

The Cross



Glimpses of the End (Part 2)
by Derek Prince

I've been Pentecostal longer than most of you have been around, and I well know all about Pentecostals. I thank God for them. They led me to the Lord. In fact, I didn't even know you could be a Christian without speaking in tongues. It was a shock to me when I discovered. And I've spoken in tongues I think every day from then until now. But the power that deals with self-love is not speaking in tongues, it's not miracles, it's not healings, it's not prophecy. What is it? It's the cross, and nothing else but the cross applied in our lives, can deal with self-love.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 1 and verse 18 Paul speaks about the cross. 1 Corinthians 1:18.

> "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

The cross is the power of God. Nothing else can deal with self-love in our lives except the cross of Jesus Christ applied. You can have a form of godliness and speak in tongues. You can believe in miracles and have a form of godliness. But one thing you cannot have is a form of godliness and the crucifixion of self. That's the dividing line.

I have to say I mix mainly with Charismatics. That's just the way my lot falls. I've mix with Charismatics and Pentecostals for more than fifty years. I've ministered in about fifty different nations and I have to tell you, some Pentecostals and some Charismatics are the most self-centered people you could meet anywhere. And it's their religiosity that makes them self-centered. It doesn't save them. It entraps them.

I want to turn to two passages where Jesus speaks about the cross. Matthew 16 verses 24 and 25.

> "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. For whoever desires to save his life [but the Greek says soul] will lose it, but whoever loses his soul for My sake will find it.'"

So Jesus said, "If you want to follow me, that is be My disciple,..." Because that was the specific phrase used of a

disciple. A disciple was one who followed after Jesus. And Jesus said, "If you are going to follow after Me there are two essential preliminary steps, Number one you deny yourself." What does it mean to deny yourself? It means to deal with that insistent self-pleasing, self-asserting ego in each one of us. The things that says, "I want, I think, I feel, I'm important, pay attention to me. I matter." And you have to say, "You don't matter. You're not important. It's God that's important. I deny you. I will not listen to you. I will not succumb to you. I will not bow to your demands. You don't dictate to me. You don't control my life, you selfish creature."

And then Jesus says, "Deny himself"—that's the first step. The second one is "...take up the cross." And after that He says, "follow Me." You cannot follow Jesus unless you've taken those first two steps. It's impossible. Some people think, "Well, it's pretty difficult, but I believe I'm managing." They're not. The first step is deny yourself. Say no to your insistent, demanding, self-centered ego.

And the second step is take up your cross. Where is your cross? It's the place where you died. God says, "You'll have to take it up. I will not impose it on you." But if you wish to take it up then that's the place where you die, where the ego comes to an end. You don't become a non-person, but you become a new person, a different person. This is your decision. Are you willing to follow Jesus? Will you deny yourself? Will you say "no?" Will you take up your cross? Somebody said, "Your cross is the place where your will and God's will cross." And every one of us comes to that place and that's where we make a decision. Whose will? God's will or my will? There's so no other way. Jesus didn't offer us a second alternative. He said, "If you want to follow Me, come after Me, you have to deny yourself. You have to take up your cross." Once you're willing God will arrange it, believe me. He has a special cross for each one of us. A special area of our lives where we have to say, "Not my will, but Yours be done." After that you can follow Him.

Let me say that Jesus did not come to make church members. He said, "Go and make disciples." And disciple is one who's met these conditions. Denied himself, taken up his cross.

And then in Luke 14, we get a similar passage. Luke chapter 14 verses 25, 26, and 27. Luke 14:25.

> "And great multitudes went with Him."

I want you to notice as we read on. Jesus wasn't really interested in those who went with Him. He was interested in those who came after Him. And there are lots of people in the Charismatic movement and in the whole Church that are going with Jesus, but they are not following Jesus. Great multitudes went with Him. It was exciting. It was enjoyable. It was no sacrifice to go with Jesus.

> "Great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, 'If anyone comes to Me, anyone, and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own soul also, he cannot be My disciple.'"

Some of us think it's pretty difficult but I've managed. Jesus said, "You can't do it." Now what does it mean to hate your father and mother? We have to understand it in the context. You have to hate your own soul. In other words, you have to hate anything that comes between you and whole-hearted devotion to Jesus Christ. Whatever it is, it is hateful. Not that the person himself is hateful. You may have the sweetest and most loving parents, but there comes a point in your life when you have to decide, "Am I going to do what my parents want, or am I going to do what Jesus wants."

I came to that place when I came out of the British Army in 1945. I was in the Middle East. I'd been there four years in the Army. The British Army owed me a passage back to England. It wasn't going to cost me anything, but God had told me to marry a lady in Jerusalem and I'd become the father of eight fatherless girls. And then I heard the news that my grandfather was dying of cancer. He was really the closest member of my family to me in many ways. And I could have a free passage home. I could have gone to see him. But not done that and obeyed the Lord. So in a way, rightly understood, I had to hate my grandfather. I thank God the hatred is not permanent. One day I'll meet him in heaven. But Jesus has laid down certain condition which never vary.

Let's go on with this passage.

> "...great multitudes went with Him..."

I want you to notice those who go with Him and those who follow Him. They're two completely different kinds of people.

> "And He turned and said to them, 'If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear His cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.'"

The conditions of discipleship are stated as clearly as anybody could ever state them. We have no reason to doubt what they are. We have to deny ourselves, take up our cross,

hate anything that comes between us and obedience to Jesus, and then we can follow Him.

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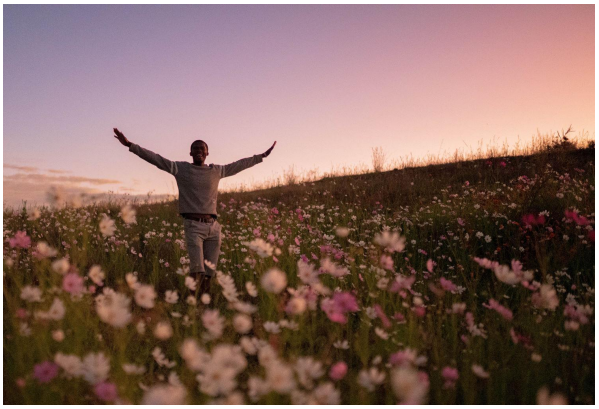
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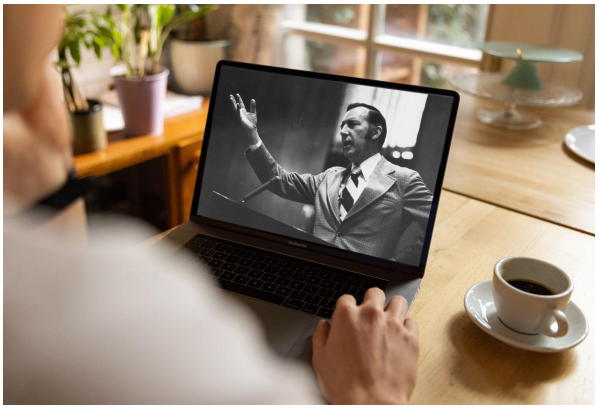
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