

*The Ultimate
Frame of Reference:
The Cross*

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

A person's frame of reference is that supporting structure upon which he bases all evaluations. The frame of reference provides a foundation for judgments and a support for decisions. Your frame of reference is your standard, and in a sense it decides for you. When your guard is down, your frame of reference is your automatic pilot. Your frame of reference reveals who you are (Proverbs 23:7).

This booklet reveals what I believe God wants every Christian to have as his frame of reference. It is that towards which Jesus set His face like a flint (Isaiah 50:7; Luke 9:51). It is that from which He would not be sidetracked (Matthew 16:23). It is that in which Paul gloried (Galatians 6:14). It is the Cross of Jesus Christ.

More than the wooden stake on Golgotha, we are concerned with what was accomplished there. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin" (2 Corinthians 5:21a).

Many of us have become too familiar with that verse. For a moment, consider the spotless Lamb. He who knew no sin became sin. He abandoned the state of sinless perfection for that of an adulterer, a homosexual, a thief, a liar, and a gossip. Jesus Christ became our sin—a filthy, vile stench in His Father’s nostrils. This identification was to such a degree that the Father could not look upon His Son.

By His expiatory death on Calvary, in our place, Jesus Christ paid the penalty for our sins (Mark 15:34; Isaiah 53:10). There on the Cross, He finished the work that the Father had given Him to do on our behalf (John 19:30). There, on the Cross, God reached down to man and said, “This is how much I love you” (1 John 3:16; 4:10).

No doubt, you have problems in your life. You may have a bad marriage, a terrible job, or slim finances, and you valiantly refer to these things as your “cross” in life. Well, Jesus Christ has only one Cross, and he wants that Cross to be your frame of reference. He wants you to have *that* Cross as your mental and emotional support structure.

The premise for all that we believe as Finished Work Christians is this: That Cross is *His* Cross, and His Cross is *our* Cross. Therefore,

when we “take up our Cross” it should always be in identification with His Cross.

We must remember that the work of the Cross has been completed. In John 19:30, Jesus cried out, “It is finished!” *Tetelestai*, the Greek word for that phrase, is the ultimate victory cry of every Christian. Coming forth from the trumpet blast of the “horn of salvation” (Jesus Christ, in Luke 1:69 and Psalm 18:2), that declaration makes every accusing demon tremble and flee.

Occupation Produces Application

When a believer occupies himself with that Cross, all of God’s *agapao* and *charis* become applicable and are known.

Agapao is the Greek word for God’s divine, unconditional love. How true 1 John 3:1 is when translated: “Behold what foreign kind of love is this.” His Cross, as seen through the classical Greek, proves that His love takes pleasure in us, prizes us above other things, and is unwilling to abandon us or do without us (Wuest, Ephesians 5:25).

Charis is the word used in the Greek to describe God’s grace, which is God’s divine vehicle of transportation, making His *agapao* available to us despite our inability to earn or deserve

it. His grace is favor conferred freely, having no expectation of return, motivated by the free-heartedness of the Giver, and it is always leaping forward (Wuest):

“Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (Romans 5:20).

The typical Greek pagan mind could never imagine or conceive of offering such a love to an enemy, proving that with Christ comes a brand-new understanding of the infinite superabundance of His care for us. This grace produces adult sons, mature believers, who pass through “no-man’s land” experiences, which are the devastations and trials of life. These believers crack the maturity barrier and come into the hidden prosperity of the “treasures of darkness” (Isaiah 45:3).

Oh, this kind of Christianity is rare! We are living in an age when the Gospel is popular but the Cross is not. We see multimillion-dollar campaigns popularizing the Gospel message. Unfortunately, these often produce *professing* Christians but not *possessing* Christians. As A.W. Tozer said it many years ago:

“Evangelism, as we know it today, does produce some real Christians, but the spiritual cli-

mate into which many modern Christians are born does not make for vigorous spiritual growth. Indeed, the whole evangelical world is, to a large extent, unfavorable to healthy Christianity. And I am not thinking of modernism, either. I mean, rather, the Bible-believing crowd that bears the name of orthodoxy. We are making converts to an effete type of Christianity that bears little resemblance to that of the New Testament. The average so-called Bible Christian in our times is but a wretched parody of true sainthood. Yet we put millions of dollars behind movements and buildings to perpetuate this degenerate form of religion and attack the man who dares to challenge the wisdom of it."

