

**4/14/06**

**Encouragement for Today**

“Journey to the Cross”

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**Key Verse:**

Philippians 1:21, “For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (NKJ)

**Devotion:**

I didn't take the time to discuss it with my parents or even tell them where I was going. I leaped out of my seat and ran toward the stage. I was running to Jesus. I could hear my mother calling my name as she begged me to stop, but I kept on running to Jesus. In the arena, a sea of people began to fill the gap between my mother and me. Normally, this would have been frightening for any small child, but it didn't seem to matter. The pull toward the front of the stage was much stronger, so I kept running toward Jesus.

I was only seven years old when I met Jesus for the first time. While attending a James Robertson crusade with my family, I was captured by the words of the evangelist as he described Jesus, the Son of God and the Savior of the world.

That divine night, the Lord opened my eyes and helped me to understand His message of hope like never before. At this young age, I was able to comprehend that Jesus was a powerful person, the Son of the Living God, Who came to earth to lay down His life for me. I knew that night that I wanted to know this Jesus Who loved me enough to go to the cross in my place. So, when Pastor Robertson invited all who wanted to know Jesus personally to come forward, in my heart I was already there.

That very moment, Jesus became my Savior. He forgave my sins and poured His love into my heart so much so that I sobbed with joy until strings of snot hung from my nose. No, it wasn't pretty, but that didn't matter. I had Jesus!

I didn't realize it then, but this was only the beginning of my journey to the cross. It took me several years to discover that Jesus was leading me down the same path He traveled on earth. What path, you might ask? Where was He going? Jesus was continually walking toward the cross. I knew the meaning of the cross for Him. It meant death and Jesus was leading me there too – to die to my selfish desires.

After we are called to God's saving grace through His Son's death, our next call is to service. This is where we become Disciples of Christ. Our salvation is a free gift. While it cost Christ everything, it cost us nothing. On the other hand, to be a co-laborer of Christ is very costly. He asks for our lives. “For if you want to save your own life, you will lose it, but if you lose your life for my sake, you will save it.” (Luke 9:24)

With this realization came a choice. Will I continue to follow Jesus or not? I mean nobody likes death, especially their own. Still, the time had come. I could no longer be a spoiled-rotten child of God receiving His blessings only. It was time to decide whether I would go on with Christ and learn not to only receive from Him but to serve Him. The requirements Jesus offered were difficult. “If you desire to follow me, you must put aside your selfish desires, carry your own cross and follow me.” (Mark 8:34)

This meant I had to nail to the cross all of my rights, my selfish desires, my pride, my anger, my family and my own personal dreams in order to fulfill God's dreams for my life.

When I reached this point of spiritual death, I began to understand what Paul meant when he said, “It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live

by faith.” (Galatians 2:20) My spiritual death led to new life, just as Jesus’ death led to resurrection life. It was the life I was always looking for, filled with power, peace and joy as I served my God and my King.

Often times we stop at the foot of the cross. There God’s grace is extended, our sins forgiven, and Heaven becomes our future home. There is more. You’ve sensed it. You’ve desired it. God has a plan for your life greater than you could ever imagine. Can you hear that second call? If so, will you get up from the foot of the cross, nail all your worldly passions there, and commit to follow Him wherever He leads? It’s an adventure of a lifetime that will last forever more.

#### **My Prayer for Today:**

Dear Jesus, I’ve been on the receiving end, but today I hear Your call to service. I want to nail all that I am to the cross so that I can go where You go and serve as You serve. I want to be Your disciple. I want to be a “living sacrifice” so that Your life, through me, can bless others. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

#### **Application Steps:**

Go to a quiet place and read Isaiah 6:5-8. Notice that Isaiah heard the voice of God calling him. What do you hear? Isaiah felt unworthy in the presence of God. He knew he was a sinner and repented before Him. Is there anything you need to confess to God? The Lord touched his lips and put His words into Isaiah’s mouth. This tells us that God will equip us to serve Him. We need not fear. God is enough. Will you say to God today, “Here I am, send me?”

#### **Reflection Points:**

What have you gained by holding to your own rights ... anger and pride?

What does God want to give you through your surrendered life?

Have you been hearing God’s call to service?

Have you longed to go deeper with God, to know Him more, and experience life more abundantly? Answer the call.

#### **Power Verses:**

Romans 12:1, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.” (NJK)

Acts 27:22, “But now I beg you, take courage! Not one of you will lose your life; only the ship will be lost.” (Good News)

Mark 8:35, “For if you want to save your own life, you will lose it; but if you lose your life for me and for the gospel, you will save it.” (Good News)

Philippians 1:21, “For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (NKJ)

Galatians 2:20, “It is not longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith.” (NKJ)

#### **Additional Resources:**

[What Happens When Women Walk in Faith](http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_whatHappens.htm), by Lysa TerKeurst  
[http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources\\_whatHappens.htm](http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_whatHappens.htm)

[Do You Know Him?](http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/knowHim.htm)

<http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/knowHim.htm>

[Becoming a Woman Who Listens to God](#), by Sharon Jaynes

[http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources\\_becomingAWoman.htm](http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_becomingAWoman.htm)