

General Topics :: Cowardly Christianity

Cowardly Christianity, on: 2006/6/12 16:32

Called to the Cross

Forsake Cowardly Christianity

By: *Jesse Morrell*

And he said to them all, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. (Luke 9:23)

The cross is a modern symbol of popular fashion but an ancient weapon of cruel death. The cross was never meant to be worn on a Christian necklace but to be worn on a Christians back. The cross was not intended to be hung on the wall but men were intended to be hung on it.

This cross, this instrument of pain and death, is the entry fee and the continual price of following Christ. The cross is not for selected Christians or only for mature Christians, but it is for all Christians who will follow in the way of their Master.

As fundamental as any Christian doctrine, the truth that all Christians are to carry their crosses is absolutely essential and undeniably necessary for the true Christian life. This doctrine of the cross is not only that Christ died for us but that we are to die daily for Him.

We live in a day when Christ's cross, in its reality with its power to cover and also to cleanse sin, is seldom taught. But we also live in a day when the Christians cross is even more uncommonly taught. Christianity without the Christians cross is Christianity without a Christian. But in America, Canada, and other parts of the world, the Church is in the sense of the Christians cross almost entirely cross-less.

Christ taught that the man who follows Him must "take up his cross daily" (Luke 9:23). A cross-less Christian is a Christ-less Christian, and is in fact no Christian at all. The promise given to followers of Christ is not a nice new set of friends or a happy community to raise children in, but the promise given by Christ is a cross. Pastors promise "seekers" happiness, fulfillment, luxury, pleasure, reward and everything else if they come to Christ. But the wisdom of the world is not the wisdom of God. Christ promised agony of flesh, rejection by the world, and finally death to self to those who sought to follow Him. And in the end, He promised eternal life.

But the suffering Church of the New Testament will not suffice for our worldly appetites today. We must have a successful Church. The persecuted Church of the New Testament does not meet the requirements of our standard for living. We must have a prospering Church. This deviation has caused the cross of self-denial to be abandoned and the cushion of self-gratification has risen in its place.

A true Church is a crucified Church. The cross affects every single aspect of the crucified man. The man who hangs on a cross is radically impacted by the cross that his family, his money, his comfort, his entire life does not go untouched. The cross covers a man from top to bottom, from his head to his feet, and there is no escaping this. There is no beautifying the cross. It is rugged wood stained with blood and reeks with the odor of death. And Christ says, "Get on it."

This cross of the Christian includes the battle against the flesh, the battle against the world, and the battle against the devil. Opposition from authorities, opposition from false brethren, opposition from family members, was apart of normal Christianity in the days of the disciples. And these are still characteristics of the normal Christian life today. Just as surely as Heaven is promised to the Christian, so also is opposition promised to the Christian, but so also is the strength to overcome and be more than a conqueror promised to the Christian.

I perceive many unspoken attitudes in the hearts of Church-goers today. "I'll live for God so long as it doesn't damage my reputation." "I'll live a holy life so long as it doesn't negatively affect my relationship with my family." "I'll pray for God's Kingdom to come so long as it doesn't touch my finances." "I'll preach the gospel so long as it doesn't land me in prison." Ultimately this is saying, "I'll follow Christ so long as there is not a cost, so long as there is no cross."

All of these attitudes stink with the stench of the wisdom of men. They smell of the fragrance of the spirit of the world, and are entirely contrary to the wisdom and knowledge of God. This is the cowardice which has replaced Christianity. But the wisdom of God, the knowledge of the Lord is not to seek to save your life, but being ready and willing to lose your life for Christ's sake. (Luke 17:33).

Christianity begins when men and women are willing to lay down all that they have for the purposes of Christ. Until a person gets to the point where they are willing to be crucified with Christ, to be willing to let go of all in order to gain Him, they have yet to reach even the entry level of Christianity. This mentality of total abandonment unto Christ is not to be the exception for the Christians life but is to be the rule for all Christian lives.

Being a follower of Christ, boldly and loudly proclaiming the gospel, living a holy life, will surely cost you your entire life. The path of Christ is the path of martyrdom. The path of Christianity has always been lit by the light of burning martyrs. Though not all Christians will die the death of a martyr, all Christians are to live the life of a martyr.

The modern comfortable Church must be transformed into a conquering Church and that will happen only when this heroic spirit of Christianity is recaptured. We must so value souls and so love Christ that the anthem of the Church becomes "His Kingdom at any cost!"

As an old hymn says,

"There is a love constraining me
To go and seek the lost;
I yield, O Lord, my all to Thee
To save at any cost"

But when our Christian encouragements consist of, "just stay out of trouble," "don't get arrested," "don't make people angry," "be safe," "don't be a nuisance," "don't be a martyr," then it's no wonder the devil and his kingdom continues to advance and gain more and more power in our country and in the rest of the world. The salvation of souls must be viewed more valuable than the securing of our own lives. A soul winning Church is a Church that would rather see their own lives taken than to see the souls of lost men to be damned.

Cowardly Christianity never poses a threat to the powers and principalities of darkness. Cowardly Christianity never grabs hold of a generation and re-shapes history. Only Courageous Christianity is Kingdom Christianity. A pampered Church is never a powerful Church. A comfortable Church is a crippled Church. But Christ wants a crucified Church, dead to the love of praise, practice of sin, and pleasure of the world.

