

Connecting Messiah to Me:  
Requirement #2: Take Up Your Cross  
*Luke 9:23b*

Nutshell: Jesus died *for* sin that we might die *to* sin.

I. Context: Jesus' identity as Messiah and its implications for us.

II. Text

**Luke 9:23** Also He was saying to all *of them*, "If anyone desires to come behind Me, he must deny himself and he must take up his cross, and he must keep on following Me."

Literal Standard Version with modifications

The next four outline items, III. - VI., are based on the 4 uses of Scripture listed in 2 Tim 3:16 AND the 3 depictions of preaching in 2 Tim 4:2.

III. Teaching

A. An outline of Luke to this point

I. About this Letter: So you'll know about this Jesus, 1:1-4

II. Testimonies to Messiah's coming. A boyhood turning point, 1:5-2:52

III. John proclaims repentance for Christ's coming, 3:1 - 20

IV. Messiah's Entry Credentials: Baptism and Genealogy, 3:21-38

V. His Initiation: Fasting and Temptation, 4:1 - 13

VI. His Self-Introduction and Hometown Rejection, 4:14 - 30

VII. Jesus: The FIRST MAN with all authority over demons, sickness, and nature, 4:31 - 5:11

VIII. Turning-Point Healings, 5:12 - 32

A. Repatriating a leper, 5:12 - 16, touching the unclean outcast to preview His taking of our exile/ disease into Himself

B. Forgiving sin, 5:17 - 26, thus declaring His Deity

C. Healing/ renewal of a man's (Matthew's) soul, 5:27 - 32

IX. New and Old Covenants:

A. NC = OC *replacement*, ~~patch-up~~, 5:33-39. NC: Law in ♥.

B. 6:1-11, OC Sabbath *strict*, but intended as a *help*.

X. Picking The 12, 6:12-16; teaching / etc., incl. Tyrites, 6:17-19

XI. Jesus' manifesto: the **SERMON ON THE PLAIN**, 6:20-49

A. Literal poor vs. rich. Love haters. Give. Be piteous.

- B. Only right teaching creates right living. Convict *self* 1st.  
Only building on Christ will survive life's floodplains.

## XII. Messiah's **MISSION** Portrayed in His Interactions

- A. Forecast: A **Gentile** seeks Jesus for a healing, Lk 7:1-10
- B. Forecast: Hope still held out to **Israel**: Nain widow, 11-17
- C. John's Q. A.: 2 diverse comings & an interval, 7:24-30
- D. John & Jesus differently wise. Both rejected, 7:31-35
- E. Love for Jesus is tied to forgiveness. The sinful woman had both; Simon the Pharisee lacked both, 7:36-50.
- F. 8:1-15, 4 Soils = 4 kinds of "hearing" of the **Word**. Only a "virtuous and sound heart" is living and fruit-bearing
  - 1. Hence, take care HOW you hear that Word, 8:16-18
  - 2. Mary as mom not an insider; Word-doers only, 8:19-21
- G. It is a Word of **power** over nature (8:22-25), demons (8:26-39), sickness (8:40-48), and death (8:49-56)

## XIII. Messiah's **COMMISSION**, the first

- A. You 12 preach, heal, and exorcise as I have. Live on what you're given. Where unwelcome, disassociate, 9:1-6
- B. Guesses given to Herod about Jesus' identity, 9:7-9
- C. New ministry lesson: *You* 12 feed the crowd, 9:10-17
- D. Popular opinion vs. truth: Jesus = Messiah, but a work not yet completed, so don't publicize it, 9:18-22
- E. But if you follow Messiah, you have to reject your own interests, adopting His, 9:23a

**Kid-speak:** Last time, Jesus said that if we want to follow Him and live like Him, we have to always say something to ourselves. What is that? "No."

- B. 9:23b, How will we disown our own road in life? Only by constantly putting it to death.

