

THE WAY OF THE CROSS

MARK 8:31-38

Recap: May 9, 2024

Speaker: Bishop A.L. Smith

Scripture: Matthew Mark 8:31-38, Psalm 37:4, Romans 1:16

Sermon Main Point

We live in a world filled with options and opportunities. The “paths” we have available to choose from are endless. We often struggle to find the “right” path, the correct direction, and the way of peace in a world of noise and chaos. In the midst of it all stands Jesus, who calls us to deny ourselves, lay down our lives, and to follow Him.

Sermon Overview

[Point 1- The Way of the Cross \(Mark 8:34-35\)](#)

“Notice the universal invitation to be Jesus' disciples (Everyone Is Invited) But there is a cost (i.e., salvation is free to us, but discipleship is necessary and very expensive personally). "He Must Deny Himself"

Deny Himself

- **Bible:** *"denying yourself" means rejecting one's own way of achieving desires and trusting in God to do so. It can also mean turning away from the "old self" and putting on a new self in Christ.*
- **World/Merriam-Webster:** *is an idiom that means to not allow oneself to have things or enjoy them. For example, "On this diet, I don't feel like I'm denying myself. I'm not denying myself the foods that I love, I'm just eating smaller amounts"*

And after one has successfully denied themselves, there must be a taking up of the cross.

Take Up Your Cross and follow Me:

- *Taking up our cross to follow Christ means, simply, commitment to the point of giving up our hopes, dreams, possessions, even our very life if need be. This is the attitude – the only acceptable attitude – of a true disciple (Luke 14:27)*
- *Take up your cross and follow me" is a phrase that means to give up your ego and accept your weaknesses, and to obey Jesus daily. **It's a call to be as submissive to Jesus as the condemned criminal was to his death.***

Originally, "this phrase "take up your cross" referred to a condemned criminal having to carry his own crossbar to the place of crucifixion. This was cultural imagery for a painful, shameful death. In this context it refers to "death to our old sin nature."

[Point 2- What's a Soul Worth? \(Mark 8:36-37\)](#)

Many of us have heard stories of the rich and famous, who, after gaining all their fame, riches, and notoriety, concluded that there was still something missing from their lives. (Jim Carrey, Oprah, Chris Tucker, Angela Bassett) How much of our own personal and professional disillusionment comes from chasing things that don't matter, hoping they will satisfy the deep longings of our souls? (The House, Car, Money, Clothing, Jewlery)

- **Psalm 37:4-6** -*"Delight yourself in the Lord, and HE will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act. He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday."*
- **Romans 8:28** *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to HIS purpose*
- **Proverbs 3:6** In all your ways acknowledge **HIM**, and he will make straight your paths
- **Joshua 1:9** Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord **YOUR GOD** is with you wherever you go.
- **Jeremiah 29:11** For I know the plans I have for you, declares **THE LORD**, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

What's a soul worth? Maybe a better question is, "What's your eternal peace and contentment worth?" Is there anything worth trading away for the eternal grace and unfailing love we find in Jesus Christ?

[Point 3- Wholeheartedly and Unashamedly \(Mark 8:38\)](#)

Jesus warns against being ashamed of Him and His words. He promises that those who are unashamedly devoted to Him in this life will be honored by Him in the next. Following Christ wholeheartedly means prioritizing our relationship with Him above all earthly concerns, regardless of the opinions or reactions of others.

- **Romans 1:16**- "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jews first and also to the Greek"
- **1 Peter 4:16**- "Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name"
- **Psalm 25:1-10** "O my God, I trust in thee: Let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me. Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: Let them be ashamed which transgress without cause"

Despite facing opposition and persecution, Paul remained steadfast in his commitment to preach the gospel, as we should unashamedly proclaiming the truth of Christ... Paul could do this because He encountered the radical transformative love of Christ.