

Come And Follow Me....

be my disciple....

and don't forget your cross



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By Rev. Elwin Thomas Knight Jr.

Much of what we hear today from the pulpits of America is a gospel that would be unknown to the early Christians and Church fathers. The Gospel of the early church was one of salvation by the blood of Jesus Christ, preservation and empowerment by the Holy Spirit and sanctification by the Word of God. At the heart of the Gospel is the forgiveness of God through Jesus; who was crucified on the Cross for the judgment of sin and raised from the dead for our justification. The Gospel in the life of the early Christian was one of personal denial as they forsook the world around them and embraced the Kingdom and Lordship of Jesus Christ.

What made the early Christian different was that they understood the call of their Lord to come follow Him. For many of the early Christian's, and some in third world countries today, it meant social and economical ostracism by their families, community and society. For them to become a Christian at times meant not only to be rejected by the world around them but also to be declared a criminal and a enemy to the state. For them the call to follow Jesus had a real and personal impact in their daily lives.

His call for them and for us today, found five times in the New Testament is a call to the crucified life; it is a call to the Cross.

1. Matt 10:38Mat 10:38 And he who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me.

2. Matt 16:24.... Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.

3. Mark 8:34.... And calling near the crowd with His disciples, He said to them, Whoever will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.

4. Luke 9:23 And He said to all, If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

5. Luke 14:27 And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me, he cannot be My disciple.

In His call for us to take up the cross, Jesus makes the following observations regarding the crucified life.

First, His summons is a call for us to come into a relationship with Him through His cross. As a part of

this relationship He requires us to be worthy of Him. Those who would be deserving of the Kingdom of God and its Lord, must have the same commitment to Jesus as He has to them. It is a relationship of trust towards Him as each obeys the call to follow. Regardless of where He goes we are to follow, even to the ends of the earth or our own life. His call to relationship is an invitation to become His disciple. To be willing, to be molded in His image and to serve His cause.

The second observation is that we are to take up the cross. It is not His cross that we are to carry, nor that of someone else, but our own. Each person who would follow after Him is to carry their own personal cross. Because each cross is personal it must be carried willingly by a broken heart which has cried out before the Lord God "Thy will be done". The cross that we are to take up is not a fashion statement worn on the weekend to enhance our wardrobe or declare our religious affiliation. It is a daily reality that I am crucified with Christ.

The third and last comment given is that we are to deny self. Jesus' idea of self denial is not one of religious duty which is practiced on some holiday or any denial based on mans religious law. It is not denial for denial's sake, but what He requires is that we deny the "SELF" and all that is in the world which self seeks after. What we are to deny is the "lust of the eye which desires all the things that the world offers. Along with the lust of the eye we are to deny

the lust of the flesh and those desires of the body which cry out to be unleashed. All that gives us identity outside of God is to be denied because of our own pride of life. The apostle John in I John 2:16-17 states that "For all that is in the world the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world And the world passes away, and the lust thereof but he that does the will of God abides for ever.

The Cross

To understand the meaning of the cross, as used by Jesus in these text, is to understand it's application in His own life. Long before nails pierced His flesh, He had taken up His cross. Jesus states in John 8:42, that He came into the world because He was sent by His Father. His incarnation was an act of love (agapaō) ⁽¹⁾ and obedience by Him, in response to a command given by His Father. Throughout His life, Jesus walked in obedience to the daily directions given to Him.

In John 8:28, Jesus states, "I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

And in John 8:29 And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him."

Jesus life was an expression of love (agapaō) for His Father, lived daily in obedience God's commands. He identified with those who did the will of God, stating that they were part of His family - Matthew 12:50.

His cross was the will of God, which He carried daily. It was personal because it was God's will for Him alone to fulfill. From the very beginning He understood where the will of His Father was going to take Him. Long before He entered the city He had already taken up His cross, because He was already carrying the Will of His Father. This was tested in the garden when Jesus prayed that the Will of His father be done regardless of what He felt at the time. At that moment He surrendered to the Will of His Father who's "Will" crossed His own natural human will. He was loving (agapaō) His neighbor (you and me), according to the Will of His father. In obedience to God, Jesus took up the instrument of His death, and carried the will of His Father, to a hill outside Jerusalem called golgotha.

The Cross in the Life of The Believer.

The cross of the Christian is the "Will of God" which will cross our own natural will. Like Jesus, we are required to take up our cross and die to this world and all that it offers; unlike Jesus, we are not required to receive nails. The cross of Jesus Christ in the Christians life defines our relationship with our Lord and how we love Him and our neighbor.

