

FACE TO FACE WITH THE CROSS

Matthew 16:21 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.22 Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"23 But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

When was the last time you were faced with a tough decision to make, a decision that almost felt like it was a life or death kind of moment. In those moments we look for support, we look for encouragement from the people around us.

If possible we look for confirmation before making the final call.

Allow me to say that Jesus faced one of those moments – the moment He had to go on the cross.

This morning I want to talk to you on the subject matter FACE TO FACE TO WITH THE CROSS.

Where we have read, the Bible tells us that there came a time that Jesus had to face the cross.

Matthew 16:21 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.

From that scripture, it does not sound like it was really a big deal, until you catch up with Him at the Mount of Olives

Luke 22:39 Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him.40 When He came to the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation."41 And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, 42 saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."43 Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. 44 And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

This was no ordinary death – what did the cross mean?

FACE TO FACE WITH THE CROSS

The cross was itself the embodiment and emblem of the most hideous of human atrocities. The cross was a symbol of reproach, degradation, humiliation, and disgust. It was aesthetically offensive. In a word, the cross was obscene.

- To a person in the first-century, the cross meant one thing and one thing only: It meant death by the most painful and humiliating means human beings could develop.
- The cross was far more than an instrument of capital punishment. It was a public symbol of indecency and social indignity.
- Crucifixion was designed to do more than merely kill a man. Its purpose was to humiliate him as well.
- The cross was intended not only to break a man's body, but also to crush and defame his spirit.

Luke 22:63 says, "And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him."

- The word "smote" here is "to flay," meaning Christ's skin was ripped from his body during the beating.
 - A soldier struck Jesus across the face for remaining silent when questioned by Caiphus.
 - They blind-folded Him and mockingly taunted Him to identify them as they each passed by, spat upon Him, and struck Him in the face.
 - The nails were punched through the radius and ulna bone of the wrist
- All that took place because destiny was a stack – that destiny was for the great exchange to take place.

The great exchange

1. Jesus exchanged men's rebellion, independence with fellowship with the father (Rebellion and independence for fellowship with the Father - Isa 53:6)
All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him (Isa 53:6).
2. Jesus took your sins and gave you His righteousness (Sin for righteousness - 2 Cor. 5:21)

FACE TO FACE WITH THE CROSS

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21).

3. Jesus took away the power of sin and gave me the power to live righteously (Defeat for victory over sin - 1 Pet. 2:24)

He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness (1 Pet. 2:24).

4. Jesus took away my shame and gave me God's glory (Shame for glory - Jn. 17:22)

The glory which You have given Me I have given to them (Jn. 17:22).

5. Jesus became a curse for me and gave me access to God's blessing (Curse for blessing - Gal. 3:13-14)

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law ... in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so we receive the promise of the Spirit through faith (Gal. 3:13-14).

- Jesus came for this reason, to buy you back, to redeem you back.
- His destiny was tied to the cross, He needed to go through the cross in order to finish His mission here on earth.
- Every child of God has a destiny but every destiny is tied to a cross – it is a matter of the **cross** before the **crown**
- Jesus had to overcome an enemy of the cross

Matthew 16: 22 Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"²³ But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

- Without realizing what Peter was saying, he found himself being used by the enemy to try and stop Jesus from facing the cross.
- Among His disciples, Jesus had one who worked against His destiny and one who was a destiny helper – Jesus had Peter and Judas.

FACE TO FACE WITH THE CROSS

- For your destiny, there are destiny killers and destiny helpers – you will have a Peter and a Judas.
- You need to identify your Peter and your Judas and know how to handle them.
- Peter is good to you but not good for you, Judas is nasty to you but good for your destiny
- Many people get excited about purpose but are not excited about the preparation – preparation and purpose are two sides of the same twins
- How did Jesus deal with Peter and Judas
 - He told Peter to get behind him – he told him to leave Him alone
 - He told Judas to do whatever he needed to do quickly –
- The cross was unavoidable if Jesus was to accomplish His mission – How did Jesus prepare Himself to face the cross?
- If you are to fulfill your purpose in life and to push through moments of difficulties you need to do what Jesus did:
 - He was mentally ready to face the cross –
John 17:4 "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.
 - He did not listen to the lies of the devil but aggressively resisted him
Matthew 16:23 But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."
 - He faced the cross with a sense of urgency
John 13:27 Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly."
 - He found His strength in prayer (received angelic assistance)
Matthew 26:36 Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there."
 - He willingly surrendered to the cross
Matthew 26:42 Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done."