

Weaving the Word

Worthy of Jesus

November 19, 2017

Welcome to where we're committing ourselves to the cause of Christ!

Are you making a contribution ... or, are you *all in*?



Welcome to Apprenticeship Training 2.0, as Jesus finishes preparing His boys to go out on their own in His authority and power. He must've shocked that crowd when He told the boys that their mission wasn't to bring peace, but division with Sword and Fire. **But absolute truth always causes commotion.**



People rarely speak it or hear it or ponder it, or know how to deal with it, let alone commit themselves wholeheartedly to it.

A hen and a pig pooled their resources to offer bacon and eggs to the poor. The chicken made a nice contribution; but that pig was all in. *That's a commitment!*



Jesus continues to shock His listeners:

Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; – Matthew 10:37 NIV

Rabbis demanded great respect; but, **only God himself can demand this kind of devotion.** And, since the Son-of-Man is the Son-of-God, anything less than “all in” is unworthy of Him.

Truth is: we can only love them best when we love Him most. If we willingly allow anyone to override Jesus, **we're not only unworthy of Him as Savior and Lord, but them as family and friend.**

and anyone who does not take **[carry]** his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. (10:38)

To live for Christ, we must die to self.

I urge you ... in view of God's mercy, **[as seen in the death of Jesus]** to **offer your bodies as living sacrifices**, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. – Romans 12:1 NIV

Old Testament sacrifices died for their cause; but, we're called to *live* for ours, because our cause is *Christ!* A **“living sacrifice” “in view of God's mercy”** is **a life of complete, ongoing surrender motivated by grace and lived out as gratitude.**



But, here's the rub: **someone else carried Jesus' cross for Him.**

Immediately, as they went out, a man named Simon was forced to take Jesus' cross and follow Him. (Mt 27:32)

So, **why doesn't Jesus carry His own cross to Calvary?**



Jesus speaks fluent OT, and expects us to treasure God's Word so our ears can hear. (Ezek 3:10) So, **what cross are we to lift up?**

Well, there's one man in Jesus' Bible (the OT) who takes up a cross: *Moses* ... and he hangs a *bronze snake* on it.



And, Jesus tells Nicodemus that this OT com'parable of the Snake on a Cross equates to the crucifixion of the Son of Man.

Okay. So, Moses' people were speaking against God ...

Then **the Lord sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died.** The people came to Moses and said, "We sinned ... Pray that the Lord will **take the snakes away ...**" [but, He *didn't*] The Lord said to Moses, "**Make a snake and put it up on a pole;** [a banner pole] **anyone who is bitten can look at it and live.**" [It's a reminder that the God who saves also disciplines in love to turn the self-serving to salvation] So Moses made a bronze snake and **put it up on a pole.** Then **when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived.** – Numbers 21:6-9 NIV

Moses is preaching the Gospel of God's grace through faith here!

And, when Nicodemus came to Jesus at night, Jesus said:

Just as Moses **lifted up the snake ... so the Son of Man must be lifted up,** that everyone who believes in **him** [by faith in God's grace] may have **eternal** life. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in **him** shall not **perish** but have **eternal** life. [Who knew that well-known Scripture was comparing Jesus to a bronze snake?] For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, [that comes through the *poisonous snakes*] but to save the world through him. – John 3:14-17 NIV

Last week we read about these false purveyors of peace.

... prophets and priests alike, all practice deceit. **They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious.** [But, we never identified what this wound actually was] "Peace, peace," they say, when there is no peace. [And, Jeremiah goes on to say] ... See, [in Moses' prophecy, 780 years before] **I will send venomous snakes among you, vipers that cannot be charmed, and they will bite you,** declares the Lord. ... Is there no physician there? [There is when the *Great Physician* comes] Why then is there no healing for the wound of my people? [Because, prophet and priest continue to practice deceit] – Jeremiah 8:10-11, 17, 22 NIV

Because, **the prophets and priests who practice deceit are the venomous snakes** that were poisoning God's people. At the end of Moses' life, long after the bronze snake event, he proclaims the name of the Lord and prophesies His rejection.



He is the Rock, his works are perfect ... They have acted corruptly toward him ... [they] rejected the Rock [their] Savior. ... **[So, God says] I will send against them [once again] ... the venom of vipers** ... If only they were wise and would understand this and discern what their end will be! **Their wine is the venom of serpents, the deadly poison of cobras.** – Deuteronomy 32:4-5, 15, 24, 29, 33 NIV



Remember when Jesus offers the wine of His Covenant at the Last Supper? Just the day before, He denounces His religious foes and discerns what their end will be.



You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? – Matthew 23:33 NIV

So, why a snake? **The snake symbolizes the curse; and Christ became our curse on the cross to swallow up death**, just as Aaron's staff became a snake and swallowed up all the enemy's snakes. (Gal 3:13; Ex 7:10-12)



The symbol of Moses' snake on a cross was fulfilled in the crucifixion of Christ. ***That's our cross, and we look to Jesus!***

Let us fix **our** eyes on **Jesus** ... who for the joy set before him endured the cross ... – Hebrews 12:2a NIV

So, why *didn't* Jesus carry His cross to Calvary?

Look at the story: ***He doesn't lift it; He's the One on it!***

"But I, **when I am lifted up** from the earth, will draw all men to myself." **He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die [so that we might live].** The crowd spoke up, "... how can you say, **'The Son of Man must be lifted up'**?" – John 12:32-34a NIV

And because of this, **we can take up the cross that saved us from death, get our eyes off ourselves, and go rescue the dying among us**, who need to but fix their eyes on the Righteous One.

Taking up our cross isn't a call to oppression.

It's a call to freedom from shame and death and condemnation and separation.

It's a call to join Jesus in the living cause of Christ.

People generally have their backs turned to the Lord.

So, **we got'a lift our cross above ourselves, so those around us can see God's mercy, so Christ can draw 'em in and heal 'em.**

And, we have to understand the urgency here:

Whoever finds his life [apart from Christ] will lose it, [Every life outside of Christ is just a slow march toward death. *You can't save your own bacon!*] and whoever loses his life [dies to self as savior, lord, and master] for my sake [being born again in Christ] will find it. [For all eternity] (10:39)

And, any love, influence, authority, or urging that would hinder this in any way, must be discerned and demoted and defused.

Jesus is sending out the Twelve as priests and prophets of the Righteous One teaching and *healing* everyone in His name.

He who receives you receives me, [if we'll speak His Word of Truth in the power of His Spirit] and he who receives me receives the one who sent me. ["The way to the Father is through Me; and, the way to Me is through My Word, My Spirit, and *you*, My disciples, My prophets." (Acts 2:16-18)] Anyone who receives a prophet because [they realize and accept that] he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, [an opportunity to receive the Righteous Son-of-Man as Savior and Lord] and anyone who receives a righteous man because [they realize and accept that] he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward [which is eternal life with our Creator-Father]. (10:40-41)

And those are Jesus' final words to His boys before He sends them out without food, money, or extra clothes, telling them not to worry about what they'll wear or eat or drink. (Lk 12:22-23, 29)

He said to the crowd And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, **he** will certainly not lose **his** reward." [What's *his* reward?] – Matthew 10:42; Luke 12:54a NIV

With Jesus, even the water boy is seen as part of the team.

We're in the game the moment we begin assisting those who are lifting and carrying the cross of Christ into a dying world.

And, we're now considered His priests and prophets.

As priest, we offer *ourselves* as living sacrifices.

As prophets, we offer Christ as the Savior to a dying world.

So, you wanna make a nice contribution *or go all in?*