The cross of God will have purpose in the life of the Christian. From the foundation of time God the Father had established in Christ, His will for each person who would call upon the name of Jesus.
(Eph 1:3-14)

Like the cross of Jesus, our cross is personal. It is the will of God the Father which is expressed as His will for our personal life. This will be different for each believer, because God's will for each believer is not the same. But the general outcome in the life of the believer will be similar because we all are being conformed into the image of our Lord.

The cross of the Christian is to be received as an act of love (agapaō) and obedience to God; by each believer. It is obedience to His will in every aspect of our life. There is not one area of a Christian's existence that is exempt from the will of God. We are to pull down every bit of pride and every thought that exalts itself against the will of God, and to bringing under control every aspect of our life; into the obedience of Christ. 2 Corinthians 10:5

The will of God or the Christians cross is a daily reality in the life of the believer. Paul states that he and other believers were always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered daily unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus may be daily manifested in our mortal flesh. 2 Corinthians 4:10-11 ASV. There is

no holiday from carrying ones own cross. God's will is ever present for those who will listen.

We have become so accustomed to this expression—"taking up one's cross"—in the sense of "being prepared for trials in general for Christ's sake," that we are apt to lose sight of its primary and proper sense here—"a preparedness to go forth even to crucifixion," as when our Lord had to bear His own cross on His way to Calvary. Your cross is God's death sentence for "self" and all that self lust after. It's primary purpose is to kill you, to bring you to a place of death.

To be a follower of Jesus each believer must follow Jesus as Jesus followed His Father. Christ obeyed His Father's will, and finished His plan for the salvation of men; though it required him to die upon the cross in order to do it. And ever since, the cross has stood as the emblem, not of suffering for the sake of suffering, but of suffering for the cause of Christ and His gospel.

To follow Christ is to take him for our master, our teacher, our example; to believe his doctrines, to uphold his cause, to obey his precepts, and to do it though it leads to heaven, by the will of God, by the way of the our own cross.

The cross in the life of the disciple.

Jesus states in Luke 14:27, "Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." To be a disciple of Jesus is to be obedient to Him as Lord and faithful to the will of God. The call to discipleship is on Christ's terms, not ours.

Many in the church today have dictated the terms of righteousness that they will accept to be His follower. They have declared political correctness, under the covering of universal love, as the new standard of righteousness. In many of churches in America, and Europe, the church leaders, bishops, archbishops and others, have declared that they have authority to disagree with the Bible and with Jesus Christ. In order to be popular with the world, they seek to edit, twist and manipulate His teachings to reject what they (and the world) don't happen to like.

They deny the very uniqueness of Jesus Christ. They deny His pre-existence as the Word of God, the second person of the trinity. They deny He is unique in his Incarnation. They deny His ability to perform miracles. They deny His teachings, and they deny His resurrection from the dead. They deny that the Bible is the subsistence of God's truth, revealed, objective, accessible, universal and timeless.

Such persons are not disciples of Jesus and I would say that they are not even born of the Spirit of God.

They are false sheep; wolves in sheep's clothing. Paul spoke of such in Second Timothy 3:5 – "saying that they have the form of religion but deny the power of it. Avoid such people." They are of the world and are Anti-Christ, because they have denied the very Son of the living God. Be careful who you allow to be your teacher.

The cost of discipleship is determined by the Master, and not by the servant. As a true disciple of Jesus, you will become unpopular. Nothing is more offensive to the world, than the claim of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and that of the Bible. Nothing will anger them more than the truth of Christ lived out in the life of one of His disciples. Remember what Jesus told the twelve disciples in John 15:18-21

(18) "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. (19) If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. (20) Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also. (21) But all this they will do to you on my account, because they do not know him who sent me.

If your going to follow Jesus as His disciple, understand that it will bring opposition from your mate, family, friends, employer, other church members, the world, and satan.

Luke in his gospel tells of three individuals who desired to be disciples of Christ (Luke 9:57-62).

One of the individuals must have been listening to the teaching of Christ and he approached and said, "I will follow you wherever you go" (v. 57). It is easy to get caught up in the enthusiasm and excitement of the moment and join the crowd. But this man must have failed to think through what following Jesus involves. Jesus did not want him to have any false apprehensions. He said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head" (v. 58). At the end of His ministry, the day of His crucifixion, Jesus owned nothing, but the clothes on His back. The cost of discipleship for Jesus was high. To follow the will of His heavenly Father, Jesus was obedient unto death, even the disgraceful death through execution as a criminal. It cost Him His life. Jesus calls us to, what seems to be, a radical discipleship. Is this the reason so many drop out after joining up?

