushed Paul says from his own experience of many years in Romans 8 we are, verse 36 we are being put to death all day long not just once in a while we are being put to death all day long all day long we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered but, verse 37 in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us what a cry of triumph everyone knows Romans 8, 37 we are more than conquerors what they don't know is Romans 8, 36 all day long we are slaughtered that's the way to be more than a conqueror the rest is all empty words are you willing to let people crucify you everyday and keep your mouth

shut and the devil will come you well people will take advantage of you if you become like that no they won't God is in control he knows how to turn the pressure down when it becomes too much when we are tested beyond our ability that is God's way the Lord says to us all of us today come up higher come up higher see things from my perspective my ways are not your ways says the Lord God's ways of serving him are not what we commonly see in Christendom today they are hidden no one knows the Son except the one to whom the Father reveals him the Holy Spirit has come to reveal Jesus to us and as I have traveled around Christendom in many countries I have seen very few have really seen the way Jesus went in his earthly life and that's why there is so much of shallowness and emptiness and that's

why you have authoritarian leaders in Christendom who don't know what it is to crush people's feet and to be their servants who are just becoming bigger and bigger in the pulpits lording it over people crushing people instead of being crushed themselves may God have mercy on us may God open our eyes brothers and sisters in these last days before Jesus comes again he is calling people how many of you will come may God find many among us let's bow before God in prayer we have heard words today which if we accept will lead us into the fullness of all that you heard in the previous days you could have been excited about the life you heard about in all the previous sessions what you have heard now is the way to that life he who has ears to hear let him hear there is no other way you have to

make a choice God will never force a cross on anyone but if you choose this way if you fall into the ground and die you will definitely bear much fruit your father who sees in secret who sees the sacrifices you make in secret will repay you openly and wherever you go wherever you see a man or a woman bearing much fruit you can be pretty sure there has been a falling into the ground and dying there has been no shortcut to that place I invite you my brothers and sisters choose this way the Lord says to you come up higher come up higher don't live at that low level that Christendom around you is living perhaps the low level which others in your own church are living come up higher today Heavenly Father give us grace to see the glory of this way and to walk it all the days of our life in

Jesus name Amen you know Jesus said no man taketh my life I lay it down and as brother Zach was praying he was talking about choice there I realized once again about that truth in Jesus' life he chose the way of the cross he chose to die the problem with Romans 8 36 is it says there that we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter that's God's accounting he knows that's supposed to be what we choose the problem is our accounting system isn't always reconciled the way it should be with God but we can change that by the choice that we make I know I believe that the prayer that we just were part of there was a time of choosing I know if you're here tonight you're a Christian you heard the word of God this message was for the church tonight it was for the church it was for you and I receive

it as from the Lord I don't think I'll have an invitation tonight but I hope you take that time of prayer we just had as a choice and again what do we do? we follow Jesus he says no man taketh my life I lay it down

nobody can make you die nobody can make you yield but you have to die daily and reckon yourself dead and account yourself as sheep for the slaughter and that's a different kind of accounting system than we know about than we hear so much and our flesh doesn't want to be reconciled to that but may God the spirit of God work in our hearts that we would not just hear about it and see the truth in it you know it's one thing to see a truth it's another thing to choose it you know we can say amen but if that's all it doesn't reach very far my prayer for myself is that it would reach

and that I would choose to follow Christ in all ways I thank our good God for breaking his word for us tonight I thank our good God he is so good to you and I to hear the truth to hear the word of God it's not a little thing there are many that are starving many that are starving to hear the word of God and here we have it so I praise God for that well it's a little difficult to know how to close but I think that's what we'll do and I would urge each one to continue in prayer as we leave this place and as God leads you in making choices I think

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