Outline:

- I. Further Points on Self-denial
  - A. It is not bald asceticism, though it *is* hard, 1 Cor 9:27
  - B. Receiving justification by faith is the basic self-denial
- II. A Command to Take Up an Instrument of Our Own Death
- III. "Cross" and "Crucify" Word Study
- IV. Our Death With Christ as the Crossover Point

- V. “Putting to Death” as the NT Language of Picking Up Our Cross
- A. Always **paired with** our death IN Christ
  - B. Our death IN Christ always **proceeding to** putting sin to death
- C. Last time, Jesus connected His identity as Messiah (9:22) with this bridge: “If anyone wishes to come behind Me...”  
Wherever He’s going, we want to follow
1. For those so desiring, Jesus gives 3 imperatives
    - a. Deny yourself
    - b. Take up your cross
    - c. Follow Him
  2. We looked at the first one last time: Deny yourself.
    - a. Basically, say no to self
    - b. Correction from last time: “himself” is not just from the middle voice, but from a separate pronoun
    - c. Some important addendums:
  3. First, this is **not** an attempted *removal* of self, as Higher Consciousness seeks
    - a. Jesus recognizes the self as a given;
    - b. the *self* is *deciding* to follow Him, not seek absorption into a Cosmic Consciousness
  4. Second, it is **not** a mere subjugation of the desires, such as in Buddhism or other ascetic religions or regimens
    - a. Though Buddhist self-denial should not outclass ours
    - b. 1 Cor 9:27, If Paul witnessed to an ascetic, he would refute its religious/philosophical basis
    - c. *and* measure his own self-discipline by it
  5. It **is** a recognition of our self-seeking, selfish nature, which makes **SELF** supreme, thus blocking love for God or man,
    - a. which, if not confronted, will allow us only a fake pursuit of Jesus
    - b. It is denial of *self* in preference to Christ’s preeminence

**Kid-speak:** What is it about me or you that keeps me or you from following Jesus? We want things OUR way.

- c. It is *self-mastery*, since my regular earthly/ bodily pursuits (legitimate in themselves) easily surface my idolatrous, godless nature
- d. It is denial of *self*, *lest* I deny Christ, Lk 12:9
- ★ e. One of the two will be denied.

6. At a more foundational level (not *directly* addressed here, nor in James, though *assumed* in both): denying MY OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS
  - a. Preferring an *imputed* righteousness, not my *own*
  - b. I.e., **Justification** by grace through faith
  - ☆ c. This is the base-level self-denial
  - d. Showing that what our selves basically identify as is righteous
  - e. That’s what the Fall did to us: “God’s not right. I’m right.” That’s our *heart-* before rebirth.

**Kid-speak:** What is the main way we have to say no to ourselves? We have say, “I have NO goodness. I need *Jesus*’ goodness counted as *my* goodness.”

7. **Titus 2:12** was our best encapsulation of self-denial
- D. Imperative #2: “And he must take up his cross”
1. An amazing command at this point
    - a. Jesus has just said He would die, but he didn’t say how. The first *specific* reference to a cross, then, is not Jesus’ cross, but ours.
    - b. By referring to His disciples’ crosses, He may have been hinting at His own cross: “I’ll die... You must die”- the same way? Would that have occurred to them?
    - c. Since the whole teaching of Jesus’ death went straight over their heads, probably not
    - d. So *anything* about a cross must have been curious here
    - e. Except they knew it to be a means of Roman execution
  2. Where in OT teaching *or* Jesus’ teachings so far might they have heard of a cross?
    - a. Nowhere specifically, *but* it was a form of hanging, so the Jews associated it with Deut 21:22-23
    - b. Which is why the Jews wanted to kill and bury all 3 crucified ones the same day, Jn 19:31
- E. Notice that we don’t have “daily” in our translation
1. A Byzantine text peculiarity
  2. Only my WEB and EMTV reflect the Byzantine.
  3. But if we see “take up” as a definitive act, then “keep following Me” will make it daily.
  4. “Taking up” my cross “daily” implies making the decision