Another person heard the call, "Follow Me" (v. 59). But he replied, "Permit me first to go and bury my father" (v.59b). Was the man's father really dead? Probably not, because he was there listening to Jesus. If his father had been dead this man would

have been busy with the details because, in Jesus' day, a person had to be buried the same day that he died. The man is probably saying that he wants to wait and remain at home as long as his father lives, and then he will consider following Jesus after this phase of his life is over. Jesus' call to discipleship is radical. "Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the Kingdom of God" (v. 60). Let the spiritual dead bury the dead. They are dead to spiritual realities. On the other hand, those who are spiritually alive will drop everything, to follow Jesus; as Lord.

Another person in the crowd said, "I will follow You Lord, but first permit me to say goodbye to those at home" (v. 61). Jesus replied, "No one, after putting his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God" (v. 62). Discipleship demands that we drop everything, even our families and anyone opposing Him. Discipleship makes us chose between Christ and others.

Who but God could make such demands on His followers? He has not left the choice of standards to following Him up to us. The natural man want's to have Jesus as savior only and that will not work. Jesus is Lord. It is He who determines the conditions of discipleship; not us. Because Jesus is Lord then this kind of discipleship is really not radical, or extreme, but is normal for those who are citizens of His Kingdom. Since He is God, we owe Him total obedience, and total self-surrender. That idea is

radical and unacceptable in the world's way of thinking. Remember what Jesus said in Mat 7:13 "Go in through the narrow gate. The gate to destruction is wide, and the road that leads there is easy to follow. A lot of people go through that gate. (14) But the gate to life is very narrow. The road that leads there is so hard to follow that only a few people find it." This is the way of the cross in the life of His disciple, and many will not follow this path. The world and most in the Western church have chosen the broad path, the one that is easy to walk upon.

Following Jesus as a cross carrying disciple is tough.

The disciple of Jesus Christ cannot live to please himself. He can live only to please the King. "Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ living and incarnate," wrote Bonhoeffer. "Costly grace . . . calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ."

Following Jesus is tough. The life to which you and I have been called as Christians is a journey which runs completely contrary and diametrically opposed to the path which the rest of the world is traveling. The world and the lust thereof is contrary to the will of God and the cross of the believer.

1John 2:16-17 For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. (17) And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. KJV.

Jesus states in Luke 14:33 that "...therefore whoever he is of you who does not renounce all that he has, he can't be my disciple.

Jesus never said it would be easy. The love (phileō)⁽²⁾ of this world will get in the way of obedience to the will of God. One will not be willing take up the cross if the love (phileō) of this present world, its wealth and all that life has to offer, is stronger than the love (agapaō) of God and Jesus Christ. Paul states in Gal 6:14 that through the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, that the world is crucified unto himself, and he unto the world.

Paul understood the struggle of serving Christ and the love of the world. He witnessed this struggle in the life of a fellow minister of the Gospel. In Second Timothy 4:10 Paul states "Demas loves the things of this world so much that he left me and went to Thessalonica." (CEV)

In Matthew 6:24 Jesus says ... "No one can serve two masters. For either he will hate one and love the other, or be loyal to one and

despise the other. You cannot serve God and riches!"

A disciple of Christ should count the cost to follow Jesus. In Phi 3:8 Paul counted all things loss.

"..... I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." KJV

It is well for every cross bearing believer to understand that every obstacle to the service of Christ must be given up. Our love for Him must seem as hate of our own life and this present world.

Jesus says in John 12:25

"He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

Remember, Jesus said that in this world we would have tribulation, but we are to be of good cheer; because He has overcome the world.

Carrying your cross

What does it mean to take up our personal cross and daily follow Jesus? We have seen that Jesus has called us not just to be believers, not just to be people who profess our faith in Him and sit back on our profession waiting for Him to take us to heaven.

Jesus has called us to deny ourselves, take up the will of God daily (our cross), and follow in single-minded obedience to Him.

In 2Co 6:17 we read "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*." Many believe that to be Holy is to separate oneself from doing something that is sinful. So they stop smoking believing that to, stop from doing something, will bring to an end that thing in their life. Too some extent this is true, but many will fall back into the sin that they are trying to quit. The problem is that you can not simply come out of the "world". For example, when you stop smoking, the need to smoke is still in you; that is, the lust of the flesh with regard to smoking. There's the secret to overcoming the world and the lust thereof. You don't come out of the "world", you crucify the world in you through the cross. Kill the love of smoking and you will no longer desire to smoke, it's that simple. Remember, the cross is designed to kill "self" This is the true power of the cross in your life, to bring into reality, a crucified, holy life; before a Holy God.

