

On the Road with Jesus: The Road to Sacrifice
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Lynn Haven UMC

Introduction

Then he said to the crowd, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but are yourself lost or destroyed? If anyone is ashamed of me and my message, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in his glory and in the glory of the Father and the holy angels. I tell you the truth, some standing here right now will not die before they see the Kingdom of God.” (Luke 9:23-27 NLT)

What does the word sacrifice mean to you? By definition, it is the destruction or surrender of something for the sake of something else. Consider it in terms of any destruction or surrender of selfishness that exists in the way you live and give of yourself today. Most would agree that it doesn't feel good to deny ourselves the things we feel we “rightfully deserve”. But this attitude of entitlement crashes into our very souls and hinders our capacity to truly live for, and get on the road with, Jesus. This road to sacrifice will most assuredly interrupt our comfortable lifestyles. And if it doesn't, maybe we are doing it wrong.

Digging Deeper

What type of sacrifice is involved?

- Read Philippians 4:11-14 (NLT). Do you know the secret of living with what you have? As we strive to be more like Jesus, we must remember that for Him sacrifice meant humiliation, intense suffering and ultimately, death on the cross. In a similar way, we must take up our “crosses” and make the choice to do that which our flesh might be unwilling to do, but the spirit demands because we belong to Christ. What does living sacrificially mean to you? A few less take-out meals each week to be able to give to the needy? Tithing...and then a little bit more? A day spent helping a neighbor? What could you give today besides money? The type of sacrifice shown by Jesus Christ should stir His followers to reconsider their definitions of this word.

Why should we be willing to sacrifice?

- You've heard the expression, “If it's worth having, it's worth fighting for.” Real life is worth fighting for and when we die to self, we get to experience it in all its glory. For some, this concept may take a minute to digest. And you can't really wrap your head around it unless you understand what real life is all about. How would you explain the rewards associated with living a real life through dying to self to a new believer? Do you struggle with this? As Easter approaches, we remember Christ's sacrificial love poured out for all to see on that cross on Calvary Hill. Jesus died for you. Will you live for Him?

How is sacrifice made?

- Little sacrifices made one day at a time strengthen your character and build the fortitude you will need when bigger sacrifices might be needed. To truly be “on the road with Jesus” we have to be willing to say, “Where You go, I’ll go. When you move, I’ll move. How You serve, I’ll serve.” (taken from Chris Tomlin’s song, “I Will Follow”) It’s time to be honest with yourself and ask, are you a “comfort seeker” or a “cross bearer”? Would you say you are living sacrificially today? Step back and take an inventory of how you allocate your time, talents, witness and gifts to double check the areas that might be keeping you from walking beside Jesus on the road to sacrifice.

Conclusion

What are you holding on to? There is much good to be discovered as we walk along this road with Jesus. Souls are not won or lost in one fell swoop. The content of our character is built upon the backs of many, individually executed decisions. So keep fighting the good fight. Take up your cross, daily.

A Covenant Prayer in the Methodist Tradition

*I am no longer my own, but yours.
Put me to what you will, place me with whom you will.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be put to work for you or set aside for you,
Praised for you or criticized for you.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and fully surrender all things to your glory and service.
And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
you are mine, and I am yours. So be it.
And the covenant which I have made on earth,
Let it also be made in heaven. Amen.*