

Living the Cross-Life

Scripture Reading — Mark 8:34-35

“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” — Mark 8:34

Jesus' call is not what many think. "We all have our crosses to bear," people sometimes say when trying to explain some--one's personal struggles. Everyone has challenges of some sort. But cross-bearing has to do with submission to Christ.

This teaching is not extremely popular as the church tries to attract people to Jesus. Marketing methods tell us to make the church appealing, but bearing a cross for Jesus' sake doesn't sound attractive. Jesus, however, challenged his followers to bear their own crosses daily in sacrificial service to God's kingdom. Richard Foster calls this "the cross-life;" willing submission and voluntary servanthood to Christ.

Jesus asks his disciples to go where they'd rather not go, beyond their personal comfort zones. For example, he had his fishermen disciples take him in their boat across the Sea of Galilee. Though storms could be expected, they submitted, and they paid a price. But in the end they gained a much greater faith (Mark 4:35-41).

Living the cross-life is challenging but not complicated. Submission means, of course, loving God and our neighbors, caring for the needy, and living God's way (Exodus 20:1-17; Mark 12:30-31; John 15:9-17). We are also called to use our talents, gifts, and interests in his service.

There are many ways to submit to Jesus. Have you taken up *your* cross?

Prayer

Lord, thank you for the calling to submit to you. It's possible only in your strength. Help me today. In your name, Amen.

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