

Sermon Notes – August 21, 2016
I Pledge Allegiance 3 – Cross Bearing
Austin Evangelical Fellowship
Pastor Colin Bell

Luke 9:23 – “And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”

Reflection on the symbol of Christianity – the cross was an instrument of the most dreadful and brutal tortures. We sometimes make light metaphorically what it means to carry the cross. “It’s just my cross to bear...”

"To endure the cross is not a tragedy; it is the suffering which is the fruit of an exclusive allegiance to Jesus Christ. When it comes, it is not an accident, but a necessity. It is not the sort of suffering which is inseparable from this mortal life, but the suffering which is an essential part of the specific Christian life."

Diedrich Bonhoeffer

Luke 9:24, 25 - “For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?”

TAKING UP MY CROSS...

1. IS DEEPER THAN LIFE’S PROBLEMS

Cross bearing is not a mystical experience or the trials of life. Cross bearing is saying to Jesus, “I am willing to pay any price for Your sake; I am willing to endure shame, embarrassment, rejection, persecution, and even death, for Your sake”.

“Not all disciples were martyred, but they were willing. Not all disciples will be persecuted, but am I willing?”

Acts 21:13 – “Then Paul answered, “What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.”

1 Peter 4:12 – “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.”

"Can you really say that you are carrying your cross if it hasn't cost you anything? Take a second and answer that question in your mind. Has it cost you anything? If there is no sacrifice involved, if you are not at least a little uncomfortable, then there is a good chance that you aren't carrying your cross."

Kyle Idelman

Phil 1:29 – “For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake.”

What am I choosing in my life over Christ? What has a hold of my heart more than He does? What am I living for instead of Him?

2. IS A CHOICE (“take up the cross”)

“The cross is there, right from the beginning, he has only got to pick it up: there is no need to go out and look for a cross for himself, no need for him to deliberately run after suffering.” Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Story of nine year old Natasha from Russia – “Sir, you may take my life, but you will never take my Jesus.”

Matthew 10:37 – “Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.”

John 10:17-18 – “For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. ¹⁸No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”

“Cross to bear’ is not an idiom that is used when a challenging situation or responsibility has been put on us against our will. For a follower of Christ, a cross is not forced upon us, it is taken up.” Kyle Idelman

3. IS NOT JUST A SUNDAY ACTION

If coming to church is the extent of you following Christ, you need to take a hard look at what it means to be a follower of Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:31 – “I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day!”

Galatians 2:20 – “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.”

If you are looking for a no-cost ticket into heaven, then following Christ isn’t an option, because it will cost you everything. Christ will interfere with your life; there will be tough roads ahead, and it will be a constant daily grind that doesn’t guarantee your physical safety.

Matthew 10:38 – “And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.”