Though dead to this world we are to live, work and demonstrate the life of Christ in this world. Paul states it well in Gal 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ living in me: and that (life) which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, (the faith) which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me. (ASV)

Your cross in the life of another

The cross of Jesus Christ in the Christians life defines our relationship with our Lord; and how we love Him and love our neighbor. The cross of Jesus, that we are to carry, is where God's will cross's our will. Our cross is to take up the will of God and carry it to our place of death (the death of our will or self) and the place of another's fulfilled need. Remember, the place of His death on the cross was also the place of our total redemption. Your cross in relation to your neighbor is where the "Will of God" directs you, regardless of the inconvenience, to love your neighbor in such a manner that the act of love brings about will of God for your neighbor.

Therefore your neighbor is the person, that you can touch with the love of God through personal involvement. They are the individuals who have come into your individual sphere of influence, means and love. Now it's understood that you will not always have the means to help those who "cross" your path. The Samaritan only had the resources to bandage the wounds and take the injured man to an inn. What little money he had was given to the Inn keeper; with the promise to repay any extra expenditure. Now the care of the injured man was not relinquished by the Samaritan after he left. Even though the inn keeper was now ministering to the needs of the injured man, the obligation (his cross) was still carried in the heart of the Samaritan. He later returned to the inn to inquire about the injured

man and settle the account. At times God will make you aware of the person or their need by just pointing it out to you. Most of the opportunities, to minister or just meet a need, will just cross your path. Divine appointments where God's provision (YOU) touches the life of someone He wishes to love on. Now telling God that you can't do any thing will not hold water with Him. Because scripture teaches, in I John 3:17, that to have the means of helping another and to turn away from the person in need, is to revival the true evil nature of your heart. It demonstrates a spirit of selfishness and not the love of God.

Reconciliation and your cross

In 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 Paul states "But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation, (19) to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation."

The will of God is for us to demonstrate His love (agapaō) in us regardless of what we feel at the time. In moment by moment obedience to the will of God, we are to carry our cross (His will in any time) to reconcile Him (through Christ) to those that He seeks. Another way to say what was stated earlier is that we are to love (agapaō) our neighbor in such a manner that the act of love (agapaō) brings about

the reconciliation of God to that neighbor. We are to do unto others just as we would have, God working through them, do unto us; especially in regards to our salvation.

Taking your cross to the nations

Up to now we have been talking about the cross as it relates to yourself and God. Also we have discussed your cross in relationship to your neighbor. We have also talked about how to carry your cross as a disciple of Jesus; and to be a co-laborer with God in the ministry of reconciliation.

Matthew 28 (18) And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.

(19) Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: (20) teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you

In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus, as our Lord, gives us an imperial command. It is given from the position of authority that the Father has given Him. This authority is one of absolute Lordship in all realms of existence, both in Heaven and on Earth. Jesus as Lord seeks a universal empire, and sends forth his armies to conquer the world. Every church and every disciple must understand that they have marching orders. *Go*, implies an aggressive warfare, against

satan and this fallen world system. Not only is every born one of God, commanded to *go*, or to take steps to make the gospel go, but the object is stated. They are to make *disciples* for Christ. Not great philosophers, but "babes in Christ Jesus," who have entered the school of Christ. Who are to be made disciples is next indicated. Not the Jews only, but *all nations*. Christ came to be the Savior of the world. His is a universal Lord. In the Great Commission Jesus looks beyond Judea, and commands that the Gospel shall be offered to all peoples, nations, tongs and languages.

At this point you have to be asking yourself, "Where do I fit into this command?" First, you have to understand that this command is universal to every member of the body of Christ throughout the Church age; not just to the twelve disciples. Secondly, it is a personal command given to you, not as an option for you to weigh and think over. You have to regard it as if Jesus stated it directly to you.

Although Jesus is Lord over all the cosmos, only you can make Him Lord of your heart. Remember that a good man out of the good treasure of his heart will bring forth that which is good...

Jesus ask in Luke 6:46, And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

This is where carrying your cross comes into play. God's will through Jesus Christ is crossing your own

natural will. As a disciple you have to take up His will and carry it to the nations.

Remember, Jesus as the eternal word of God, left His place in Heaven to come to earth in response to His Father's command. Here, He took up His Father's will and carried it to the place of His death, and our redemption.

1. God the Father gave His son commandments. Note what Jesus states in John 14:31 and John 15:8-10

(14:31) But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence. (Jesus was going to Jerusalem to die on His cross in obedience to His Father's will.)

(15:8) Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. (9) As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. (10) If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love.

2. Paul in Philipines 2:5-11, states the mind of Christ in response to His Father's command.

Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: (6) who, existing in the form of God,

counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, (7) but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; (8) and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient *even* unto death, yea, the death of the cross. (9) Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; (10) that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven and *things* on earth and *things* under the earth, (11) and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

For you to be able to His disciple, to obey His commandments, you have to have abided in His love. And He and the Father has to abide in you. Every thing that Jesus did was based in His Fathers agapaō love. Listen to what Jesus says in John fourteen.