According to Matthew 11:30, we bear a yoke that is easy and a burden that is light as we take up our Cross, daily, with a mental attitude of faith and in identification with our Lord's sufferings (Philippians 1:29).

It is through our own death that we grow into *His* Cross as our ultimate frame of reference. Pray that He will increase, and that we might decrease (John 3:30).

Chapter One

TAKE UP YOUR CROSS—
MY LOVE AND GRACE
—AND FOLLOW ME

“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.

“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it” (Matthew 16:24, 25).

Every believer must determine with his own free volition to take up his Cross daily. He must count the cost, deny himself, and follow Jesus Christ in a continuous, deliberate act of laying down his life.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

“And be not conformed to this world: but be

ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:1, 2).

Once the life of the Cross has been experienced, it becomes very precious to each believer. It clearly reveals that we desire to have the Cross of Jesus Christ in our lives above all else. As we take up our Cross—which is Christ's Cross—with a full knowledge of what it entails, that becomes the means of our identification with God. Thus, the Cross is able to be manifested in God's plan for our personal lives.

Only a few people arise each morning in an attitude of enthusiasm and intelligence, having God's divine attributes actually functioning in their soul. In fact, few are the believers who take up their Cross with full understanding of this life-changing truth. Most people accept the plan of God for their lives and enter into it hoping for the best, without having taken up the Cross of Christ. When a difficult situation arises, they consider that particular trial to be their "cross." Much of Christianity has been infiltrated with this type of thinking. So many professing believers have no concept of the practical application of the Cross and what it means to have the Cross

as their ultimate frame of reference.

The Cross: Our Provision for Life

The Cross is God's provision for my life as a whole. I deny myself every day of my life, because I know what the Cross is. I *choose* to take it up. I know very well what I am doing. Psychologically and emotionally, I take up the Cross deliberately every day. Either I deny self entirely, or I have not taken up my Cross.

If in a day we could see what God sees in our behavior, we would realize that the reason we have provocations and confusion is that we have failed to take up our Cross. Often, we think that trials are the Cross—as if they were sent by God to cause us to grow. This is not what the Bible says about the Cross. The Cross is not represented by difficulty. The Cross is something I take up voluntarily, in the same manner that Jesus took up His Cross in obedience to the Heavenly Father.

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

“But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was

made in the likeness of men:

“And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;”

And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:5-11).

When a person takes up his Cross through a specific act of his will (a definite attitude of mind) and with the consent of his emotions, without reservation, he gains an amazing capacity to reveal God’s life. Throughout the entire day and night, he learns that he is not to do one single thing to keep his life. As an act of his will, he does absolutely nothing to preserve himself. He has taken up the Cross as his own, and he goes forward, fully aware that regardless of blessing or adversity, he has already chosen God and His Cross as his provision for life.

This decision does away with questions toward God. It does away with reactions in the

sinful adamic nature. It clearly reveals the believer's commitment and dedication. He has discovered something unique: that he can go forward with God in the power of the Cross.

The Importance of Daily Exercise

Not many people do this. Some get up, have their devotions, and go on with their day, but few fully understand what it means to take up a personal Cross and have it done with for that particular day. Imagine entering into your first situation of the day being dead—psychologically and emotionally—to everything and everybody. “You are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” (Colossians 3:3). Your emotions are free from any kind of reaction. You are no longer filled with self-interest or self-preservation.

There is no “duty” in the Cross. There is no going away muttering under your breath at bothersome points during your day. There is no pressure and no stress, just complete availability to God.

Until a person understands this principle, he cannot even look upon Canaan—the land of promise of Finished Work rest. That is how we become vessels of honor (1 Thessalonians 4:4), moldable clay in the Potter's hands (Jeremiah

18:2-6). Life becomes a pleasure when we allow God to be Master, Christ to be Lord, the Holy Spirit to be our guide, the Word to reveal truth, and the abundant life to be our experience.

So often, believers go through trials, and they cannot figure out why. The fact is, we are apt to become upset in situations because we did not deny self and take up the Cross that day. The average believer is not a "practical" believer. He believes at times. He believes if it is convenient. He believes if it is comfortable. He believes when he is at the end of his rope or when he is backed up against a wall at the ultimate end. But he is not an experiential, daily believer; he does not understand that by his free volition, he must daily take up the Cross.

The apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:31, "I die daily." Reckoning that he was crucified with the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul had entered into this very definite daily act of the co-crucifixion of his will. With his free volition, he experientially reactivated this truth each day by making a deliberate decision to believe that his old sin nature was included in Christ's death on Calvary:

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like Christ was raised up

from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). It was not an act of fear. By grace through faith, Paul died the way he lived—free from fear, dead to self, and alive in Christ.

