

FOLLOW ME

MATTHEW 16

Text: Matt 16:24

(Matthew 16:24) "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

Introduction:

The Talmage records the story of the Greek architect commissioned by the emperor to build the great coliseum in Rome. When the work was finished, the opening was a great and grand event. The coliseum was filled with a great host of people. The emperor was there and had sitting beside him the architect, who was to receive a crown for this great achievement. For the chief entertainment, they brought out a few dozen Christians. In the base of the coliseum was a series of cages and allies.

Christians were brought into the alleys, and lions were freed from the cages to devour the Christians while the watching crowd cheered. After the Christian's were all dead and the great beasts lay eating their flesh, the emperor arose and shouted to the gathering "The time is come to pay tribute to the man who has built this great monument of Rome. We celebrate this day with

a great feast, a crown of triumph, and the slaying of these Christian dogs." As the crowd cheered, the Greek architect removed the crown and tossed it to the maze below. He then shouted to the crowd which gasped in shock, "I too am a Christian." With that, he was taken by the guards and thrown to the lions, where he perished.

This architect decided to follow Jesus more fully and at the cost of his life as he let his presence be known. So whatever the cost, I have decided to follow Jesus. In the scripture today, notice the natural flow of the thought.

1. WE HAVE A RECOGNIZED CHOICE

(Matthew 16:24) "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

The word take up has a strong definition with and a lifting of the cross to the highest point in our life, so that all may see it. This means in order to take up our cross we must deny our self refusing our claim on life and accepting his Will as we live for Jesus Christ.

A. Right Choice:

The thought with the text is our making this choice with a desire to accept the Will of God. This comes

from the word "Telei" which means to seize with your mind.

1. Notice as in 1 Chronicles 28:9

(1 Chronicles 28:9) "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever."

a. Following Jesus more fully is always a right choice

B. Real Choice

(Joshua 24:15) "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

1. Real choice which is made in faith and followed thought

C. Ready Choice

(2 Corinthians 6:2) "(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)"

1. One should not tarry long, because they may tarry too long

D. Rotten Choice

(Luke 18:18) "And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

1. For those who have not accepted Christ as Savior
2. Also it is a rotten choice for those who are saved and not following Jesus

2. WE HAVE A REQUIRED CROSS

(Matthew 16:25) "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."

The key to this verse is in the words "for my sake"

- Christ says that "whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it"

- The person who abandons this life: who sacrifices and gives all that he has for Christ. Then that person knows from deep within that there are benefits for serving Christ and accepting the required Cross
- But the person who keeps his life and what he has and seeks more and more of this life, shall lose his life completely and eternally.

A. Personal Cross

See the personal pronouns, "His".

This is a choice that I can't make for you, just as I cannot accept Christ as Savior for you.

B. Path of the Cross

1. The way of the Cross leads home
2. The path of the Cross also leads to a life of rejection in this present life, the Cross speaks of Crucifixion, leading a believer to an end of their self
3. When one comes to the end of their self, then the pleasures of this world holds no attraction to them

(Galatians 2:20) "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

3. WE HAVE A REALIZED COMMITMENT

(Matthew 16:26) "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Lose his own soul means to lose ones life and perish. Once a man has lost his soul it is lost, it cannot be brought back.

The man forfeits and suffers the loss forever.

Imagine! Even if a man possessed all the wealth of the world, he would not be able to buy back his soul. Why? Because it is gone, it has passed on forever into Hell. The man will never return to earth, for even one day, for another chance. He is gone forever.

A. Context

1. The scripture is given in the perfect present tense, which means that following Jesus is a continued, daily decision, to dedicate you to the Lord.

B. Christian

(Hebrews 10:7) "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God."

(Hebrews 10:9) "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second."

1. A true commitment to Christianity: is to act Christ like.
2. Jesus did not shrink His Cross, he lived in and for the Will of God

4. WE HAVE A RESERVED CROWN

(Matthew 16:27) "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works."

Shall reward every man according to his works. These words are adopted from Ps. 62:12 and Prov. 24:12

(Psalms 62:12) "Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work."

(Proverbs 24:12) "If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it?"

and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?"

A. Reward

1. The Crown of Rejoicing

(1 Thessalonians 2:19) "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?"

a. Some call this the Soul Winners Crown

2. The Crown of Righteousness

(2 Timothy 4:7-8) "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: {8} Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

a. This Crown seems to be for all who watch for the return of the Lord. Those who have Blessed Hope in a purifying sense.

3. The Crown of Glory

(1 Peter 5:4) "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

4. The Crown of Life

(James 1:12) "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

a. Here is a special crown for those who have been or will be martyred for the Lord Jesus. Such as the victims in the school shooting who stood up for their Lord and their testimony

5. The Crown Incorruptible

(1 Corinthians 9:24-25) "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. {25} And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible."

a. All Saints everywhere in all ages,
can win this crown by being
sincere and faithful

B. Rewarder

(1 Peter 5:4) "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

C. Rewarded

(1 Corinthians 4:2) "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."

(James 1:22) "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

The song writer put it this way the Cross before the Crown.