

The Cross He Carried

Message Notes

Intro:

- One week away from Easter
- We are focusing the entire month on the cross of Jesus
- Last week we discussed the cup he drank
 - Drank our sin, our bondage, our curse, our rejection

There are two major sides of the cross

- On one side of the cross is the substitutionary work
 - He did it so you don't have to!
 - This is the part of the cross that no one has a problem with.
- The other side of the cross is identificational side of the cross
 - Galatians 2:20 (ESV) — 20 I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
- The top teaching of Jesus throughout the gospels
 - Mentioned in all four gospels
 - Recorded at four different moments
 - "FIND YOUR LIFE YOU'LL LOSE IT; LOSE YOUR LIFE FOR MY SAKE AND YOU'LL FIND IT"
 - On tour in Galilee - Talking about family loyalty
 - In Caesarea Philippi - When He told Peter "Get behind me Satan"
 - On journey to Jerusalem - Talking about the end of time "Lot's wife loved this life"
 - Before His crucifixion - The seed must die before it produces fruit.. The only way to true fruitfulness is death. Tertullian supported with statement "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church"
- The phrase was almost always accompanied with "If anyone wants to be my disciple, he must first pick up His cross and follow me!"

Transition - Thankfully, God gave us one of the most beautiful pictures of what it means to pick up our cross and follow Him

Mark 15:16–20 (NLT) — 16 The soldiers took Jesus into the courtyard of the governor's headquarters (called the Praetorium) and called out the entire regiment. 17 They dressed him in a purple robe, and they wove thorn branches into a crown and put it on his head. 18 Then they saluted him and taunted, "Hail! King of the Jews!" 19 And they struck him on the head with a reed stick, spit on him, and dropped to their knees

in mock worship. 20 When they were finally tired of mocking him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him again. Then they led him away to be crucified.

Luke 23:26 (NLT) — 26 As they led Jesus away, a man named Simon, who was from Cyrene, happened to be coming in from the countryside. The soldiers seized him and put the cross on him and **made him carry it behind Jesus.**

About Simon:

- He was from north Africa
- He was in town for passover
- He was the father of Rufus and Alexander
- He missed the whole morning and was coming into the city
- He was FORCED TO CARRY
 - My life is being interrupted against my will
 - I don't want to partner in this brutal murder
 - This cross is heavy
- There is no way he felt:
 - Like he was partnering with Jesus
 - Like he was suffering with Jesus
 - Like he was modeling discipleship everywhere
 - Like he was going to be seen as a servant of Christ, not a servant of Rome
 - In hind sight, WHAT A PRIVILEGE
 - Mary didn't know she was anointing Him for burial
 - Simon didn't know he was modeling discipleship
 - Joseph didn't know he was serving the resurrection

Simon says:

1. The cross was not in my PLANS

1. Simon had no intentions of carrying a cross for a condemned man.
2. Christianity means that you forgo what you wanted to do.
3. Peter learned this lesson several times
 1. Matthew 16:22–25 (NLT) — 22 But Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him for saying such things. “Heaven forbid, Lord,” he said. “This will never happen to you!” 23 Jesus turned to Peter and said, “Get away from me, Satan! You are a dangerous trap to me. You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God’s.” 24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If any of you wants to be my follower, **you must give up your own way**, take up your cross, and follow me. 25 If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.
 2. John 21:22 (NLT) — 22 Jesus replied, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? As for you, follow me.”

4. Throw your plans out the window!
5. Those who are ***led by the Spirit are the sons of God***
6. This is a life where you are not in control of where you go.

2. **The cross was not what I DESIRED**

1. Nothing in Simon wanted to do this. This did no appeal to his flesh at all!
2. Galatians 5:24–25 (NLT) — 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. 25 Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.
3. Our surrender doesn't stop with our PLANS, it also impacts what you DESIRE.
4. Cravings
 1. Lust of the flesh - I want to gratify my instincts and let myself have whatever I desire.
 2. Lust of the eyes - I want to gain the world, whatever I see I want
 3. Pride of life - I want the attention, praise, acceptance of the world
5. God says, crucify your desires. Want what comes from my hand.

3. **The cross was not good for my IMAGE**

1. Imagine Simon's embarrassment of getting caught in the procession.
2. Spit, rocks, trash, names, jokes... all being hurled at you.
3. John 15:18–19 (NLT) — 18 "If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first. 19 The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you.
4. Luke 6:22 (NLT) — 22 What blessings await you when people hate you and exclude you and mock you and curse you as evil because you follow the Son of Man.
5. Following Jesus will sometimes cause your image to be marred, misunderstood, persecuted.

4. **The cross interrupted my COMFORT**

1. There was nothing comfortable about carrying a 200lb cross for half a mile.
2. The goal of Christianity is not to live comfortable, often times it will thrust you into an uncomfortable place.
3. 2 Corinthians 11:24–26 (NLT) — 24 Five different times the Jewish leaders gave me thirty-nine lashes. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea. 26 I have traveled on many long journeys. I have faced danger from rivers and from robbers. I have faced danger from my own people, the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles. I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the seas. And I have faced danger from men who claim to be believers but are not.

But if you could interview Simon now...

- Those brief few moments defined my life!
- I never felt closer to Him than right behind Him, carrying the cross
- My eternal reward is great because I carried my cross
- What a privilege it was to be chosen to carry my cross!

Ending:

- All of us come to a Simon moment.
- This is actually what Christianity is, someone handing you a cross.
- Maybe you've wanted to be ruler of your own life, and take the substitution of the cross without the identification of it.
- Who here wants to surrender their life?