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# THE CROSS: HIS, MINE AND OURS

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## I. INTRODUCTION

*<sup>23</sup>And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. <sup>24</sup>For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. <sup>25</sup>For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? <sup>26</sup>For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. <sup>27</sup>But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."*

*Luke 9: 23 – 27*

“One hundred and eighty years after the death of Charlemagne (king of Franks & emperor), around the year 1000, officials opened the great king’s tomb, where in addition to incredible treasures they saw an amazing sight—the skeletal remains of King Charlemagne seated on a throne, his crown still on his skull, a copy of this gospel lying in his lap and a bony finger resting on this very section of scripture.”<sup>1</sup>

-- Kent Hughes

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<sup>1</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Luke, Volume One: That You May Know the Truth* (Wheaton, IL: CrossWay Books, 1998), 342.

## II. THE COST OF THE JOURNEY

### A. The Stunning Choice of Words in Luke 9

### B. The Main Theme: The Cross is Not Confined to Christ

“Jesus immediately followed the announcement of the cross with a reference to another cross, this one to be carried by His followers. There is, of course, a difference. Their cross was not literal and their sufferings not atoning. But it was (and is) real.”<sup>2</sup>

-- Leon Morris

“Men wanted for hazardous journey. Small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful. Honor and recognition in case of success.”<sup>3</sup>

-- Earnest Shackleton

### C. We Signed a Charter at Our Conversion

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<sup>2</sup> Leon Morris, *Luke* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974), 170.

<sup>3</sup> Ernest Shackleton.

### III. THE THREE TERMS OF THE CHARTER—*“If anyone would come after me, let him...”*

#### A. Deny Himself

1. Intrusive words demanding action

2. Resisting a downgraded grace

a. *For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.*

Titus 2:11–12

b. *... his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.*

1 Corinthians 15:10:

c. Grace bring the terms of discipleship within reach.

3. Defying the ‘rule of self’

4. Christ’s application

a. *For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.*

Luke 9:24

“When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.”<sup>4</sup>

-- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

b. Some questions to consider:

(1) Where are we dying to self?

(2) Does our form of Christianity involve denial?

<sup>4</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Cost of Discipleship*, 100-101, quoted in James Montgomery Boice, *Christ’s Call to Discipleship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregal Publications, 1986), 43.

5. Those for whom the saying is hardest.

## B. Take Up His Cross Daily

1. What is this call?

“A cross results from specifically walking in Christ’s steps, embracing his life. It comes from bearing disdain because we are following the narrow way of Jesus Christ, “the way and the truth and the life” (John 14:6). It comes from living out the business and sexual ethics of Christ in the marketplace, the community, the family, the world. It comes from standing true in difficult circumstances for the sake of the gospel.”<sup>5</sup>

-- Kent Hughes

2. Take It Up ... Daily!

“This news has, of course, been good for me. The most dangerous thing in the world is the sin of self-reliance and the stupor of worldliness. The news of cancer has a wonderfully blasting effect on both. I thank God for that. The times with Christ in these days have been unusually sweet.”<sup>6</sup>

-- John Piper

3. The ‘Revolution’ away from the church & the drift from daily Christianity

“Ultimately, we expect to see believers choosing from a proliferation of options, weaving together a set of favored alternatives into a unique tapestry that constitutes the personal “church” of the individual.”<sup>7</sup>

-- George Barna

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<sup>5</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Luke, Volume One: That You May Know the Truth* (Wheaton, Illinois: CrossWay Books, 1998), 341-342.

<sup>6</sup> John Piper, *Don't Waste Your Cancer*, February 15, 2006.

<sup>7</sup> George Barna, *Revolution* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 2005), 66.

- a. What is Barna's diagnosis?
    - 1) The Triumph of Individual Faith
    - 2) The Obituary on the Local Church
    - 3) The Emergence of Mini-Movements
  - b. "No informed Christian leader could make a straight-faced argument that involvement in a local church necessarily produces a more robust spiritual life than that seen among Revolutionaries. As seen in earlier chapters regarding the state of the Church in America these days, Christians who are involved in local churches are actually less likely than Revolutionaries to lead a biblical lifestyle."<sup>8</sup>
  - c. "Our research shows that local churches have virtually no influence in our culture."<sup>9</sup>
4. The application to business and finances – verse 25

### C. Follow Me

1. Our Direction is His Decision

*"Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go."*

*John 21:18*

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 115.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 118.

2. Denial and Duty Often Precede Delight

- Where do you have to pick up the cross to follow him?

3. Our Direction was Resolved at Conversion

#### IV. CONCLUSION

##### A. The Result of the Advertisement

“It seemed as though all the men in Great Britain were determined to accompany me, the response was so overwhelming.”<sup>10</sup>

-- Ernest Shackleton

##### B. The Attraction to Spelling Out the Cost

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<sup>10</sup> Ernest Shackleton

## APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Are there any ways you may be viewing grace as a release from effort rather than a power for effort?
  
2. What is one way God may be calling you to deny yourself in this next season? What practical steps can you take towards that goal?
  
3. Is there any suffering you may be avoiding that the cross is calling you to embrace? Consider the following:
  - Where you might need to act in love toward someone who probably won't love you back.
  
  - Where you might need to acknowledge a wrong you've done.
  
  - Where you might need to sacrifice something you enjoy because you now desire it too much.
  
  - What does the following Biblical reality say to you right now: 'Biblical obedience can often be a condition for delight in God'?
  
4. How should following Christ affect your view of:
  - feelings
  
  - talk
  
  - daily schedule
  
  - spending

## BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

*Christ's Call to Discipleship* by James Boice

*When I Don't Desire God* by John Piper

*Living the Cross Centered Life* by CJ Mahaney