



## Articles and Sermons :: Avoiding the Cross: Unwillingness to Suffer by Basilea Schlink

**Avoiding the Cross: Unwillingness to Suffer by Basilea Schlink - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2010/5/29 18:39**

How can these things be compatible: we want to be Christians, disciples of Jesus Christ, who bore the cross for the whole world and chose to do so voluntarily, and yet we reject our own cross? Jesus says, "He who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10: 38), and "Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14: 27). One day Jesus will say to those who avoided their crosses, "I do not consider you to be My disciples!" Then the door to His kingdom will be closed.

What severe judgment will come upon us, if we refuse to carry the cross that has been laid upon us and complain about it to God and man! Our complaints are usually accusations. If we bear our suffering by saying "Yes, Father" we will come to great glory one day above, and here on earth we will be led into an intimate fellowship of love with Jesus. But if we avoid the cross, we will experience just the opposite. Here on earth we will become unhappy, because we are separated from Jesus. Only those who are His true followers, who go the way of the cross with Him, will be near Him here, and then above for all eternity.

If we want to be with Jesus and want our lives to end in the City of God, there is only one way-the way of the cross. Jesus is asking each of us personally "Will you choose My way of the cross?" He is beckoning to us in love, "Come, follow Me; take up your cross!" If we do not follow the call of Him who loves us more than anyone else, if we refuse to take up our cross and even rebel against it, we will have to hear the Lord say to us as He did to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan!" (Matt. 16: 23). For then the tempter has us in his grip. He will bring all those who do not want their crosses into the kingdom of hell. Then they will have to suffer much worse. Satan wants to use every means to deter us from going the way of the cross, because he does not want us to reach the kingdom of eternal joy. There our cross will change to joy, if we carry it for Jesus here. This is a decision which will have far-reaching consequences for all eternity.

If we want to enter Jesus' kingdom one day and inherit the crown of life, we have to follow the Apostle Paul's advice, "Take your share of suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 2: 3). We should surrender ourselves to suffering, for instance, if God lays a cross upon us, if we have to suffer unjustly, if people hurt us without reason, scold us and treat us badly, it is then that we must follow in His footsteps. "When He was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he trusted to him who judged justly" (1 Pet. 2: 23). If we want to choose the "ways in Christ" (1 Cor. 4: 17), we will suffer everything; persecuted and reviled, we will bless; suffering unjustly, we will be "refuse", a door mat for all. Then we are on Jesus' side. Then He will recognize us as His disciples and want to share His glory with us above, giving us thrones and crowns. Those who have suffered with Christ and have patiently borne various types of suffering and afflictions, such as bodily hardships, disappointments, loneliness, the death of dear ones and family troubles, will inherit eternal glory with Jesus (Romans 8: 17). But if we belong to those who complain about every cross and are discouraged and even accuse God with the question, "Why me? Why do I have to suffer?" we could be destroyed by God's verdict. "But as for the cowardly . . . their lot shall be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.. ." (Rev. 21: 8).

So everything depends upon whether we really bear our crosses. But how can we get free when we are bound by fear of the cross? The first "must" is to recognize the reason for trying to avoid the cross! We need the insight of truth for our unredeemed, sinful nature. We need to repent of this sinful trait, which makes us guilty again and again. Whoever has recognized how contaminated he is with sin, and is really sorry about it and wants to be freed no matter what it costs, will willingly accept discipline and suffering of all sorts from God. For he tells himself soberly, "I need the crosses to purify and transfigure me into the image of Jesus and so reach the goal of heavenly glory." But whoever does not take his sins and the eternal goal seriously will find that every type of suffering is too much for him. He will complain about it and accuse God and man instead of honestly admitting that he needs suffering and chastening, and lamenting about his own weaknesses and sins. So we need to ask for contrition over this blindness. Then our attitude towards the cross will change and we will see His blessing in it.

