

# RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP

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John 6: 44 – “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him ...”



## ARE YOU SAVED?

What a question! Though we all want to cringe and, indignantly, look down our noses at anyone who could dare ask such a question, the fact is, the question needs to be asked of all those who call themselves Christians.

**True Christian conversion is the culmination of a collision course between a sinner, parading his very unspiritual booty (his sins) and a Savior, whose cross becomes the stopping point for any sinner who has a glimpse of purity in his heart.** Sin and a good heart collide with God and the cross of Christ and, as in any collision, the sinner is momentarily stunned. In this case, he awakens from his stupor to see that his sinful booty has evaporated into the blood of the Man on the cross and the removed weight creates a joy unlike any he has ever experienced. He feels like a new man, no longer weighed down by the same sin that, only a short time before, held him captive. He has been born again and the truth of what Jesus has done has set him free,

because when sin collides with truth, truth always wins.

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**He threw himself at the Master's feet, weeping over his sins, and received his salvation, wondering how a holy God could do such a thing for a worm like him.**

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This man did not “accept the Lord”. He grabbed hold of the Lord and aggressively took hold of the salvation that was so graciously granted him. He threw himself at the Master's feet, weeping over his sins, and received his salvation, wondering how a holy God could do such a thing for a worm like him. This man had a collision with Heaven and he walked away a new man.

There are so many in the Church today that have been coerced into “accepting the Lord” but have had no collision, no weeping, no divine touch, no outward change and, quite frankly, it is questionable as to whether they have, in fact, been saved. There is no desire in them to go deeper with the Lord. They choose not to divorce themselves from the things of the world. And they

don't want to be around any “fanatics”.

How often have we heard teachers and evangelists say, after a gospel message of salvation, “Think about these things and when you are ready, we hope you will decide for Christ?” **Decide for Christ? The decision has already been made, in Heaven. Christ has already decided for you!**

I will say it again. The cross and the sinner who has a heart for God are on a collision course. The sinner who does not have a heart for God won't even see the cross. It will pass him by. He might be coerced into “accepting the Lord”, but he will not have received salvation. Salvation is not a passive experience.

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**The sinner with a heart for the Lord throws himself at the cross wanting every sin to touch the spilt blood of his Savior.**

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## JESUS IS ALSO LORD

Col. 2: 15 – *And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public*

*spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.*

It was tradition, during that period of time, that the victor in a battle would parade through the city dragging the defeated enemy along behind him – a public spectacle – so that there was no doubt who was the victor and who was the defeated foe. And that is, according to Paul, exactly what Jesus did. Does that sound passive to you? Does that sound like “accepting the Lord”? No! The sinner with a heart for the Lord throws himself at the cross wanting every sin to touch the spilt blood of his Savior. He climbs onto his horse and rides through the city behind Jesus as the citizens cheer loudly. There occurred a collision between sin and the cross and there was a clear winner. And the winner was Jesus Christ. **And now, with salvation having been accomplished, this new man must declare and begin to serve Jesus as his Lord.**

Those who have been called by God already have their names written in the book of life. It is the will of God that brings salvation, not the will of man. Listen to what Jesus says:

John 6:44 – “*No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him ...*”

There is nothing for the sinner to “think about” regarding salvation. He either receives Christ or he rejects Him. Salvation is a powerful force that changes a sinner

into a saint-to-be; kills off the old man and creates a new man; crucifies the self and sanctifies the heart; and opens the door to complete restoration according to God’s purpose for mankind.

We have made the cross everything but what it really is – a treacherous, bloody, ungodly death sentence for the worst of all criminals. Those who were put to death on the cross were the dregs of civilization. And it was to those depths that Jesus descended so that no one would be left out. He paid the price for the worse crimes of humanity, the grossest transgressions, the vilest sins. The cross was the only way He could have died. It was a long, severe, bloody, agonizing death sentence. By the grace of God, Jesus lasted six hours on the cross. Many took twelve to twenty-four hours to die. Jesus paid the price – in full. Once that was done, there was no reason for the sentence to be prolonged.

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**When Jesus died, those who collided with the cross also died. When He rose from the dead, they, too, rose from the dead.**

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But death could not hold the Son of God. Death, like sin, came into the world through Satan’s deception. If Jesus were sent to do away with sin then he would also have to, in order for God to

be God, do away with death. Sin was defeated on the cross. Death was also defeated on the cross. When Jesus died, those who collided with the cross also died. When He rose from the dead, they, too, rose from the dead. Those who came away from that collision were changed - completely. Old things passed away. All things were new. **Their sins were eaten up by the blood of Jesus Christ.** Sin no longer has dominion over them. You must know that in every fiber of your being – sin no longer has dominion over you. Neither, dear friend, does death.