(23) Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. (24) He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

Discipleship comes out of a love relationship between the disciple and his master. Jesus in John 13:34-35

states, "But I am giving you a new command. You must love each other, just as I have loved you. (35) If you love each other, everyone will know that you are my disciples. Later in on in John 17:23, Jesus praying to His Father says, "I am one with them, and you are one with me, so that they may become completely one. Then this world's people will know that you sent me. They will know that you love my followers as much as you love me.

Real Disciples in a Modern World.

... William Borden

In 1904 William Borden graduated from a Chicago high school. As heir to the Borden Dairy estate, he was already a millionaire. For his high school graduation present, his parents gave 16-year-old Borden a trip around the world. As the young man traveled through Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, he felt a growing burden for the world's hurting people. Finally, Bill Borden wrote home to say, "I'm going to give my life to prepare for the mission field."

One friend expressed surprise that he was "throwing himself away as a missionary." In response, Bill wrote two words in the back of his Bible: "No reserves."

Even though young Borden was wealthy, he arrived on the campus of Yale University in 1905 trying to

look like just one more freshman. Very quickly, however, Borden's classmates noticed something unusual about him and it wasn't his money. One of them wrote: "He came to college far ahead, spiritually, of any of us. He had already given his heart in full surrender to Christ and had really done it. We who were his classmates learned to lean on him and find in him a strength that was solid as a rock, just because of this settled purpose and consecration."

During his college years, Bill Borden made one entry in his personal journal that defined what his classmates were seeing in him. That entry said simply: "Say 'no' to self and 'yes' to Jesus every time."

Borden's first disappointment at Yale came when the university president spoke on the students' need of "having a fixed purpose." After hearing that speech, Borden wrote: "He neglected to say what our purpose should be, and where we should get the ability to persevere and the strength to resist temptations." Surveying the Yale faculty and much of the student body, Borden lamented what he saw as the end result of this empty philosophy: moral weakness and sin-ruined lives.

During his first semester at Yale, Borden started something that would transform campus life. One of his friends described how it happened: "It was well on in the first term when Bill and I began to pray

together in the morning before breakfast. I cannot say positively whose suggestion it was, but I feel sure it must have originated with Bill. We had been meeting only a short time when a third student joined us and soon after a fourth. The time was spent in prayer after a brief reading of Scripture. Bill's handling of Scripture was helpful. . . . He would read to us from the Bible, show us something that God had promised and then proceed to claim the promise with assurance."

Borden's small morning prayer group gave birth to a movement that spread across the campus. By the end of his first year, 150 freshman were meeting for weekly Bible study and prayer. By the time Bill Borden was a senior, one thousand of Yale's 1,300 students were meeting in such groups.

Borden made it his habit to seek out the most "incurable" students and try to bring them to salvation. "In his sophomore year we organized Bible study groups and divided up the class of 300 or more, each man interested taking a certain number, so that all might, if possible, be reached. The names were gone over one by one, and the question asked, 'Who will take this person?' When it came to someone thought to be a hard proposition, there would be an ominous pause. Nobody wanted the responsibility. Then Bill's voice would be heard, Put him down to me.

Borden's outreach ministry was not confined to the

Yale campus. He cared about widows and orphans and cripples. He rescued drunks from the streets of New Haven. To rehabilitate them, he founded the Yale Hope Mission. One of his friends wrote that he might often be found in the lower parts of the city at night, on the street, in a cheap lodging house or some restaurant to which he had taken a poor hungry fellow to feed him, seeking to lead men to Christ.

Borden's missionary call narrowed to the Muslim Kansu people in China. Once that goal was in sight, Borden never wavered. He also inspired his classmates to consider missionary service. One of them said: "He certainly was one of the strongest characters I have ever known, and he put backbone into the rest of us at college. There was real iron in him, and I always felt he was of the stuff martyrs were made of, and heroic missionaries of more modern times.

Although he was a millionaire, Bill seemed to realize always that he must be about his Father's business, and not wasting time in the pursuit of amusement. Although Borden refused to join a fraternity, "he did more with his classmates in his senior year than ever before." He presided over the huge student missionary conference held at Yale and served as president of the honor society Phi Beta Kappa.

Upon graduation from Yale, Borden turned down

some high paying job offers. In his Bible, he wrote two more words: "No retreats."

William Borden went on to graduate work at Princeton Seminary in New Jersey. When he finished his studies at Princeton, he sailed for China. Because he was hoping to work with Muslims, he stopped first in Egypt to study Arabic. While there, he contracted spinal meningitis. Within a month, 25-year-old William Borden was dead.

