

Matthew 16:24-27

Jesus will recompense every man according to his deeds

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it. For what will a man be profited, if he gain the whole world, and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and will recompense every man according to his deeds."

We need to read these words daily and have them written in places where we can be reminded of them continually. They bring back the truth to our hearts that Jesus really is coming back and that living our lives fully for Him is the greatest blessing in the world!

Do you ever stop and think about what it means to deny yourself and pick up your cross? Our flesh cries out for the things of this world continually like an undisciplined child who screams and gets mad when he doesn't get his way. There are so many areas of our lives that are like that. We come to Christ and get saved but this doesn't mean that we are suddenly good in every area. It means that now we have subjected our bodies to Jesus' authority and His rules. We have been living a long time by our own rules and for ourselves and as we sit under our Lord's authority He begins to teach us and point out the things in our lives that have to change. This is where we begin to deny ourselves. Every place that God puts his finger on will seem like some impossible thing to let go of. Some of those things will even cause us to get mad at Him and yell at Him. (Ask me how I know this?) You see, our Heavenly Father is not afraid of our wrath because He loves us past it. He will do what is for our good regardless of our reaction which really shows how much He loves us because He doesn't have to. He could be like many parents who simply find a way to compromise with the complaining and screaming child.

I find it an interesting thing about God's work and leading in our lives that most of the time we simply have to say yes and submit to His rules long before we understand why. I like to think of it like a parent telling their child not to play in the street. The child does not understand yet the very real threat of being killed by a car but if he obeys he will live to find out why his parents gave him that rule. Our Heavenly Father wants us to live long enough to understand why. *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments; His praise endures forever."* Psalm 111:10 *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction."* Prov. 1:7

Taking up the cross is carrying out the work that God has for us to do. Jesus knew that His mission was going to be literal death on the cross and many who have followed Him have done the same. This understanding makes us want to make every moment count and keeps our focus on things that really matter. It's so easy to be distracted by things here on earth that are passing away which cause us to forget the work that will not pass away. If we forget we will become ineffective.

"For what will a man be profited if he gains the whole world, and forfeits his soul." These words just bring us back to our senses and the world once again loses its grip on us. Interesting fact: Did you know that when Jesus told those who wanted to follow Him that they must sell all they had, trading it for heavenly riches, that not very long afterword at the downfall of Jerusalem thieves had overrun the land and would kill anyone who had any wealth at all in order to steal it. Anyone who had anything of value lived in fear for their lives. So they could have traded possessions that they couldn't keep for treasure in Heaven which no man could steal. Josephus' history of the downfall of Jerusalem goes into great detail about those events.

"For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and recompense every man according to his deeds." This is our greatest day when all we have left behind will feel like nothing compared to the heavenly smile of our Savior and we will wish we had several lifetimes of things to give up just to make up for the blessings He bestows upon us! All we have lost will be nothing in our eyes.

Our victory is in Christ Jesus! Let us look to Him today and may this earthly life just fall away from us.

God bless you all! June 2, 10