Faith Plus Love through Dying Daily

In Luke 9:23, Jesus said, "...If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Notice that carefully. Why did He say we are to take up our Cross *daily*? Jesus was teaching a lesson of living in faith, having God's character of love. You see, it is possible to have faith to remove mountains and not have charity (1 Corinthians 13:2)—to have the faith through the Word but without the character of love. But, if we have the Word of God, categorically, *and* God's Holy Spirit producing God's love in our hearts, and if they are both functioning together in life, then we have faith with the character of love.

Faith with the character of love goes beyond "name it and claim it" faith. It is a faith that serves by love (Galatians 5:6). This quality of faith can remove mountains, but with God's nature of love in the process of removing them.

In Luke 9:24, after He said He was going to

the Cross and that He would be resurrected, Jesus taught the disciples a lesson, but they could not understand the meaning of it. He was saying, "For the details in your soul, in your life, I want you to learn how to lose that you may gain, how to forfeit that you may win, how to enlist that you may have." In other words, don't try to surrender—just enlist. God took care of your surrender when you entered into His co-crucifixion. Therefore, enlist your members to enjoy His resurrection.

The word for "lose" simply means to lose something that you could have had through your volition. "Daily" means every single day. It is referring to our own Cross. For the believer to take up his own Cross means that God will order the believer's steps so that he will have his own Cross in identification with Calvary. Then, the Greek brings out something beautiful: "Take up your own Cross, and keep on following Me while you do it."

Do you know why He said it that way? Often, when people begin to experience a "cross" (as they see it), they stop following the Lord Jesus Christ through *His* Cross. They become occupied with their "cross" which is separate from His Cross. Many end up denying

themselves while they live in legalism or natural good works. Because they are not functioning in a faith that works by love, they get frustrated and enter into mental works and they become confused, bored, and reactionary.

So this is what He is saying: “I want you to deny yourself and take up the Cross that I give you. I ordered your steps for the plan of your life. As you take up your Cross, keep following Me through My indwelling life and My indwelling Word—and don’t stop following Me!”

Building Spiritual Muscles

Many people can develop spiritual muscles so that their mind and emotions obey their will. In the morning, you tell your body to get up, and it gets up to go to work. You say to yourself, “I’m not going to eat that junk food today,” and when your will has such muscles, you don’t eat junk food. You say, “I’m going to get proper rest,” and in the Lord, through the Word, your will has developed muscles to make right decisions so you can get the rest you should have. You say, “I could worry. I could get tempted. But I’m not going to do it!” and through Jesus Christ and the Word that is indwelling you, you trust God instead of worrying.

Your will develops tremendous muscles with the Word of God and the filling of the precious Holy Spirit, through faith-rest in the character of God's love. Therefore, your will begins to rule with walls of doctrine. You face Satan, demonization, and all the traps, projections, and stimulation that come from the flesh, so that you see a strange victory. It is "strange" because you didn't have it a while ago. You suddenly find that you are relaxed. You have peace. You are motivated by love. You sense kindness towards others, and if you fail, you are very quick to be honest. It is no big problem, because you isolate it and go on.

The most beautiful thing about this is that by exercising your spiritual muscles, you are greater than a king over a country. You are greater than a ruler over a city (Proverbs 16:32). You can rule over Satan, over demons, over circumstances, over the flesh, over the mysteries, over the invisible, because you have an invisible Christ inside of you. You have doctrine that is tangible—that has substance through faith. You have developed godly character because the Holy Spirit produces the very love of God in which you can rest. You don't have to rest in works or in something else. You rest in His char-

acter, His love, His nature, His promises, His Word.

Instead of saying to God, “Remember this or that,” say, “I know I am who I am, but You remember Your Word of grace. You remember Your Word of love to me.” (And of course, He does—but it makes you feel good that you are remembering what He is remembering.)

Indeed, the believer who reigns within himself through Christ, who rules over his passions, desires, and fears with faith-rest, is greater than every virtuous and wise man of the world.

Chapter Two

BEAUTIFUL FOR SITUATIONS

“Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King” (Psalm 48:1, 2).

The “situation” of Mount Zion speaks of its placement—its specific setting in God’s design—so that people would look to it for generations and remember all that God performed there.

