



NEW BEGINNINGS CHRISTIAN CHURCH GOLD COAST, QUEENSLAND

QUALIFIED FOR EVERY BLESSING BECAUSE
OF THE FINISHED WORK OF JESUS

DO WE HAVE TO TAKE UP OUR CROSS?

During the Q&A time at a recent grace conference I was speaking at, someone asked the question: 'What about Jesus' call to take up our cross? We have to take up our cross, don't we?

'Before I share my reply, it's good to look at what is meant by that question. In fact, when you ask those who insist that we need to take up our cross what this means, many actually do not know how to answer. They are sure we have to take up our cross, and tell us to do so, but don't know what it means!

Some take it to mean having to carry some unpleasant burden in life – maybe coping with a difficult relationship or working in an unpleasant environment. Often the world uses the term in this way. But this has nothing to do with what Jesus was saying.

Others believe it means to 'die to self', i.e. suppressing our own desires for the sake of the kingdom. This leads to a whole lot of self-imposed rules of self-denial. For example, saying 'no' to anything that gives pleasure such as chocolate, TV, me-time, etc. The idea behind this thinking is that anything I like or want is intrinsically wrong and must be denied. But this is not what Jesus meant either.

My reply

My reply to the question was, 'It's too late for taking up our cross. We have gone beyond that. We have already been crucified with Christ!' Jesus spoke these words prior to going to the cross. Anyone who wanted to be a follower of Jesus needed to know where He was heading. He was going to the cross. And if they were thinking about being His disciples they needed to know that He was going to take them with Him.

All of God's people know that Jesus died for them, but not all know and understand that we died with Him. It's too late for speaking about taking up our cross. We've already been 'crucified with Christ' (Gal.2:20).

That's why none of the apostles in their epistles ever exhort us to take up our cross. Rather they declare the finality of the cross and of our co-crucifixion with Christ. This was Paul's constant theme. He told the Corinthians that when Christ died they died too, (2 Cor.5:14). To the Colossians also he said, '...you died with Christ...' (Col.2:20). To the Romans, too, he wrote, '...we died with Christ...' (Rom.6:8), etc.

The finality of cross and the power of the resurrection

Religion will always try to get you to take your eyes off the finished work of Christ and put the focus back on yourself. In my latest book **Grace: The Power to Reign**, I wrote, 'Remember, we will never experience the power of the resurrection until we understand and believe in the finality of the cross. If we are ignorant about the finished work of Christ, we will substitute authentic Christianity for the dead works of religion. When we do this, our focus will be upon self and therefore, we will operate in the power of the flesh.'



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This leads to a life of defeat because it is void of the resurrection life and power of Jesus. It is easy to determine whether you are living in the power of the flesh or in the energy of God's grace. What are you focusing on, what Jesus has done for you or what you think you have to do for Him?

When you understand the finished work of the cross you know that you died with Him. It's no longer about you! It's all about what He has done for you and will do through you.

Keep your eyes on Jesus! The finality of the cross leads us into His resurrection life and power.

'Let's say with Paul, *'God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world'* (Gal.6:14).

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