

THE CROSS

LUK 9:23 And he said to *them* all, "**If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross** daily, and follow me."

It is a choice that the believer makes every day.
It is the choosing of God's way over the ways of man.

PRO 14:12 There is a way **which seemeth right** unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death.

HEB 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him **endured the cross, despising the shame**, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Jesus did not have to endure the cross. He could have released twelve legions of angels to rescue Him. (Matt 26:53-54) The only way that inspired/prophetic written scripture could be fulfilled was by Christ's obedience.

HEB 11:25 **Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God**, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; **26Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt**: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

Moses chose affliction or (the way of the cross) for two reasons.

1. He esteemed the reproach of Christ as being a greater spiritual/personal treasure than all the treasures that would have been offered to him in Egypt.
2. He had a respect of the recompense of heavenly reward. (1 Cor 3:13-14)

1 COR 3:13 **Every man's work shall be made manifest**: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. **14If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.**

ACT 20:22 And now, behold, **I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me** there: **23**Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. **24But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself**, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

Paul was called of God to bear his cross (suffering) before he became an apostle.

Act 9:15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for **he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name** before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

Act 9:16 For I will shew him how great things **he must suffer for my name's sake.**

The Holy Spirit had spoken in many cities, mostly by in prophecy. (Act 22:23)
Paul was a finisher of what he started and respected the call of God. (Act 22:24)

God's ministry gifts must be available to the body of Christ even in extreme tiredness. (Joh 4:6-30)

Joh 4:28 The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, 29 Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? 30 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

The whole city subsequently heard that Jesus, the Messiah they were looking for was resting near a well of water outside the city. Christ's Holy Spirit gifts gave Him the ability to share His love with a woman who came to draw water. The woman subsequently told the men in the city about this amazing man near the well, which came to meet Him. (v.30)

MAT 14:13 When Jesus heard *of it*, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart: and when the people had heard *thereof*, they followed him on foot out of the cities. 14And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, **and he healed their sick.**

Ministry demands on anointed ministers are great. Jesus had no time to grieve over John the Baptist. The people followed Him into the desert where He healed them.

MK 10:45 "For **even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister**, and to give his life a ransom for many.

JN 19:6 When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify *him*, crucify *him*. Pilate saith unto them, **Take ye him, and crucify *him*: for I find no fault in him.**

JN 19:16 Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led *him* away. 17And **he bearing his cross went forth into a place called *the place of a skull***, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha:

Pilate found no fault in Jesus. For the scriptures to be fulfilled in the life and ministry of Christ Jesus, He willing took up His cross and walked to Golgotha.

ISA 53:3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; **he was despised, and we esteemed him not.**

ISA 53:4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, **smitten of God**, and afflicted.

ISA 53:5 But he *was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities*: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

ISA 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and **the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.**

To follow Christ we must all deny our wills. Many people give the devil too much credit for personal discomfort or hardships. The fact is that God knows everything about our situation. Yes, it is God who allows all our distresses.

Note the phrases “smitten of God (Isa 53:4) and “the Lord laid on him” (Isa 53:6)

MK 8:34 And when he had called the people *unto him* with his disciples also, he said unto them, "**Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.**" 35"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospels, the same shall save it. "

Denial of self and the purposeful carrying of the cross of Christ is what the normal Christian life is all about.