Situations are necessary to reveal that Jesus Christ is beautiful, and to reveal our personal experience with Him in truth. God places us in situations that we might not choose on our own so that He will be glorified. We need to experience a variety of circumstances in order to grow in grace. God needs us in the situation so He can take over and produce life in it; the situation needs us to see grace as we grow; and the world

needs us in the situation so people can see God in action.

Therefore, He is beautiful for all situations. He ordained each and every situation of our lives before we were born. There are no accidents in the plan of God. When we are assured that all is ordained, we can take up our Cross with our free volition and bring pleasure to Him through obedience. He then works out of our lives that which is undesirable.

The Lord Jesus Christ is beautiful for situations, because He wants us to learn obedience, even through suffering. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). We should learn from suffering, rather than kicking against the goads. Instead of resisting the Holy Spirit, which will cause us to be incapacitated and incapable of receiving God's love and grace for the situation, He wants us to learn obedience by denying ourselves with our free volition, and by going forward in joy, peace, power, love, and purpose, taking up our Cross to learn something from Him.

His Grace Is Sufficient

The Lord Jesus Christ wants to show us that

His grace is sufficient for every single situation. He will never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). There is no situation we can encounter that is void of His faith. He goes through everything with us, to the very end. He is beautiful for situations, because He takes all the things in our lives that are not of God and makes something beautiful out of them.

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28).

“For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God” (2 Corinthians 4:15).

This makes Him very beautiful. He is beautiful because He has provided a Cross that allows us to deny ourselves, so that the situation itself is not burdensome or taxing.

If we had to deny ourselves without His Cross, the situation would be a burdensome, religious form of doing something for God. It is like being forced to be like God without knowing Him. God has not said, “I want you to perform and be good in situations.” On the contrary, He says, “Here is a situation, and here is

My Cross. Deny yourself, through an act of your will, and enter into My death through faith. That way, your 'self' is done away with, and the only power left to work through you is Me."

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (2 Corinthians 4:7).

All we need is faith that responds, love that experiences, and grace that is now. I no longer have to strive or struggle. Calvary has made a perfect provision. What can be tough about co-death?

Tragedy becomes Joy in Obedience

James 1:2-4 says, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

If we go through a situation in fleshly works and religious form, it is not joyous, but grievous. But the person who has the love of God does not sense a grievous burden in doing God's will. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3).

This principle would revolutionize lives and relationships if comprehended in areas of faith, realized in resurrection, and practiced in personal application through obedience by taking up the Cross. What the world sees as a tragedy can actually bring joy into every dimension of our obedience. We can truly say that Jesus Christ is beautiful for situations.

To every circumstance there is a divine connotation and an incomprehensible value that is so absolutely true, so complete in its divine validity. It is that any human being can become that vessel in whom Jesus Christ will reveal the treasure of Redemption in time, the eternal value of God's plan, and the very present truth of God's situation.

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

"While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:17, 18).

It is possible that some morning we will get up and, perhaps, find that parts of this country have been annihilated through cataclysmic

events. Some morning you may get up to find that someone very close to you has passed away. We have to face life knowing that just as God had the power to raise Jesus in His humanity, it is that same power that makes situations beautiful for me. My life cannot be shaken if I am living in the “faith-world” of Jesus Christ. The bottom will never fall out if the bottom is grace. And my fellowship with Jesus Christ will never end if my eyes are focused upon Him through the lens of the Cross.

God Is Speaking to Us

The Lord comes to us and says, “Listen, I want to teach you some simple things. That is why your life is going to be filled with a variety of circumstances. I am not going to tell you what they will be, but I will do sudden and strange things right in the midst of the circumstances. I have the right to control every single thing in your life. I will not promise you a single thing in relationship to horizontal domestics. I will promise you many things through Redemption, but not necessarily through the routine things of your life. I do not promise to give you the things that you desire on the earth, and I do not promise to help you realize your selfish dreams on the

earth.

“This is what you have, as a believer, for situations. You are not to know what your future holds. But, I will promise you this, that if you honor the Word of God, if you continue to be filled with the Spirit of God, and if you will take up your Cross, daily, through an act of your free volition, you will go forward in a faith that works by love (Galatians 5:6). Your life will go from faith to faith (Romans 1:17), from strength to strength (Psalm 84:7), and from glory to glory (2 Corinthians 3:18)! Look to Me at all times and count it all joy. Then, I will do My work in you in every situation.