Simply by suffering in the flesh we stop sinning (1 Pet. 4: 1). God allows a cross to enter a sinful area of our lives-so that the sin may be put to death, in this way we become transformed more and more into Jesus' image and one day will be able to see Him face to face. Through discipline we share His holiness (Heb. 12: 10) and without holiness, no one will see the Lord (Heb. 12: 14). For instance, the cross of losing earthly goods, if willingly accepted, has often freed people from their bondage to things of this world, making them free to live for Jesus and His kingdom. Or the cross of losing a beloved

d person, to whom we were bound, freed our soul to give Jesus undivided love and brought the greatest happiness into our hearts. The cross brings glory and deep joy even here on earth, because God the Father in His love cannot wait until eternity; He yearns to reward us here also.

The second "must" for becoming free from trying to avoid the cross is to look at the Father, whose heart is full of love for His child and who carefully considers how much we can bear and what will be best for us. He gives us the very cross that can bring us to glory. He hides a wonderful treasure in our cross. We are to discover it: wonderful fruit, transfiguration, victory, eternal joy, oneness with Jesus. And we must tell ourselves again and again, "Because God is love, suffering is never the end of the story. God always has a way out of suffering; He always has comfort and aid, for He is my Father." Faith in the Father's love, which has given us this cross, will make difficult things easy and bitter things sweet.

At the same time look at Jesus. He was the Crossbearer. Humbly bending beneath the heavy burden, He carried His cross lovingly to Calvary for us. He has gone on before us and levelled the ground for us so that we will not stumble. Now He is bearing our cross with us. He knows what it means to carry the cross, since He bore the sins and suffering of all mankind. He knows how to help and strengthen us. Should we not trust Jesus that we can bear it? Yes, if we bear our cross with Jesus, we will come closer to Him than ever before and experience His joy.

So let us renounce our mistrust and stop thinking that God is not love and that He brings us suffering without comfort and aid. For such thoughts nourish our desire to avoid the cross and turn our cross into an unbearable burden. Then we will really become unhappy. The worst suffering is our own desire to avoid the cross. That is why we want to renounce this sin. In faith we want to praise the power of Jesus' redemption and experience this power in our lives.

My Lord Jesus,  
You are called the Crucified Lord and the Crossbearer.  
I have chosen You as my Lord, given You my  
will and my love, desiring to follow You.  
Hear my plea:

May You never have to say to me: "You are not  
worthy of Me; you cannot be My disciple", because I  
did not want to carry my cross.

Grant me the grace to say "Yes Father" to every  
cross, trusting that it has been prepared for me personally  
and comes from the loving hands of the  
Father. It will bring me an abundance of divine  
blessing.

Grant me grace to rejoice in my sufferings (Rom. 5: 3),  
because they transform me and prepare me for  
Your kingdom of joy and glory-and also give me  
intimate fellowship with You, my Lord Jesus, here  
on earth, and let me taste eternal joy.

I thank you, my Lord Jesus, for showing us:  
In the cross is great fruit  
in the cross is glory  
in the cross is victory, power and resurrection.  
The cross frees my soul from this earth and draws me to heaven.  
The cross brings me gain here and above.

Teach me to love my cross as a precious gift from  
Your hand, which I will thank You for in eternity.  
Out of love for You, my Lord Jesus, I wish to follow  
You. Make me a true cross-bearer. Amen.

**Re: Avoiding the Cross: Unwillingness to Suffer by Basilea Schlink - posted by mkal, on: 2010/5/31 5:18**

This is very wonderful my friend. This is the message that is lacking today...the message of the cross. We run from the very cross that will deliver us, but this message is unpopular today. Satan does his best to hide the truth of the cross, thus leaving God's people in bondage.

**Re: - posted by whyme, on: 2010/5/31 10:51**

Satan tried to tempt Jesus to avoid the cross with fame, power, or comfort. He is still tempting His church with the same alternatives to the cross life. The story is we can have Christ and comfort too; Christlikeness and the American dream are not mutually exclusive we are told. It's tragic the way the bait and hook are clear but we all in varying degrees still bite. Praying, fasting, dependence, trusting and God's word are still the Christ like path of resistance.