

TAKE UP YOUR CROSS AND FOLLOW JESUS

Luke 9:23

Jesus calls the repentant believer to start a one way journey with Him through life. No believer can live independently of the life empowering Spirit of Christ. Jesus says, "My burden is light." Living life without Christ guiding and empowering is a burden too much to bear. The born again believer is living life with Christ inside and alongside. His Spirit teaches, guides, and empowers for righteousness. The suffering of obedience for righteousness and the repentance of sins are the recovery processes that lead to a healthy and productive life with eternal consequences that makes life worth living. "To take up your cross and follow Jesus" is to be rescued from the most unfulfilling life and delivered to the most fulfilling life possible. The suffering of obedience is a learning process. Just as Jesus learned obedience (Hebrews 5:8), we must also learn obedience by experience through faithful following and "for us" sometimes through the disciplinary hand of God. "The chastisement for our peace" was dependent upon Jesus' obedience. We could not have peace with God except that Jesus died sinless on His cross, sentencing all sin to extermination (Romans 8:3). Our learning obedience to Christ yields "the peace of God" that surpasses all worldly understanding. The fruit of the Spirit in our lives has a foundational premise. No matter what life throws at us, we know that we are ultimately victorious in Christ Jesus and our circumstances are allowed by God who orchestrates our lives to make all things work together for good. When you fail, don't waste the failure, learn obedience as a result. Neither waste your tribulations. Glory in your pain and struggles because tribulation produces perseverance and perseverance produces character and hope (Romans 5:3,4). God promises to complete the work He began in the born again believer. In His omniscience, God already sees us complete in Christ, fully justified as to having eternal life, fully sanctified, and fully glorified. Being fully engaged in this one Way journey in Christ is to experience a relationship with God which is of the highest order. Knowing God the Father and knowing Jesus the Son is knowing life of the highest order. In contrast, knowing the thoughts, intents, and actions of sinful men is to experience the stench of death and decay. Because of our sin, creation is groaning and is in the throes of death. Thanks be to Jesus, creation will be liberated from sin and death. Jesus arose with power and authority to liberate those with readiness of mind to cooperate with the Spirit, and in the end liberate all of creation through final judgment and a new creation. In cooperation with the Spirit, we may take up our cross and follow Jesus on a one way journey to glory. Nothing can separate the believer from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ our LORD. Romans 8 Philipians 1 Colossians 1 Isaiah 53:5