

Our Cross and Crown

DAY ONE. Read Matthew 19:29

Matthew 16:24-25 (NIV) ²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.

As you look back over your life, in what ways have you denied yourself for Jesus? How many things can you name that you have “lost for him”? Were these the results of someone taking them or you sacrificially giving them?

Pray. Ask God to show you places you can deny yourself more for the sake of Jesus.

DAY TWO. Read Acts 5:41; Hebrews 12:2

To the old rugged cross I will ever be true;
Its **shame and reproach gladly bear**;
Then He'll call me someday to my home far away,
Where His glory forever I'll share.

Think of the times you have been mistreated because of your faith. How did you respond? How much mistreatment are you willing to endure for Jesus?

Pray. Take some time to pray for those around the world who are being mistreated for their faith. Try to identify with them.

DAY THREE

2Timothy 4:7-8 (NIV) ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

As you look back over your life thus far, how would you evaluate your effort in the “race” and “fight”? Are you putting in the effort needed to win the crown?

Pray. Ask God to show you places where you need to “get in shape” or put in more effort.

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Exchanging Reproach for Glory

A Cross for a Crown: The Great Exchange #1

*“I will cling to the old rugged cross
And exchange it someday for a crown.”*

1. The reproach of the cross

“Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree” (Gal. 3:13)

The reproach of the cross

Galatians 3:13 (NIV) ¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.”

“As a tree was the means of introducing the curse into the world, so hath God ordained that a tree should be the means of its removal.”

— J. A. Macdonald

The reproach of the place

Matthew 27:33 (NIV) ³³ They came to a place called Golgotha (which means The Place of the Skull).

The reproach of association

Matthew 27:38 (NIV) ³⁸ Two robbers were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left.

The reproach of the humiliation

Matthew 27:27-30 (NIV) ²⁷ Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. ²⁸ They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹ and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. “Hail, king of the Jews!” they said. ³⁰ They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again.

The reproach of mocking

Matthew 27:41-44 (NIV) ⁴¹ In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. ⁴² “He saved others,” they said, “but he can't save himself!

He's the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. ⁴³ He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" ⁴⁴ In the same way the robbers who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

Psalm 22:6-8; Isaiah 50:6; 53:3-7

The reproach of abandonment

Matthew 27:46 (NIV) ⁴⁶ About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*"—which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

The reproach of sin

2Corinthians 5:21 (NIV) ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. Isaiah 53:9

Hebrews 13:12 (NIV) ¹² And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. Exodus 29:4

"Shame was stripping away every earthly support that Jesus had: his friends gave way in shaming abandonment; his reputation gave way in shaming mockery; his decency gave way in shaming nakedness; his comfort gave way in shaming torture. His glorious dignity gave way to the utterly undignified, degrading reflexes of grunting and groaning and screeching." —John Piper

2. The glory of the crown

... now crowned with glory and honor (Hebrews 2:9)

The glory of the crown

Hebrews 2:9 (NIV) ⁹ But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

The glory of the throne

Hebrews 12:2 (NIV) ² Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The glory of the name

Philippians 2:8-11 (NIV) ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! ⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Revelation 19:11-16 (NIV) ¹¹ I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True... ¹² His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns... ¹⁵ "He will rule them with an iron scepter." ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

3. Our cross and crown

... if we endure, we will also reign with him. (2Tim. 2:12)

Matthew 16:24-25 (NIV) ²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.

2Timothy 2:11-12 (NIV) ¹¹ Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; ¹² if we endure, we will also reign with him.

Revelation 20:6 (NIV) ⁶ Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

Romans 8:17-18 (NIV) ¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. ¹⁸ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

1Peter 4:12-13