**These are not lofty, unattainable, ideals for the Christian to look up to. These are the radical facts of true salvation.** Are you, in fact, saved? Do you know that you are saved? Are you sure that you are saved? Did you have a collision with the cross? Are you changed? If you are still struggling with sin to the same degree, or nearly the same, that you were before the cross, then you need to make a decision. It’s time to collide with the cross again. Either you are going to serve the Lord or you are not. Because if you continue operating as a lukewarm Christian, Jesus Christ is going to spit you out of His mouth. Those are His words, stated clearly, to the Church in Laodicea. And they are just as clearly stated

to the Church today. Get salvation settled!

## YOUR DAILY CROSS

What does it mean to “take up your cross daily”? First, Jesus did not say, “take up your cross whenever you feel like it”. He did not say, “take up your cross every Sunday morning”, nor did He say, “take up your cross occasionally”. He said, “Take up your cross daily”. There is to be no time when you are not to be carrying your cross.

But what does it mean to carry your cross? A.W. Tozer says: “The cross is the suffering the Christian endures as a consequence of his following Christ in perfect obedience.”

Carrying your cross is yielding to God absolutely; allowing Him to do with your life whatever He pleases. And whatever that happens to represent: the suffering, the shame, the embarrassment, the pain; that, friend, is carrying your cross.

Carrying your cross also means exactly what it meant to Jesus. The cross is where your sins were crucified. The cross was where your self was crucified. The problem is: you really don't believe it. You certainly don't act like your sins and self have been crucified. Do you? Why not? It is because you have two enemies – Satan and self. They work very similarly. Satan is a liar. He was

defeated on the cross and dragged through the city for all to see. But he knows that you weren't around then. You didn't see him being dragged through the city. If he can convince you that sin is alive and well in you, then he has become a pseudo-victor. And you, in your mind, suffer defeat. And if you think that sin is alive and well and has the ability to control you, to entice you, to envelop you, and to cause you to slip into its deadly grasp, then you have believed the devil's lie. You have become a weak-kneed, powerless Christian.

And self is no different. It wants to control you; and it is in cahoots with the devil. So, how will it control you? It certainly will not do so to your benefit, regardless of what it has coerced you into thinking. You have been lied to.

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### **How can sin stand against a cross-bearing Christian who knows the truth?**

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How do you deal with this dilemma? You take up your cross daily. **Every day you must carry that cross with you so that you don't forget what was accomplished on it.** You must know, at all times, that Jesus paid the price for your salvation. He died on that cross and, by His grace and mercy, so did you. You cannot allow yourself to

forget that powerful truth. You must know, at all times, that sin was crucified on the cross. You must know, at all times, that self was also crucified on that cross. And you must know, at all times, that when Jesus died, you died and when he rose from the dead, so did you – a new man. You must know, at all times, that sin has no dominion over you. So you carry your cross every day. **When sin attempts to intrude in your life, you hold up the cross as a clear sign that it cannot do that. Stick it in the devil's face.** You have died to sin and sin has no dominion over you. And every day, sin becomes a little weaker. It has to. How can sin stand against a cross-bearing Christian who knows the truth?

## THE EFFECTS OF SIN

Sin does not jump out of the bushes, like a crouching lion, and suddenly attack you. Sin starts with a thought, a temptation. If you allow the temptation to fester, it becomes dangerous. If you do not cease from entertaining that temptation, then sin will burst forth like a shot from a cannon, only it will be more deadly.

The radical disciple, who carries his cross daily, sees the temptation for what it is. **He holds up his cross for all to see and resists temptation; and sin, like an**

**overmatched baseball player, swings and misses and walks, forlornly, back to the bench.** If the temptation slips by the radical disciple, the Holy Spirit will remind him again. He still has time to put sin in its place. “Well,” you say, “why doesn’t the Holy Spirit remind everyone like that? Why is it so hard to be a Christian?” He does. The Holy Spirit does speak to us about these things. But the weak-kneed Christian can’t hear Him. There is too much garbage in the way. The radical disciple has thrown himself on the mercy of God, yields to God daily, and carries his cross, wanting desperately to see sin and self crucified in his experience as well as in word. And it will happen for him. He will hear the Holy Spirit when He speaks. He will sense the warning about sin and temptation – and, by the grace of God, he will respond properly.

“How long will you have to carry the cross,” you ask? Until the day you die, dear friend. Satan will never give up. Ultimately, he will have respect for you – much hatred, but also respect. He will know who you are. He will know there is little he can do to you, but he will watch and wait. **Just put that cross down for a day and see what he will do.** Jesus said, “Take up your cross daily.” He said it for a reason. He knows your enemy far better than you do. Jesus is

the Captain of the Lord’s Host. And He is trustworthy. He will grant you all the grace and strength you need to serve Him according to His perfect will.

You will never stop denying yourself and you will never stop carrying your cross and because of it, you will never stop following Jesus.

Radical disciple, take Jesus at His word. Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Him.

But first, let’s make sure that we are saved.

**Please join us at the Radical Discipleship meetings every other Monday evening – at New Life Foursquare Church, 5913 Jefferson Pike, Frederick, from 7PM to 8:30PM. Next meeting is Monday, March 10<sup>th</sup>. We hope to see you!**

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