

An Every Day Death

Luke 9:23

“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”

Did you know that the right slogan can not only bring your company to a customer’s mind but also create a desire for the product? The symbol and logo should be memorable. For example, I will say a slogan and you tell me what company it represents. Ready?

- Melts in your mouth not in your hand.
 - Just do it.
- You’re in good hands withAllstate.
 - It keeps going, and going, and going
 - Every kiss begins withK

Those companies have spent a lot of money to put that in your heads to attract as many of us as possible. With that in mind, what would you say the symbol or slogan be for Christ followers? Jesus lays it out in Luke 9:23. So the slogan for Christ followers should be: ‘Come and Die’.

It’s not a slogan people flock to; it’s a slogan people flee from. No one wants to talk about death. We don’t like to say the word. When someone dies we say things like, they’ve passed on/ they’ve gone ahead/ they’re no longer with us/ they’ve kicked the bucket/ they’ve bought the farm/ they’re pushing up daisies/ they’re swimming with the fish.’

The symbol for followers of Christ isn’t any better. It is a cross. An instrument of torture and death. Why couldn’t Jesus use a dove or a shepherd’s staff, or a rainbow? Why choose two bloody beams nailed together?

The first thing I want you to see is, the cross was **a symbol of humiliation.**

- The Romans had a number of ways to carry out an execution. They knew how to carry it out cheaply as well. Some people were burned alive, stoned, forced to drink poison, and ran through with a sword.

- Crucifixion on the other hand was expensive. It took four soldiers and a centurion to oversee it. It was much more expensive. So why crucifixion? The answer; for humiliation. They wanted to make a public statement.
- The Bible tells us that they humiliated and mocked Jesus. They crucified him naked on a cross. Philippians 2 tells us that Jesus “made himself nothing.”
 - The cross was a **symbol of suffering**.
 - After being beaten beyond recognition, the Roman soldiers put the horizontal beam on his back. The beam was 125 lbs. and was placed on his open wounds. It’s no wonder he had a hard time carrying it down the Via Dolorosa (or, the way of suffering).
 - There is a junk theology that says if you are having problems that are difficult then it is evidence that you must not be following Jesus.
 - Here are some scriptures that will help prepare us for our trials in life and give us a Biblical perspective while we are in the fight. Luke 6:22, “Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man.” 2nd Timothy 3:12, “Everyone who wants to live a Godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” Philippians 1:29 “For it has been granted unto you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him.”
 - Ultimately the cross was a **symbol of death**.
 - When Jesus got to Golgotha, the place of the skull, the soldiers put the horizontal beam and the vertical beam together and nailed Jesus hands and feet to the cross. Hours later they thrust a spear into his side to confirm his death.

- When we become followers of Jesus we die to our own plans, pursuits, and desires. Jesus invites all of his followers to die to themselves!

- **Comfort Theology**

- Most of us commit our time and resources to make our lives as comfortable as possible. We are by nature comfort seekers, not cross bearers.
- Even some church movements are teaching this comfort theology. They want everyone to feel as comfortable as possible. Not preaching anything offensive.
- Then we begin to see the consequences of this comfort theology when someone gets sick or their finances take a hit. They start to question God because according to the gospel that was preached to them, God isn't holding his end of the deal!
- Someone once said, "What you win them with is what you win them to." Let me give you an example: I'm going to read to you a 'For Sale' description of a car.
- This is how many sermons are presented. The cross gets covered up. The sermons are often about salvation, but never about surrender. Often about living but never about dying.
- Instead of giving the people the truth of God's Word, the people are given a more palatable version. By doing that we rob the gospel of its power and the people of the life God has for them.

- **Choosing to die.**

- When Jesus calls us to follow him, he says, "take up your cross..." The word "take" indicates that dying is a choice we make, and not something that is forced on us.

- You've all heard the phrase, "cross to bear". It's an idiom that is used when we are faced with a challenging situation or something has been forced on us against our will. For followers of Christ a cross is not forced upon us, it is taken up. Jesus said in John 10:18 "No one takes my life from me, but I lay it down of my own accord."
 - Dying to ourselves is not a onetime decision. It's a daily one.
- Think of it this way. Your life is a \$100.00 bill. Most of us think of dying to ourselves as this one big moment where hand over our \$100.00 bill. But following Jesus isn't a onetime deal. Think of it like this: Cash your 100 dollar bill for the equivalent in pennies, and give to God each day one penny that represents your daily surrender.
- In closing, when we die to ourselves and completely surrender to him, there is a surprising side effect to dying; we discover life, a life we so desperately wanted all along.