When news William Whiting Borden's death was cabled back to the U.S., the story was carried by nearly every American newspaper. "A wave of sorrow went round the world . . . Borden not only gave (away) his wealth, but himself, in a way so joyous and natural that it (seemed) a privilege rather than a sacrifice" wrote Mary Taylor in her introduction to his biography.

Was Borden's untimely death a waste? Not in God's plan. Prior to his death, Borden had written two more words in his Bible. Underneath the words "No reserves" and "No retreats," he had written: "No regrets."

His death was one the shining examples that motivated the student mission movement of the early 1900. He carried his Lord's will, his cross, to fulfill God's will for him, in Egypt.

....Dietrich Bonhoeffer

In his hearing before the Gestapo during his imprisonment, defenseless and powerless as he then was only fortified by the word of God in his heart, he stood erect and unbroken before his tormentors. He refused to recant, and defied the Gestapo machine by openly admitting that, as a Christian, he was an implacable enemy of National Socialism and its totalitarian demands toward the citizen—defied it, although he was continually threatened with torture and with the arrest of his parents, his sisters and his fiancée, who all had a helping hand in his activities. ... In 1944, when friends made an attempt to liberate him and to take him to safety abroad, he decided to remain in prison in order not to endanger others.

The last service which Dietrich Bonhoeffer held on the day before his death... "moved all deeply, Catholics and Protestants alike, by his simple sincerity."

Bonhoeffer, who was never tried, went steadfastly on his last way to be hanged, and died with admirable calmness and dignity. God heard his prayer and granted him the "costly grace"—that is, the privilege of taking the cross for others and of affirming his faith by martyrdom.

William Borden and Dietrich Bonhoeffer are just two examples of those who have chosen to take up their cross to follow Jesus. One gave up wealth and a life

of ease to serve those who were poor and heavy laden by the world. The other stood up to oppose those who would make Jesus politically correct, for their own evil purposes. One life was taken by sickness, the other by the will of man; but both were freely given to the glory of their Lord.

As his last will and testament William Borden, as a cross bearing disciple, pinned in two words the summation of his Christian life and service, "No regrets."

As a sheep before his slaughters, in admirable calmness and dignity that comes through Grace, Dietrich Bonhoeffer gave his greatest sermon without uttering a word.

John Keith Falconer stated "I have but one candle of life to burn, and I would rather burn it out in a land filled with darkness than in a land flooded with light."

In Conclusion.

The call by Jesus Christ to come and follow Him as a disciple and a cross bearer is a summons for us to come into a relationship with Him through His cross. As a disciple we are to have this same mind set or state of heart that is found in Christ Jesus. Jesus invites us to have the same commitment to Him and His Father as they have to us. He calls us to a life of obedience to the will of His Father and to submit to His Lordship. With out stretched and open hands He

offers us His gift of forgiveness and grace. Through the Holy Spirit each is called to, the obedience of the cross. It is personal for the repentant soul. It is a call to be worthy of Jesus, worthy of His life and death for our sin's; worthy of the gift of eternal life, worthy of the Holy Spirit that seals each believer. It is a call for total transformation of the life of the Christian as they daily take up the will of God; and carry their cross to it's fulfillment in the life of another. It's a call to forsake this world and the love of it. To have a love for God and His Christ that is stronger then our very own natural life. He summons us to be His very own demonstration of Himself, a living epistle read by all. He invites us to be apart of His ministry of reconciliation, the expression of His (agapaō) love to a lost and dying world.

To follow Jesus Christ is a call to us to take up our own cross daily, in love and obedience to His Father's will, to be His disciple. He is calling us to carrying our cross the ends of the world; and as we go, we are to declare the Gospel of the His Kingdom.

- (1) Agapē (ἀγπη agápē) means "love" in modern day Greek. The term s'agapo means "I love you" in Greek. The word "agapo" is the verb "I love". In Ancient Greek it generally refers to a "pure", ideal type of love rather than the physical attraction suggested by "eros". For example, in the New Testament this is the

verb used to describe God's love for humanity.

- (2) Eros (ἔρως *érōs*) is passionate love, with sensual desire and longing. The Modern Greek word "erotas" means "(romantic) love". Plato refined his own definition. Although eros is initially felt for a person, with contemplation it becomes an appreciation of the beauty within that person, or even becomes appreciation of beauty itself. Eros helps the soul recall knowledge of beauty, and contributes to an understanding of spiritual truth. Lovers and philosophers are all inspired to seek truth by eros. Some translations list it as "love of the body".
- (3) Philia (φιλία *philía*), means friendship in modern Greek, a dispassionate virtuous love, was a concept developed by Aristotle. It includes loyalty to friends, family, and community, and requires virtue, equality and familiarity.
- (4) Storge (στοργή *storgē*) means affection in modern Greek; it is natural affection, like that felt by parents for offspring.

