

DOES YOUR CROSS HAVE WHEELS?

While living in Fayette County, Alabama, a rather interesting occurrence took place a few years ago. A very religious minded man came through the county (as well as many other counties in Alabama) bearing a cross on his shoulders. He garnered much attention from the locals as well as from the newspaper. It was his goal to call to the world's attention the pain and agony that our Lord endured on the cross for our sins (1 Pet.2:24). He was also sending a message that we are called to bear our cross for Jesus (Matt.16:24). While I admire his zeal and cannot question his sincerity, it was rather alarming that the part of the cross that rested on his shoulder was supported by a large pad, and at the base of the cross was a set of wheels which made transporting his burden much easier.

I do not wish to cast aspersions on this man's seemingly noble undertaking, but it did make me think about how we as Christians often treat bearing our cross for the Lord. How many today want to reap all of the benefits of Christ's death upon his cross, but are unwilling to bear their own cross in return? It is true that Jesus bore a much heavier and more difficult burden by taking our sins upon him, but he did ask of us to bear a burden in return: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. **Take my yoke upon you**, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt.11:28-30). Our society is always searching for the easy way out. Whether it be in the workplace, at school, in recreation, or any other endeavor, it seems that fewer and fewer are willing to do the work necessary to succeed. This attitude has made its way into the church. It seems more and more want to do less and less for the Lord, but still enjoy all of the provisions made through the blood of Jesus. Many seek out a church that will meet their needs, a church that will do for them. Brethren and friends, we should be looking for a church to which we can lend our talents and abilities, for which we can labor and toil in service to the Master. The fact remains, according to the words of Jesus, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Lk.9:23).

Brethren, it is time for us to take the "training wheels" off of the cross we bear. Christianity was never intended to be a bed-of-roses religion. There is a price we must pay in order to follow our Lord. "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" (Gal.2:20). There are no shortcuts in the religion of Christ. There is no easy way out of bearing our cross. Jesus endured the most humiliating, the most excruciating, the most agonizing death imaginable because of the cross that he bore. Is it too much for our Lord to expect those who desire the benefits of his death to bear their cross? The cross we are called to bear pales in comparison to the burden he bore for us on Calvary's tree: "For

he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21). As you have often heard it said, God never said it would be easy, but He did say that it would be worth it. Let us gladly bear our cross for Jesus!

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