

Following Jesus



Fierce Times Are Coming (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

Now, in response to what I've been saying, I want to ask this question? How should we conduct ourselves? How should we respond to this situation? I think my first recommendation will surprise you, but recognize that all these things that we've been speaking about confirm the reliability of Scripture. They are all clearly predicted in Scripture. So when they happen, in a certain sense, we should say, "Thank God the Bible is true." If they didn't happen, the Bible would be unreliable. So you may not enjoy them. I don't enjoy them. But bear in mind, they confirm the accuracy of the Scripture.

Secondly, each one of us needs to deal personally with the root problem which is self-love. As I've said, this is the demonstration of the power of godliness. Something that can change selfish, self-centered people into unselfish, loving, sacrificing people. You and I need to experience that change. You see this is not some special version of Christianity. It's just returning to the original version. Matthew 16:24–25,

> "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.'"

To me the simplest definition of a Christian is someone who follows Jesus. But there are two preconditions. You cannot follow Jesus until you've done two things, which are deny yourself and take up your cross. You can try to follow Jesus, but you can't do it. He's ruled it out. It's impossible. What does it mean to deny yourself? It's to deal with self-love. Self says, "I want, I like, I think, help me, pray for me, heal me." And you say, "Shut up! I'm not listening to you. I'm listening to what Jesus has to say. I'm listening to what the Holy Spirit has to say."

You know being in the ministry I get many pathetic people—I just had a letter the other day from people whose lives are in a total mess. Everything's gone wrong. Financial, physical, relational. I think, "Dear God, what can I do about that?" I'll tell you that in most cases, they're very self-centered. It's me, my problems, my pain. I tell people sometimes, "Listen, stop focusing on the problem, and focus on the Lord. There's no solution while you focus on your problem."

So everyone of us has got to do two things. Deny ourselves. Take up our cross. What is your cross? Somebody gave this

definition—"Your cross is where God's will and your will cross." You cannot follow Jesus doing your own will. It's impossible. Revelation 12:11 has a picture of some glorious people. It's a Scripture that many of us quote often. I could quote it, but I'll read it.

> "And they overcame him [that's the devil] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, [but it does not stop there. I've taught people many times in many places how to testify to what the word of God says the blood of Jesus does. But that isn't all.] and they did not love their lives to the death."

Those are the only people that overcome Satan. Satan is not afraid of our theology. He's afraid of our commitment. Committed Christians cause him to tremble. What does it mean to be committed? Deny yourself and take up your cross. The cross is the place of execution.

I didn't intend to say this, but I happened to be writing a teaching letter and it's so fresh in my mind. Years ago, if you could believe people were alive when I was young. About that season, it was Easter-time, and I was meditating on the crucifixion, and I had this mental picture as I walked around of the hill of Calvary with three crosses. But the central cross was taller than the other two. The Holy Spirit had a little conversation with me and He said, "For whom was the middle cross made?" And then He said, "Be careful before you answer."

So I thought it over and I said, "It was made for Barabbas, but at the last moment Jesus took his place." So the Holy Spirit said, "I thought Jesus took your place." And I said, "Yes, He did." Then the Holy Spirit said, "Then you must be Barabbas." And I had a revelation which I never argue about, but I suddenly saw how totally corrupt my whole nature was. There was nothing in me that was pure, or good, or meriting God's favor. I saw there was only one remedy. Execution. I coined a little phrase, "God's solution is execution." That's where you and I have to come. To a place of execution, where we deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Jesus to the place of execution. After that we can follow.

You say, "Well, Brother Prince, that's very radical." It is, but so is the New Testament. It's a radical book. Christianity is a radical religion. I don't believe we'll survive in the pressures that confront us now unless we are radical.

I want to offer two suggestions as to how we can face the situation. First of all, tribulation pressures some people to God. It makes some hard, and bitter, and rebellious. But is makes some open and responsive. There's a beautiful picture in Revelation 7:9. John the Revelator is speaking and he says,

> "After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'"

Then one of the elders said to John, "Who are these?" John said, "I don't know. You'll have to tell me." In verse 14 the elder replied,

> "...These are the ones who come [the Greek says, 'who are coming' John actually saw them streaming more, and more, and more] who are coming out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

There is coming a great tribulation. It isn't here yet, but it's coming. One of the things that will happen in that tribulation is a huge multitude that no man can number, will turn to the Lord. Furthermore if you will accept my little prophetic theory, the people who will turn them to the Lord will be 144,000 Israelite believers in Messiah. God will send them out into all nations. They will win countless millions of people to the Lord. But the people will not come until the pressure of tribulation is on them.

So one purpose of God in sending tribulation is to turn people to Himself and make them realize their desperate need. Luke says in chapter 21 verse 26,

> "men's hearts will be failing them for fear and for looking for the things that are coming on the earth..."

That's when we need to be able to tell them the truth. When they are desperate, when their hearts are failing.

In Hebrews 12 it says, "God is going to shake all things, both heaven and earth." But he says, "We have a kingdom that cannot be shaken." At that time the unshakable kingdom will be demonstrated, because it will be the only thing that isn't shaken. Many will turn and say, "I need that."

Let me ask you this question. Are you in the unshakable kingdom? That's what it's going to take. Jesus said if you come after Him you have to lose your life, literally your soul. Are you willing to let self go, to lose your soul. Not

necessarily to die, but to say to your self-seeking, ambitious, greedy, selfish soul, “You’re on the cross. You have no more power over me.”

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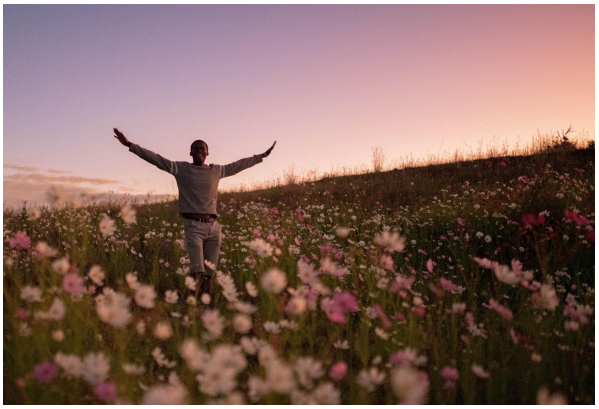

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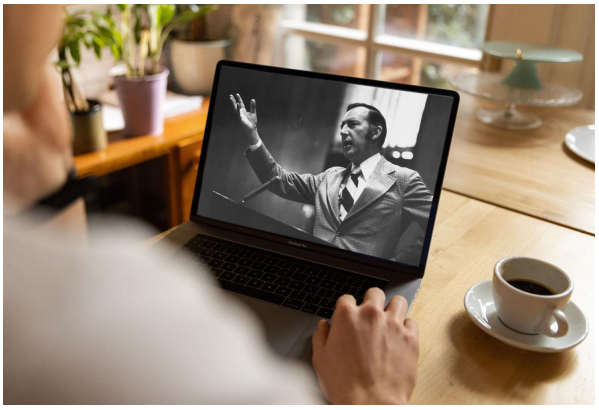

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