“There will never be a time in your life when My plan will not be in operation. No one will be able to interfere with My plan for your life, because all power has been given unto Me in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:20), and I am ordaining your steps (Psalm 37:23). Everything I do is for your sake (2 Corinthians 4:15), and all things come from Me (2 Corinthians 5:18). Are you ready? There will be many sudden surprises, but they will all reveal God in your humanity.

“Now, if for you to live is not Christ, you will go away crying many times—not tears of

truth, but tears of selfishness. Without the mind of Christ, you will go away with emotional disturbances because you did not get what you wanted for your life. I will cause many things to happen in order to totally destroy your worldliness and selfish desires. In fact, I will do just the opposite in your life, because I want you to be like Me. I gave My life for you. When you think you need someone's attention, I may cause that person to be unavailable. I want you to lean on Me as your resource and to walk totally by faith in the strength of God's patience and the impartation of God's grace."

God is speaking to us so precisely. Are you listening?

Chapter Three

GOING THROUGH SOMETHING OR GOING WITH SOMEONE?

“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” (Galatians 2:20).

Only the spiritually illiterate would consider the Cross to be a burden. They would point to their trials and limitations as their “cross,” but this is not so. The Cross is something we take up and go through as we deny ourselves. Then, there is nothing left in our lives that can trouble us, because we are dead! The language of self-awareness is, “That is my ‘cross’. I must go through this.” That is such a contradiction. What do you have to go through? What is there to go through? Is the Bible true?

If my selfish nature, needs, emotions, and attitudes are crucified, what do I have to go

through? I must understand that I am not “going *through* something. I am going *with* Someone. We have the attitude that we are going through something when we do not understand that we are going with Someone. My life is hid with Christ in God, and I am dead. “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21). “Christ is my life” (Colossians 3:4).

Check the Source of Your Thought Life

I often hear this type of statement: “For the last two months, I have not been like the others around here. I am going through something!” Well, though we all have our isolated moments, that kind of statement is as out of date as the devil. “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7). So, if that is what you are thinking, it is not biblical, and it is not true.

There is never a time when a believer has to “go through something.” Sure, he may go through the valley of the shadow of death, but that is only a place of shadows. Shadows cannot kill anybody. Besides, there could never be shadows unless there is a light. This tells me that there is a Light in every valley.

The shadows of reflections, projections, and

situations do damage to floundering, easily intimidated, carnal Christians. Their experience becomes an endless cycle of bondage. The person who always says, "I am going through something," will start out the next month with the same old frame of reference. That life is certainly a bore. That person would do well to realize that it is only one's attitude that makes life hopeless. We live in a body of death, and our only hope is to have the life of Christ.

The Cross Brings Us Through Tribulation

We are in a world where God has promised that there will be tribulation. There may be cataclysmic catastrophes, even limited nuclear warfare. A child may die, a beloved family member may die, you may get cancer. You may wake up some morning to a financial crash, with food prices soaring and housing shortages multiplied. Jesus said that there would be tribulation in this world. However, the believer does not look at life as though he is going through something. He is living inside of Someone, and that Someone is God. Thus, the Spirit-filled believer lives by faith in God, denies himself by taking up his Cross daily. This Christian follows Jesus Christ daily, as he lives and thinks with God

daily.

The godly man or woman dwells continuously on things that are true, honest, pure, kind, just, and lovely. He is contented in whatsoever state he finds himself. "For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Philippians 4:11). Each day, he lives totally for God and has no desire for self-preservation. He has no desire to be occupied with anything other than what God is revealing to him through providential situations in the details of his own life.

The Finished Work believer accepts God's plan as the very best for him, and he believes that it is the perfect will of God. He knows God is loving enough to care for the very details of his life (Psalm 113:6), therefore he counts it all joy. If the very thing that he worked so hard to accomplish goes awry, glory to God! Marvelous! He knows that it happened for his sake, so he will be conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus (Romans 8:29).

The Cross Makes the Difference

The Cross reveals God's superabundant care for us, and that superabundant care supercedes any trial we may go through. The Cross makes

the difference. We must remember that all things work together for good, as stated in Romans 8:28, so that through all things, we might be conformed to the image of the Son through the transformation of a renewed mind (Romans 12:2). This can only be accomplished as we take up our Cross daily.

Many go through situations and purposely cultivate their own oppression. They actually find something to “go through” so they will have an excuse to be sad. They choose to live in the weakness of their personality because they are weary of the battle of the flesh, and they are deceived into thinking that it is easier just to give up. The average person lives in the ungodliness of his moods, knowing nothing of the Cross, because of his independence and stubbornness.