E. M. Bounds once wrote that a Christian "must throw himself, with all the abandon of a perfect, self emptying faith and a self-consuming zeal, in his work for the salvation of men. Hearty, heroic, compassionate, fearless martyrs must be the men who take hold of and shape a generation for God. If they be timid time-servers, place-seekers; if they be men-pleasers or men-fearers; if their faith has a weak hold on God or His Word; if their denial be broken by any phase of self or the world, they cannot take hold of the Church of the World for God."

The Church which fears neither death nor man but only God is an unstoppable Church. Their very blood becomes drops of water to the seed of the gospel. To silence the Apostles the devil needed to resort to execution. Is that true of us today? Will the decrease of your popularity or favor silence your lips? Will the prospect of suffering and pain hinder your speech? Or will you all the more boldly proclaim the gospel and dedicate your life for God's purposes? Only once the Church is dead entirely to self and absolutely to the world can it live wholly to the Lord.

Michael Brown once said, "You know who wins the battle? You know who wins the war? Whoever is willing to die for the principles they stand for."

We must rid ourselves of all thoughts of self preservation and replace it with actions of self-sacrifice. Our attitude must be that of Christ who said, "Not my will, but Thine, be done." (Lu 22:42) Our perspective must be that of Paul who said, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Corinthians 4:17-18)

Lay down your life with all of your hopes, dreams, and desires for the sake of Christ and His gospel and pick up the cross

s, seeking not to save your own life but to give it for the Kingdom of God.

The gates of hell will shake and the hosts of hell will tremble when the heartbeat of the Church becomes, "His Kingdom at any cost!"

E. M. Bounds quote found in "A Treasury of Prayer" compiled by Leonard Ravenhill page 91. Printed by Ravenhill Books in 1973.

Hymn quotation found in "Why Revival Tarries" by Leonard Ravenhill, page 127. Bethany House Publishing.

Re: Cowardly Christianity - posted by Tash (), on: 2006/6/12 16:54

Called to the Cross, i believe the way the cross is being spoken about here on this site is becoming impressed on our hearts by the Spirit. The church has lost its effectiveness in magnifying Christ, the Cross needs to be on every Christians back. God is building this in me and my fellow brothers in Christ.

I remeber Ravenhill once said "we take people to the cross, but we don't get them on the cross".

Re: Cowardly Christianity - posted by myfirstLove (), on: 2006/6/12 21:13

amen, amen.

God has burned the message of the cross upon my heart too and filled me with fiery zeal to preach it.

"Called to the Cross, i believe the way the cross is being spoken about here on this site is becoming impressed on our hearts by the Spirit. The church has lost its effectiveness in magnifying Christ, the Cross needs to be on every Christians back. God is building this in me and my fellow brothers in Christ."

yes, tash, i agree. God is building in me such simple, but deep truth of the cross in me too and i am, by His Spirit living and sharing it with my brothers and sisters too with much feverent love for my first Love, with all purity, no apologies. for i am not ashame of the of the cross for it is life to those who believe and walk in it!

it is when you believe and preach the cross, all hell comes at you. but, thank God we have the shield of faith that protect s us from the fiery darts of the evil ones. God makes us alert and watchful, we will not be overcome, but we overcome by faith in Him!

Glory to You, our God! thankyou Father for reavealing Your truth to us! thankyou for raising us up to spread your message with no shame, in all love, enabling us by your grace to be united with You in death that we may be truly ressurected and give You the utmost glory on earth!

1 Corinthians 1:18

18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the POWER OF GOD.

Re: - posted by Tash (), on: 2006/6/13 2:44

Quote:
-----it is when you believe and preach the cross, all hell comes at you. but, thank God we have the shield of faith that protects us from the fiery darts of the evil ones. God makes us alert and watchful, we will not be overcome, but we overcome by faith in Him!

Yes that is true 'SHIELD OF FAITH' , this morning the Spirit woke me up to read Ephesians 6 then after that Ephesians

3. and its not the first time God has made me read this. May the Spirit reveal to us His children much concerning the cross. I want to serve the Lord with all my heart and strength and the only way this can be achieved is through the Spirit crucifying my 'self' on the cross and leaving it there. I also pray this is the mentality of all who want to serve our Lord.

Re:, on: 2006/6/13 14:23

The most powerful life that a person can live is a crucified life. When self-satisfaction is replaced with self-sacrifice and self as a whole is replaced with the Spirit. To be able to truly say, "It is no longer I that liveth but Christ that liveth in me!" That is the life I want to live now and forever.

Re: - posted by IRONMAN (), on: 2006/6/13 18:59

AMEN brethren

sacrificing it all, rights priviledges the whole lot is a most brutal painful, thing. However it is the only way to victory. make no mistake, the enemy will come and get you once he sees you go all out for the gospel. then again one result of going all out for the gospel is the enemy gets trampled on, he doesn't like that and will take special interest in any who will do that his...however the word says no weapon formed against us will prosper. this is not to say that said weapon won't be used against you even to the point of one more blow meaning death, but that even so we have the victory!