

COUNTING THE COST OF FOLLOWING CHRIST

"THEN HE SAID TO THEM ALL, 'IF ANYONE WANTS TO FOLLOW AFTER ME, LET HIM DENY HIMSELF, TAKE UP HIS CROSS DAILY, AND FOLLOW ME.'" - LUKE 9:23



1 LOSING OUR LIVES

"For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of Me will save it" - Luke 9:242

Last year, I read of a woman who was tied to a tree and whipped for her faith in Jesus in the mountains of Central Mexico. Most of the people in her hometown worship pre-Hispanic idols and wanted her to deny Jesus. She did not deny Him, therefore they tortured her. Not all of us will have to go through such trials and turmoil as this lady. But ALL of us will have to pay a price to follow Jesus.

Every follower of Christ must lose their life to save it because we must give our lives to Him! And Jesus also paid that same price, giving up His life to follow God's plan and save us from our sins. It is fitting then that His followers must give up our lives. Salvation is by faith alone, and true faith produces good works, which means we are willing to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, regardless of how hard it might be.

2 DENYING OURSELVES

"If anyone wants to follow after Me, let him deny himself..." - Luke 9:23



To deny ourselves means there must be a sudden and definitive change of direction in our lives because the one in charge is not us anymore, but Jesus. Following Jesus comes at the price of uprooting ourselves off the throne of our hearts and yielding them to Jesus, once and for all.

Had the Romans not been prepared to crucify Jesus, I think the Lord would have pulled a cross out of his sleeve, or at least, being a carpenter himself he would have put one together by borrowing the tools from somebody. But the Romans were prepared, and Jesus climbed up the cross, for you and for me.

I had the privilege of hearing not long ago from Christians who have been persecuted, imprisoned, and tortured in China. The chilling details of their sufferings were surpassed by the joy as they kept singing songs inserted in the middle of their stories. The lyrics of one such song was about the commitment to say, "Maybe today is the day when I will stop carrying my cross and will climb up on it."



3 TAKING UP OUR CROSS

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. - Matthew 11:29

Every follower of Jesus is required to carry his cross, every day, everywhere, and be ready to climb it without previous notice. Your willingness to lose your comfort, your sources of security such as a bank account or a house ([Luke 18:29](#)) are part of taking up your cross. Your willingness to be despised and rejected by the closest people in your life such as parents, siblings, spouse, children, friends, and others ([Mark 10:29](#)) are part of taking up your cross. Your willingness to even make the ultimate sacrifice for Jesus should He require that from you is also part of taking up your cross.

We must resolve that He is more valuable than anything in this life, even our own life. That resolution will make every other little sacrifice or discomfort not just worth enduring but easy and light ([Matthew 11:29](#)).

4 SAYING "YES" TO LIFE'S BIGGEST ADVENTURE

In fact, all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. - 2 Timothy 3:12



The verbs "to deny" and "to take up" in [Luke 9:23](#), in the original language, refer to a once and for all point in time where such actions were taken. But the tense of the verb "to follow," speaks of a continuous action, something we are always doing. This is easily understood if we think in terms of the first disciples of Jesus. Those men left everything behind to follow Him. When He stopped, they stopped, when He walked, they walked! They learned lessons on the move, literally. They were not sitting on chairs taking notes. They were in the lab watching God's power from the first row, getting to know God in ways they had not known Him before and watching the model they would, in time, imitate.

Following Jesus will take you on some tough roads ([2 Timothy 3:12](#)), and maybe even to the ultimate sacrifice of your life for Him. But it will take you also to a life in which you see Him doing the impossible: changing hearts in such a way that people deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him. We could never say "Yes" to a bigger adventure than that!



Check out the Forge resource Mudrunner

for dozens of real-life testimonies of believers all over the world who are counting the cost of following Christ and saying "Yes" to life's biggest adventure!