

# Will You Carry Your Cross?

Have you ever heard the phrase, “That’s just my cross to carry....” from a friend going through hard times? Or have you ever used that phrase when you were going through a hard time and you had the feeling that you had to handle that cross or burden all on your own?

There are so many things I want include this month about Jesus’ mention of “taking up your cross....” But there is one particular incident in the scripture that seems to be jumping out at me. It may seem insignificant but it is mentioned in three of the gospels....so it must have some weight to it, right?

The specific occurrence I am referring to is when Simon of Cyrene is met coming from the country as Jesus is carrying his cross. The soldiers, for reasons we can only imagine, compelled Simon to bear Jesus’ cross.

*Matthew 27:32 - And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.*

*Mark 15:21 - And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross.*

*Luke 23:26 -And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.*

I did some research and found that this one incident has much significance in more ways than one. I want to focus on how Simon’s mention seems to affirm that Jesus was definitely a man.

I have heard it before, “well, he was God incarnate....he probably didn’t suffer like a real man would have....” or something along those lines, referring to the scourging and beating Jesus took before he died. And reading through the gospel’s accounts - there is no mention of him reacting as you would think a man should react under such circumstances. The groans and shrieks of pain that I can

“hear” in my imagination are not mentioned by the apostles. This leaves doubters with ammunition to “verify” their claim that Jesus really felt no pain....or for others to feel somewhat disconnected from Jesus when he seems to show no signs of physical pain in his words that are spoken. Did he really endure the beating that they say he did?

Did he really feel pain in the physical sense?

Yes. I can only try to put myself there in the crowd and ask myself what would compel the same soldiers that were mocking him and spitting on him as they beat him, to allow - they even compelled - someone else to carry his cross. It seems that there were only one of two reasons: either because Jesus was so weak that they had begun to actually feel sorry for him....or they were afraid that he would die before he made it to the final destination. This assures me that he was feeling the physical pain....and it was apparent enough that the insensitive soldiers were even aware of it.

I think the one “blessing” that I got out of this passage when I think about Simon being compelled (they pretty much made him) carry Jesus’ cross.... was that Jesus also allowed him. Oh yes....if Jesus had wanted to, he could have called on the angels and called the whole thing off....but he didn’t. He suffered and he hurt and he took the beating. And in the midst of it all, when he was offered relief....he didn’t deny it. He allowed Simon to help him carry his burden for a REASON.

How many times in scripture before Jesus actually physically carried the cross did he make mention of the words “pick up your cross and follow me?”

*Matthew 10:38 - And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.*

*Matthew 16:24 - Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*

*Mark 8:34 - And when he had called the people*

*unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*

*Mark 10:21 - Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.*

*Luke 9:23 - 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.*

At least five....Jesus knew how he was going to die, and there was a reason he made mention of this and then the plan also involved a visual account of this for his followers. Simon didn’t have much of a choice from what I understand. But we do.

Would you pick up the cross and follow Jesus? Would you be willing to put yourself in positions of ridicule and scorn for him in today’s world?

Sometimes it is easier to lay low and not draw any attention to ourselves as Christians, but is that what Jesus meant when he told us to take up our cross? Was the cross he was referring to the same cross that Simon carried after Jesus? Are we to stand up and follow him and endure whatever is “thrown” at us because we choose to follow him?

If we are to carry our cross, then how far must we carry it, you ask?

Well, Jesus accepted the help of Simon, as we should accept help from Jesus and other Christians....but according to *John 19:17 - And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha:*

Jesus carried his cross until it was finished.

Until next month....

Happy Trails & God Bless!

Christa

## Last & most important thought...

### **Salvation is a gift and a choice.....**

Jesus died on the cross as the final sacrifice. When He was resurrected on the 3rd day, he defeated Satan for us. All we have to do is believe that He beat death and acknowledge it with our words. If we believe that and accept Him as our personal savior...we are promised eternal life with Him in Heaven. You can’t earn your way into Heaven; you have to believe your way there. So many people think they “aren’t good enough” to get to Heaven... But... Salvation is a GIFT from God and you don’t earn a gift. Gifts are something someone gives to you and for the gift to be yours, you have to accept it. All we have to do is accept that wonderful gift. I know I have...won’t you?

***But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God’s grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many. Romans 5:15***

***For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16***

***That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. Romans 10: 9-10***