There is a wonderful alternative. Through meekness and humility, in Jesus Christ, God will reveal Himself to us in every situation.

He reveals *grace*:

“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you” (1 Peter 5:10).

He reveals *love*:

“That you may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God” (Ephesians 3:18, 19).

He bestows *faith*:

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1).

He reveals that He wants us to go further into His love than we ever expected to go (Ephesians 3:17). In any situation, we will be able to experience new dimensions through faith and receive a new understanding of God through His own personalized touch. Everything about “situations” now spells out the glory of God with great benefit for man. “He loadeth us daily with benefits” (Psalm 68:19).

When I choose to deny myself and I take up my Cross, I do it to glorify God. I count it all joy, and I do not allow myself to become mean and hateful. I choose to glorify God and enjoy every moment of this privilege. Thinking with God, I become insulated more and more with every word of doctrine that relates to the Cross.

Free to Choose the Cross

In every detail of my life, I am responsible to choose the Cross with my free volition. Psychologically and emotionally, I present my entire body to God as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1, 2), so that my mind will be transformed and renewed by His immeasurable grace in the revelation of His inexhaustible Word. Then, I will be completely conformed to the amazing plan of God, through the steps that He has ordained for me.

God's purpose is to make us just like His Son. "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8). Our only purpose is to become like Him. No matter the route He has chosen for us, it is His business to make that happen. He is God. I am only His servant. I do not choose *how* He is going to conform me to His Son, for that would be to exalt my own will against the plan of God. So, the believer must say, "Here I am, Lord, Send me" (Isaiah 6:8). Then, the spiritual adventure begins to happen.

We never know what is coming next. We may not know why things happen, but we

know that we can count it all joy. God's justice will never let the sorrow and torture of wounds inflicted by the malicious enemy prevail. In the meantime, however, we must realize that we are dead, indeed, and we are made alive through Christ.

I do not intend to allow myself to have a bad day, and I do not expect to be depressed for one moment. I do not expect to get angry as a means of saving my self-life. I may get angry at the enemy and his demons because of what they do and people's responses to them, but I do not expect to "go through" a single thing this week. Do you know why? It is because I am seated in heavenly places, above it all (Ephesians 2:6). He makes me lie down in green pastures. I am relaxed. I shall not want.

The Ultimate in Christian Living

So many people live in the frustration of unfulfilled worldly passions and never experience the reality and joy of God's provisions. Yet, the believer who has set his affections on things above (Colossians 2:2) has crucified the carnal passions and desires of the godless human nature (Galatians 5:24). He has not only accepted, theologically, what God has *said*, but he is expe-

riencing what God has *done*. Oh, what a zenith of Christian living! Therefore, he lives in the presence and purpose of God.

That believer can say, "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1). Already seated in heavenly places and made to lie down in green pastures before the situation happened, the situation ends in his receiving mercy. God continually leads him beside the still waters. The very thing that seems like a storm by sight is inwardly a still-water situation to him, because he knows who is leading him. "He restores my soul: he leads me in the paths of righteousness" (Psalm 23:3). This believer knows that what is happening in his life is the treading, again, of the path of God's righteousness. This is not such a bad way to go. In fact, it is the biblical way to live. No wonder the Holy Spirit gave psalms, songs, and poetry. They help us to understand the beauty of every situation as we pause and appreciate the impact it can have in our lives.

We were created for God's glory (Isaiah 3:7). We were created for His pleasure (Revelation 4:11). We were created to glorify Him (1 Corinthians 10:31). It is for these reasons that we were created. We must say "thank you" for this revelation.

As a believer with a God who is intensely personal, it does not matter what the situation is. Jesus Christ is beautiful. I have no questions, only faith. I have no frustrations, only love. I desire no changes, only to be changed by Christ. I am not seeking anything for myself. I am only looking for opportunities to reveal Him (Jeremiah 45:5, Luke 19:10, 13). That comes by focusing on the ultimate frame of reference: the Cross of Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSION

“Unto me, who am less than the least of all the saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

“And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

“To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

“According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord”

“...according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

“May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

“And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

“Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” (Ephesians 3:8b-11, 16-21).

The Cross is the place of liberation for the believer. The Cross is the ultimate pivot point of all mankind, standing alone between the mysterious darkness of God in the past and the light of His ever-present invitation: that we would behold Him, having free and unhindered access, no matter who we are, what we have done, or where we are going. This is for the ultimate grace Christian (James 4:6).

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

“By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Romans 5:1, 2).