



Take Up Your Cross

Matthew 16:24–27

SERMON NOTES

I. THE PROBLEM: FAITH IS JUST AN ADD-ON.

We've changed the lyrics of the hymn from...

"All to Jesus, I surrender, I surrender all," to...

"Some to Jesus, I conditionally surrender, I surrender some."

II. JESUS TEACHES US TO SURRENDER ALL.

Matthew 16:24 *Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."*

1. DENY OURSELVES THE "GOOD LIFE" NOW.

Romans 8:18 *I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.*

To deny oneself is to be aware only of Christ and no more of self, to see only Him who goes before and no more the road which is too hard for us. Once more, all that self-denial can say is: "He leads the way, keep close to Him." **-Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

2. TAKE UP OUR OWN CROSSES.

Matthew 10:38 *Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me.*

We are to identify fully with Jesus at the risk of facing shame, suffering, and even death in this life, just as Jesus did on the Cross.

3. FOLLOW JESUS.

2 Chronicles 20:12 *O our God...we do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.*

John 8:12 *When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

III. IT'S A TALL ORDER W/O KNOWING THE REWARD!

Matthew 16:25–26 *For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?*

Jn 12:25 *Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.*

The World's Way: Love your present life and all the world offers by pursuing worldly glory, comfort, and safety. The very fine print of this offer is that you will forfeit your soul with no way to buy it back on judgment day.

The Lord's Way: Deny yourself in this life and pursue Jesus for His glory, even knowing it may very well lead to shame, suffering, and even death. **The Good News** in bold print is that you will find eternal life and reward!

IV. WHICH “REWARD” WILL YOU RECEIVE?

Matthew 16:27 *For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.*

Jesus today has many who live His heavenly kingdom, but few who carry His cross; many who yearn for comfort, few who long for distress.

Plenty of people He finds to share His banquet, few to share His fast.

Everyone desires to take part in His rejoicing,

but few are willing to suffer anything for His sake.

There are many that love Jesus as long as nothing runs counter to them;

many that praise and bless Him as long as they receive comfort from Him.

Those who love Jesus for His own sake, not for the sake of their own comfort, bless Him in time of trouble and heartache as much as when they are full of consolation.”

–Thomas a Kempis

Today, we don't face the danger of martyrdom.

I challenge you to pick up your cross, let go of yourself and live for Christ!