

March 12, 2017

“Crosswalk”

A Six-Week Journey with the Cross Part 1

“Take Up the Cross”

“Then he said to the crowd, ‘If any of you want to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me.’” Luke 9:23 NLT

Luke 9:21-27

A. All of us must make a choice to follow...

“If any of you want to be my follower...”

1. Choosing to follow Jesus is completely voluntary.
2. Choosing to follow Jesus is not forced or thrust on any of us.
3. Choosing to follow Jesus comes from an inner desire that longs to be His!

“If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it.” Mark 8:35

B. Choosing to follow Jesus is an act of surrender...

“...you must give up your own way...”

1. There is an exchange that must take place if we are going to choose to follow Jesus.
2. There is a voluntary choice to give up my way for His way!

3. The only way to pick up the cross is to let go of my own personal desires.

“My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Galatians 2:20

C. Choosing to follow Jesus is a daily decision...

“...take up your cross daily...”

1. Choosing to follow Jesus has a beginning.
2. Choosing to follow Jesus is reinforced by a renewed decision each day.
3. Choosing to follow Jesus is voluntarily choosing to give up my own will, and surrendering to His will each day!

“Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.” Romans 12:2

D. Following Jesus and no other...

“...and follow me.”

1. Choosing to follow Jesus means I am choosing to follow only one leader.
2. Choosing to follow Jesus means I am no longer directing my own life.
3. Choosing to follow Jesus means I am willing to go wherever He leads me!

“Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise.” Hebrews 10:23

E. What will your choice be?

“But if you refuse to serve the LORD, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the LORD.” Joshua 24:15

1. Are you willing to give up your own will?
2. Are you willing to choose daily His plan for your life, even if it costs?
3. Are you willing to take a place of surrender as an act of love for Jesus and to all?
4. Are you willing to make this choice, even if you have to do it alone?

Coming next:

40 Days of Prayer and Fasting –
March 5 – April 16, 2017

March 19: The Cost of the Cross

March 26: Stay Near the Cross

April 2: The Power of the Cross

April 9: Freedom Through the Cross

April 16: After the Cross - 3 Days Later

40 Brave Soldiers for Christ

“In the first century, when Hadrian was emperor of Rome, he waged war against the Christians in the empire. A group of 40 believers gathered to worship in Northern Italy. Soldiers surrounded them and said, ‘Upon order of the Emperor, your worship of this so called King of the Jews must cease immediately, or you will be executed.’ ‘Do what you will,’ answered the 40, ‘even if it costs our lives.’ So, the Roman soldiers took them into a mountainous region. It was wintertime, and the small lake in the area was a completely frozen over. The Captain of Guard said, ‘Here is one more opportunity for you to deny Jesus Christ – or we will place you on that lake all night until your bodies freeze.’ It is better to freeze for a night than to burn in hell for eternity, answered the brave believers. So, the 40 believers took off their clothes and sat naked on the ice. With teeth chattering and knees knocking, they sang, ‘40 Brave Soldiers for Christ’ as the Romans looked on and mocked them. Occasionally, the captain would call out, ‘Come to your senses, men. Deny Jesus for a moment. Come and be warmed by the fire and be saved.’ But the believers would not budge, and kept singing, ‘40 Brave Soldiers for Christ, ‘40 Brave Soldiers for Christ’. After an hour or so, one Christian stood up, able to endure the pain no longer. He ran towards the soldiers, saying, ‘I deny Jesus the Christ.’ And he was welcomed to be warmed by the fire. He couldn’t pay the price, and he turned his back on Jesus the Christ. What about us? What would happen if suddenly we were absolutely forbidden to name the Name of Jesus Christ? Would you be willing to suffer, to be tortured, to die? Remember the 40 believers on the lake in Northern Italy! After one of their brothers left and turned away, they still sang, only they changed their song to, ‘39 Brave Soldiers for Christ’. One of the Roman soldiers observing this scene was so moved that he stripped off his clothes, ran out upon the lake and said, ‘No, 40 Brave Soldiers for Christ. 40 Brave Soldiers for Christ.’”