Your sin before a Holy God.

God's Law rests on the eternal moral principles that are consistent with the very nature of God Himself. Therefore, biblical law (the Ten Commandments) is the summary of all moral law. As such it sets forth fundamental and universal moral principles by which God will judge all of humanity.

Rom 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

1Co 15:56 The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law.

The Ten Commandments

The Law that Sentences You To Death.

1. Exodus 20:3 "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." That is, thou shalt not give unto anyone or anything in Heaven or on earth that inward heart affiance, loving veneration, and dependence that is due only to the true God; thou shalt not transfer to another that which belongs alone unto Him.

The great *sins forbidden* by this Commandment are these: first willful ignorance of God and His will through despising those means by which we may acquaint ourselves with Him; second, atheism or the denial of God; third, idolatry or the setting up of

false and fictitious gods; fourth, disobedience and self-will or the open defiance of God; and fifth, all inordinate and immoderate affections or the setting of our hearts and minds upon other objects.

2. Exodus 20:4-6 "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: (5) Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; (6) And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."

This commandment strikes against a desire which is deeply rooted in the human heart, namely, to bring in some aids to the worship of God, beyond those which He has appointed. In the forbidding of images God by parity of reason prohibits *all* other modes and means of worship not constituted by Him.

3. Exodus 20:7 "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain." God's Name is taken in vain by us when we use it without due consideration and reverence. Whenever we make mention of Him before whom the seraphim veil their faces, we ought seriously and solemnly to ponder His infinite majesty and glory, and bow our hearts in deepest prostration before

that Name. Have you used God's name as a curse word or as an meaningless expression?

Example - "*Oh G_d you've got to be kidding!!*"

4. Exodus 20:8-11 "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. (9) Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: (10) But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates: (11) For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."

5. Exodus 20:12 "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee."

6. Exodus 20:13 "Thou shalt not kill." Every killing of a man is not murder. It is not so in the execution of justice, when the magistrate sentences a slayer, for he is vested with lawful authority to put capital offenders to death. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed" (Gen. 9:6). But this commandment is not restricted to forbidding the actual crime of murder. It also prohibits all the degrees and causes of murder, such as rash anger

and hatred, slanders and revenge, and whatever else may prejudice the safety of our neighbor.

7. Exodus 20:14 "Thou shalt not commit adultery." This prohibition is designed to guard the sanctity of the home, for strictly speaking "adultery" is a crime which none but a *married* person can commit—"fornication" being the name of it when done by one who is single person.

8. Exodus 20:15 "Thou shalt not steal." The root from which theft proceeds is *discontent* with the portion God has allotted, and therefrom a coveting of what He has withheld from us and bestowed upon others. Calvin wrote that "This law is ordained for our hearts as much as for our hands, in order that men may study both to protect the property and to promote the interests of others."

9. Exodus 20:16 "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." Taken at their face value, this commandment, would prohibit only the horrible crime of perjury or the giving of false testimony in a court of law. This commandment forbids all false and injurious speeches respecting our neighbor.

10. Exodus 20:17 "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his

maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's." Concupiscence or lusting is the firstborn of indwelling depravity, the first risings and expressions of our corrupt nature. It is a violent propensity and inclination toward what is evil, toward that which is contrary to the holy will and command of God.

You The Sinner.

Scripture teaches that if you have broken any of the Ten Commandments, you have broken all of them.

- Have you ever denied His existence? Or placed a person or thing as more important in your life than Him? If you have then committed the sin of the atheist or the sin of idolatry.
- Have you ever worship another god? Thus breaking the second commandment.
- Have ever used God's name as a curse word? If you have then you have broken the third commandment as a blasphemer.
- Have you used the Sabbath as just another work day? Treating it as un-holy or common, as any other day of the week?
- Have you in thought, word or deed acted in an discourteous way towards your parents?
- Have you ever had murder in your heart towards another?

- Have you ever been unfaithful in thought, word or deed in your relationship with your spouse?
- Have you ever taken something that was not yours?
- Have you ever lied about some one?
- Have you ever looked on something that belonged to an other and desired it?

As you can see from the short list that is listed above, every one has become a sinner before a Holy God. We by our own effort can not keep the Law. And by not being able to fully keep the Law, we are condemned by the Law.

Rom 2:12 For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;....

Rom 3:19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. (20) Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

Rom 7:5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did

work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

Rom 7:7-11 What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. (8) But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin *was* dead. (9) For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. (10) And the commandment, which *was ordained* to life, I found *to be* unto death. (11) For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew *me*.

