

A Challenge to us All

Introduction:

We are to carry on the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We were sent into the world even as Christ was sent into the world.

We are to be the light of the world even as Christ was the light of the world.

We are to carry out the ministry of reconciliation even as Christ carried out the ministry of reconciliation.

We are to take up our cross even as Christ took up His cross.

Theme: Like Jesus, we are to take up our cross.

Key Verses: Mat 16:24 (NASB) Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.
Mat 16:25 (NASB) "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it.

What is involved in denying ourselves and taking up our crosses?

What is involved in being conformed to Christ's death?

Phil 3:8 (NASB) More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ,
Phil 3:9 (NASB) and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,
Phil 3:10 (NASB) that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;

What does it mean to die daily?

1 Cor 15:31 (NASB) I protest, brethren, by the boasting in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

I. What it means to be willing to deny ourselves in a physical sense.

How much was Paul willing to suffer? How much did Paul suffer?

A. Paul was willing to suffer persecution.

2 Cor 11:23 (NASB) Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as if insane) I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death.

2 Cor 11:24 (NASB) Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes.

2 Cor 11:25 (NASB) Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep.

B. Paul was willing to take personal risks

2 Cor 11:26 (NASB) I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren;

C. Paul was willing to suffer physical deprivation.

1. Paul deprived himself of sleep

2 Cor 11:27 (NASB) I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

2. Paul deprived himself of food

2 Cor 11:27 (NASB) I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

3. Paul deprived himself of water

2 Cor 11:27 (NASB) I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

4. Paul was willing to deprive himself of physical comfort.

2 Cor 11:27 (NASB) I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in

cold and exposure.

5. Paul was willing to deprive himself of physical protection.

2 Cor 11:27 (NASB) I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

- D. Paul was willing to suffer internal mental anguish and turmoil.

2 Cor 11:28 (NASB) Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure upon me of concern for all the churches.

1. Paul was willing to assume responsibility for the churches.

2 Cor 11:28 (NASB) Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure upon me of concern for all the churches.

2. Paul was willing to assume the weaknesses of others.

2 Cor 11:29 (NASB) Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern?

3. Paul was willing to help others in the consequences of their sinfulness.

2 Cor 11:29 (NASB) Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern?

- II. Paul demonstrated the willingness to lose his life in a spiritual sense.

- A. What we are about to consider is very hard to believe. It sounds like hyperbole.

1. The truthfulness of what Paul is about to say stated positively.

Rom 9:1 (NASB) I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit,

2. The truthfulness of what Paul is about to say stated negatively.

Rom 9:1 (NASB) I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit,

3. The truthfulness of what Paul is about to say reiterated.

Rom 9:1 (NASB) I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit,

- B. Paul is willing to give up his own salvation for the sake of the salvation of others.

Rom 9:2 (NASB) that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart.

Rom 9:3 (NASB) For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,

- C. Even as Christ bore our curse, Paul wishes that he could bear the curse of his fellow Israelites.

1. Christ took upon Himself our curse.

Gal 3:13 (NASB) Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us-- for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"--

2. Paul was willing to take upon himself the curse of his fellow Israelites

Gal 3:13 (NASB) Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us-- for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"--

- III. Moses also provides us with an example of one who was willing to give up both his physical and spiritual life for the sake of others.

Exo 32:30 (NASB) And it came about on the next day that Moses said to the people, "You yourselves have committed a great sin; and now I am going up to the LORD, perhaps I can make atonement for your sin."

Exo 32:31 (NASB) Then Moses returned to the LORD, and said, "Alas, this people has committed a great sin, and they have made a god of gold for themselves.

Exo 32:32 (NASB) "But now, if Thou wilt, forgive their sin-- and if not, please blot me out from Thy book which Thou hast written!"

- A. Moses is told that he cannot make an atonement for others.

Exo 32:33 (NASB) And the LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.

- B. However, Moses is still to sacrificially lead this people.

Exo 32:34 (NASB) "But go now, lead the people where I told you. Behold, My angel shall go before you; nevertheless in the day when I punish, I will punish them for their sin."

IV. Conclusion:

- A. Paul was truly unique in his commitment to Christ.

2 Cor 11:23 (NASB) Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as if insane) I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death.

1 Cor 15:10 (NASB) But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

- B. Moses was unique as a servant of God.

Num 12:3 (NASB) (Now the man Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth.)

- C. We are to seek to be conformed to Christ's death as exemplified in the lives of Moses and Paul.