- each day to put myself to death
  - a. Certainly true
  - b. If not covered here, definitely elsewhere, as we'll see
- 5. Otherwise, "daily" is in Luke but not Matthew or Mark
- F. "Take up his cross"
  - 1. "Pick up" is accurate enough. A decisive act.
  - ❖ 2. We must decide to pick up our own death instrument, but not to find our *own* death-path; rather, to follow Jesus
  - 3. Jesus tutors us in how to put ourselves to death
  - 4. He did it long before He went to the literal cross.  
Extinguishing the would-be life of sin was daily for Christ.
- G. "Cross" and "crucify," Gk., *stauros*, *staureo*
  - 1. "Cross" was the name for the piece of wood "stood" (root word) in the ground, to which a criminal was attached for a slow, painful death. Perhaps invented by the Persians.
  - 2. "Crucify" was the verb form of "cross." The act of putting to death on a cross.

**Kid-speak:** What was a cross? A cross was a way the Romans put bad people to death.

- H. "Cross" and "crucify" in the Gospels
  - 1. In Matthew, Mark, and Luke, "cross" is spoken of 2x as a disciple's cross before referring to the cross on which Jesus died (3x if we include Mk 10:21, Byz.)
  - 2. In Matthew
    - a. **10:38**, "whoever doesn't take his cross"\*
    - b. 16:24, parallel to our v
    - c. 20:19, Jesus prophecies the cross specifically, 26:2
    - d. 23:34, disciples' literal crucifixion
    - e. 11x more of Jesus' death (either word)
    - f. 27:38, the 2 thieves; v 44 "with" as prefix
  - 3. In Mark
    - a. 8:34, parallel to our v
    - b. 10 more of Jesus' cross
    - c. 15:27, the 2 thieves, v 32 "with" as prefix
  - 4. In Luke
    - a. our v is first
    - b. **\*14:27**, "whoever doesn't bear his cross"
    - c. 23:26, Simon the Cyrenian carries Jesus' cross
    - d. 6x of Jesus' crucifixion, + 2 thieves 23:33

5. In John
  - a. 13x in chap 19 of Jesus' cross/crucifixion
  - b. 19:18, + 2 thieves; 19:31, of all 3 crosses
- I. "Crucify" in Acts
  - 2:36; 4:10, of Jesus' crucifixion
- J. "Cross" and "crucify" in the epistles
  1. 17x of Jesus' cross or crucifixion (Heb 6:6, "crucify again," with a prefix)
  2. **Gal 2:20, 6:14, and Rom 6:6** of *our* connection to *Jesus'* cross (2:20 and 6:6 having the prefix "with")
  3. **Gal 5:24** of **OUR** self-crucifixion
    - a. But similar to the previous category. We crucified the flesh, but chiefly *in principle* **in** our turning to Christ
    - b. For this to be an ongoing crucifixion, as in Lk 9:23, we would look for *present* tense, not aorist
    - c. Still, it does speak of a *personal choice*, just a definitive, past one
    - d. The better verses for our ongoing crucifixion use words for "death": put to death, etc. →

**Kid-speak:** Why does Jesus tell us to pick up our own cross? Because we have to decide to kill whatever is bad in us.

K. "Crucify" in Revelation, 11:8

L. Doctrinally, then,

1. Jesus' own crucifixion is foundational
    - a. That's where our sins are taken away
    - b. And where our sin's power to dictate terms to us is nullified (Sin has power to *demand*, just not to *enforce*)
  2. Our connection to Jesus' cross in **Rom 6:6, Gal 2:20, and 6:14** is the *crossover point*
    - a. Gal 6:14 especially states the foundational fact of Christ's cross being instrumental in the *world being crucified to us*. That is, the world's way is dead to me.
    - b. and *us being crucified to the world*. That is, the world finds us separated from its spiritual operations.
    - c. Yet this describes a spiritual reality *in principle*, not the working out of our union with Christ's cross
  3. **Gal 5:24** recounts our *entryway* to taking up our own crosses
- M. I get the impression that the sacredness of the Cross keeps NT

writers from explaining our personal crosses with the *words* “cross” or “crucify”