The answer to your sin problem.

Rom 10:8-11 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; (9) That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. (10) For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (11) For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Rom 10:13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

God, judged our sin in Christ Jesus. By faith, through Jesus, we died in the judgement of our sin. Therefore everyone who acknowledges that Jesus died for them on the cross has become crucified in Him. Our old self is dead and the power of sin over us is broken. His blood has covered our sins and satisfied the legal requirement of God's Law that was against us.

Rom 8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

Rom 10:4 For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Rom 8:4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Romans 1:16-17 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. (17) For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. Romans 1:16-17

Gal 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus

Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

God places in the truly repentant sinner, the Spirit of Christ, or the Holy Spirit. This is what being "born of the Spirit or born again means. Note what Jesus says in John 3:3 and John 3:5-7.

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

John 3:5-7 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (6) That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (7) Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

First Peter 1:22-23 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see *that* ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: (23) Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

By faith in God's word and by the power of His Spirit dwelling within us, we become a new person, created in righteousness, and holiness.

Eph 4:22-24 That ye **put off** concerning the former conversation the **old man**, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; (23) And **be renewed in the spirit** of your mind; (24) And that ye **put on the new man**, which after God is **created in righteousness and true holiness**.

The New Christian.

If you have the Spirit of God dwelling in you and self is on the throne of your life, instead of Jesus, then your love of God will be phileō based. At first, every born one of God starts off this way. We love (phileō) The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit because they first loved us. We start to love them for all the wonderful things they did and are doing for us. But like Peter, we will come short in our love of God, if called upon to sacrifice self. Remember, phileō love will not carry you to that place of sacrificial obedience. It caused Peter to deny that he even knew Jesus.

What has to change is the relationship between the you and the Lordship of Jesus. You have to get off the throne of your heart and crown Jesus as Lord and God of the heart.

Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that **our old man is crucified** with *Him*, (Jesus) that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

The new identity in Christ is that I am crucified. The life I now live is by the faith of the son of God. I now allow Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, to express Himself, as He desires. I yield all that I am to Him, who is now Lord of my life. I allow His love to flow through me as He wills. I am now willing to be taken to that place of inconvenience, to that uncomfortable situation, to the crucified life, where only God's agapaō can take and sustain me .

How, you or I will love God can be only found in this type of relationship. For it is only out of Jesus living in me or you, that true love, agapaō love can find expression and give meaning to our lives and the things we do. Remember, Jesus in you and me, is not only God's agapaō living in us, but it is eternal life, Himself.

1John 5:11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

Do you know the agapaō (love) of God towards you?

Do you know for sure, that if you were to die today, you would spend eternity with God in Heaven? God's word helps us to plan our future.

Realize that God loves you.

To truly love God, and your neighbor; you must first receive the love and forgiveness of God. *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* John 3:16

The Bible says that all are sinners.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God... Romans 3:23

As a descendent of Adam, you were born a sinner. *"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned"* Rom 5:12 The reason you commit sin is because you have a sin nature from Adam. Because of your sin nature you can not keep the Ten Commandments given by God. Your sin nature causes you to rebel and sin against God. You are a rebel in God's eyes.

God's Word also says that sin must be paid for.

For the wages of sin is death....Romans 6:23. A wage is a payment. The payment of your sin is death and Hell, separation from God forever. If you go on in your sin, you will die without Christ and be without God forever.

The good news is that Christ paid for your sin.

All your sin was laid on Christ on the cross. He paid your sin debt for you. *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* Romans 5:8

You must personally repent and receive Christ by faith as your Savior.

The Bible says, *"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."* Romans 10:1.
"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."
Romans 10:9

"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 1John 5:11-12

How to pray.

If you are not sure how to pray, read Psalm 51 and make it your prayer. Or you can pray something like this —

“Dear God, today I turn from all my sins (name them), and I put my trust in Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. I Believe that Jesus took on Himself my personal sin and that Your Holy judgment of my sin was just and right. Holy Father, I believe that you raised Jesus from the dead and in doing so, declared that the judgment of your Holy Law, against me, was fully satisfied.

I thank you for covering my sin by the precious blood, of the Lamb of God, Jesus, your son.

Please forgive me, and grant me your gift of everlasting life. Fill me with your Holy Spirit and receive me as your child.

From this moment forward, you will be my Father, Jesus my Savior / Lord, and the Holy Spirit my companion and guide. Amen.”

There is nothing magic about these words, it is the attitude of your heart that God cares about.

As your first act of obedience to God, join yourself in His death and resurrection through water baptism.

Rom 6:3-5 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? (4) Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up

from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (5) For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

Now allow His Holy Spirit and Word guide you throughout your life.

AMEN

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