

THE SAVIOR'S PASSION: COMPELLED TO BEAR HIS CROSS

INTRO: In John 19:17, we read that our Savior went forth bearing his cross. How wonderful that Christ in perfect obedience was carrying the load of our disobedience. But it is equally instructive that someone else should be made a partaker of the burden. As far as our atonement, our Lord trod the winepress alone. But as to his suffering and sorrows, we are to be partakers. To bear the cross after Jesus is the office of the faithful.

I. ONE CERTAIN SIMON COMPELLED.

- A. The cross was laid on the shoulders of Jesus.
 - 1. Roman soldiers would not themselves have carried a cross, and to the Jews, the cross was accursed.
 - 2. The condemned man himself, therefore was expected to carry his cross to the place of his execution.
 - 3. We think of all that Jesus had suffered in the long day Thursday and now Friday morning.
 - 4. It is a wonder that the Son of Man was able to carry the cross at all!
- B. A certain Simon...
 - 1. He is an unknown man, noting special about him. How true that is of each of us!
 - 2. But he is a very particular man, one whom God knew and loved and would bring in close connection to Jesus.
 - 3. And where is that other Simon, the son of Jonas, who was ready to go with Jesus to prison and even to death?
 - 4. Simon was merely passing by, of himself not at all intending to get involved with this business of Jesus.
- C. Simon was compelled.
 - 1. The word used comes from a Persian word meaning to press into service.
 - 2. The Roman soldiers requisition Simon to carry the cross.
 - 3. What humiliation for the Christ, who as King requisitioned the colt and the house for the last Supper.
 - 4. Is it all by chance that Simon is requisitioned for this task? No, it is by divine providence!
 - 5. How are we today called to bear Christ's cross? Only one has the privilege to requisition us and make it binding.
 - 6. By nature we are reluctant, but by grace irresistibly compelled!
- D. Simon compelled was made great.
 - 1. Before he was just a certain Simon, an unknown passing by.
 - 2. Now he is the great cross-bearer, a type of all who follow Jesus.
 - 3. Forever remembered.

II. WHAT IT ENTAILS.

- A. Bearing the cross entails shame.
 - 1. As the enemies hurled their insults at Jesus, the insults would also fall upon the man who follows and takes his cross.
 - 2. It is identification with Christ.
 - 3. Jesus warned that a disciple is not above his Master. Following Christ and bearing his cross brings shame.
- B. Bearing the cross entailed carrying a great weight.
 - 1. This cross whether just the cross beam or the whole thing would be a weight that would stagger a strong man.
 - 2. The cross of Christ presses down upon us, it makes our life difficult. It is never easy.
 - 3. Jesus warns that if we would follow him we are to count the cost.
- C. Bearing the cross entails denial of self and our own agenda.
 - 1. There is always the conflict in us between flesh and spirit.
 - 2. Christ's cross demands complete denial of our self and our own interests.
 - 3. It is easy to follow when relatively no demands, but submitting to his will, we must be willing to lose everything.
- D. Cross-bearing brings us near to Jesus' bloody and repulsive nakedness.
 - 1. It must have been hard for Simon to stand near Jesus, and to see much more than a pitiable criminal.
 - 2. But later, perhaps after Pentecost, to see the necessity of that blood and to stand amazed and love that One who bled
 - 3. He fought without looking the great Pascal Lamb that takes away the sin of the world. You and I are drawn to Christ.
- E. It means that one comes after Christ.
 - 1. To come after Christ is the result of his efficacious call.
 - 2. Christ is first, we follow, taking up his cross. Can we say ***"Where he leads, I will follow, I'll go with him all the way"***
 - 3. Ours is not only to believe on him but also to suffer for his sake. We must do this not only once in awhile, but daily.

III. A BLESSED OCCUPATION.,

- A. Why is bearing Christ's cross a blessed occupation?
 - 1. It brought Simon into Christ's company.
 - 2. It kept Simon in Christ's steps.
 - 3. It linked him with Christ's work.
 - 4. This is our calling: Luke 9:23, Matt. 10:24, 38
- B. We are called to rejoice in our sufferings.
 - 1. The Apostles after beaten by the Jewish council rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for Christ
 - 2. Peter writes "Rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings..." (I Peter 4:12)
 - 3. Peter writes, "If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf (I Pet.4:16)"
- C. We are called to a great victory.
 - 1. "If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him. If we suffer, we shall also reign with him...(II Tim 2:12)."
 - 2. "If so be that we suffer with him that we may also be glorified together (Rom. 8:17)."
 - 3. As Christ through the way of the cross entered his glory and was crowned, so also for those who follow him.
 - 4. Be faithful cross-bearers!