1. But the doctrine is definitely and fully expanded, just with terminology of **putting ourselves to death**, based on our **death in Christ**
2. See those two deaths paired in Col 3:3 and 5
  - a. Our death in Christ is first: Col 2:20; 3:3
  - b. Then, based on that, we are to “count as dead” our earthly members in v 5, listing 5 such “members”

**Kid-speak:** If we believe in Jesus, does God put us IN *Jesus’* death? Yes. Is that how we put our *own* sin to death? Yes.

- N. **Rom 6:6** and **11**, special attention to this extended argument
1. Beginning in 6:2, summarized as a ‘boycott’: those who “died to sin” certainly won’t continue living a life of deliberate sin, will they?
    - a. No way. Those whom the Spirit baptizes into Christ were baptized into His death, 6:3. Our death in His death is our *starting point, Stage One*. The old “me” as an *automatic sinner* is gone.
    - b. Our union with the Resurrection as the automatic (non-optional) *Stage Two* of this transformation, 6:3-4
    - c. Launching right into the “ought” of a newly-lived life, 6:5, *Stage Three*
  2. Returning to the seedbed and groundwork of our resurrection in Christ, our union with His death, v 6
    - a. Our “old man” was co-crucified
    - b. With the prospect of rendering “the body of sin” useless
      - i. Sin is pictured with its own body
      - ii. Not my physical body, which is God’s
      - iii. But an invisible body/ “law” (Rom 7:25)/ mechanism within my body
      - iv. Its own entity
      - v. But able to be countermanded by the Christian
  3. So if we mentally situate ourselves in Christ’s Death and Resurrection, we have the groundwork for “newness of life”
    - a. It’s initial stage called “justification,” v 7, something Done and Final, giving us every confidence for our *continuance* in this Way
    - b. Issuing forth in the ‘now-and-not-yet’ aspect of our life in

Christ, v 8-10

- c. Culminating in **our cross**: “Count yourselves to be truly dead to sin,” v **11**. Once again, Stage Three.

**Kid-speak**: How does Jesus’ cross help us stop being bad? We say, “I started out being bad, but Jesus died to take that away.”

- d. Communion seeks to bring us back to it weekly

- ★★e. But where is our death going? “**Alive** to God,” v **11**

- O. Philip 3:10 makes it a tidy 3-fold list, followed by the basis for all three: our assimilation into the Cross

- P. Note: “That’s your cross to bear” is usually used inaccurately, of any suffering or sickness; whereas, Christian cross-bearing is a specific, *chosen* execution of self-determination/ sin

IV. For the Walking Wounded (1 Thess 5:14, “Uphold the strengthless”) Boarding at **Weakness**... Ironic next good stop: **Death**.

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V. Conviction (2 Tim 4:2, “Convince, rebuke”): **What have I done wrong?**  
**How have I lost righteousness?**  
Have I made an initial decision to take up my death instrument?

VI. Correction/ Realignment (2 Tim 4:2, “Exhort/encourage”):  
**How will I correct my error? How will I regain uprightness?**  
Anyway, God only wants me to kill my assassin: sin.

VII. Schooling in Righteousness: **How do I take this on the road?**  
Lord, sin is so embedded, enmeshed, and insinuated, just disentangling it enough to take a whack at it as hard. But the whacking is ultimately the painful part. Give me grace.

Vision: Taking up our cross deepens our self-denial and connects it to Christ’s cross. We deliberately deaden “fornication, uncleanness, passion, wrongful desire, and covetousness” (Col 3:5) **SO** we can live newly, **Col 3:12-17**.