

The believers cross (Quality: Good)

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Preacher: Pont, Philip

[0 : 00] The Lord helping us once more I would ask your attention to Luke chapter 23 and verse 26.

The gospel as recorded by Luke chapter 23 and verse 26. And as they led him away they laid hold upon one Simon a Cyrenian coming out of the country.

And on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus. And as they led him away they laid hold upon one Simon a Cyrenian coming out of the country.

And on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus. We began this morning to speak of this cross.

We tried to indeed trust confirm that every believer in Christ Jesus will indeed have a cross.

[1 : 26] One that will be given him not one he chooses. One that will remain with him or her till either the Lord takes it away or that he might be taken or she might be taken to eternal glory.

It is sent for a purpose. To hold us down. To keep us dependent. To make us aware of our emptiness and poverty.

Without that his all sufficient grace and aid is granted. But there is one thing I did not say. My friends.

And this is the all important matter. It does not matter how we describe the cross. It might be your cross. My cross. Somebody else's cross.

If it is given of God. It is for our souls good and profit. But let me say this. Without a cross. There is no crown.

[2 : 45] It was so. The Lord Jesus Christ must needs go to the cross. Not that he shall have a crown for going to the cross.

He. The all sufficient God and saviour. Has a crown of glory. As indeed it must surely be. From all eternity and to all eternity.

But there will be a crown. And there will be no crown without this cross first. Remember once in tribulation's path.

The Lord dropped these words in. Lord pardon my complaint. I follow at thy call. The joy prepared. For suffering saints.

Will make amends for all. You will not and I will not never know. The blessings and benefits of that glorious state of heaven.

[3 : 48] If we are not first brought into the pathway of believers. May I just turn for a moment.

May I just turn for a moment. To a word in the ninth chapter. May I see you. May I see you. May I see you. May I see you. May I see you. My friends what instruction it is.

May this be a word to all believers. Whether you are new. As we might so put it in the way. Or a long time in the pathway.

and he said to them all if any man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me therefore it is a daily cross and it so confirms what we concluded with this morning when we just began to say this that the greatest, heaviest, the most awkward cross that you and I must surely have I thought not to begin to decide to describe people's crosses I do try not to establish what I may feel to be the way that the Lord teaches some different from the other because it can be trying to the poor people of God but I said and I stand by what I said the greatest, heaviest, the most awkward cross my friends is self and I say it again the Lord Jesus Christ's own words dropped in after dinner today that such that our followers of his will be brought to this let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me it's not something that you put on with your Sunday clothes my friends it's a cross you bear given to you to bear given to you to carry given to you as a burden before the church before the world as well and as indeed it must be surely said given and never removed until the Lord will remove it and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus well my friends the Lord help us then to look at this cross of self what it is that we have to indeed endure and indeed resist as grace is given what indeed is that which causes the warfare between the old man and the new have you a religion that's got a warfare in it oh have you sometimes wished you'd never opened your mouth and spoke this or that because it wasn't through the spirit's influence that you spoke but it was rather the old man that spoke your sinful self and my friends

I stand by this truth also that if you walk in the ways of God you will find the greatest adversary to that way will be yourself many will speak of the carnality of the world out there and how they desecrate the day of God it's totally true and how the world is sunk in sin and the nation also and all that sort of thing and it's absolutely true but before you take up stones to stone the carnal in this world look into your own heart and that's where carnality should be the trouble and that should be that which brings you in confession and repentance before the Lord my friends your cross is your self and what about self that is so opposite to grace because that is what the that is what we must draw from this conclusion my friends it's what's opposite to grace it's what's so opposite to the pathway that they walk well you may look inside and say well

[8 : 23] I've none of these things well my friends let us point out one or two things that you and I have got and you and I must mourn over and as grace is given and truly as the spirit of confession is granted to us that we must that we may bring them before the Lord and lay them at his feet it's something that's going to be crucified in his people my friends to crucify it is to put death on it and so that it cannot be trusted in rather that it may be as the grace of God will be given to have it revealed and confess it before the Lord well let us begin with the spirit of pride that is in self and all you say I've got such a humble spirit I live in such a humble way I don't have the possessions the world have there are two thoughts of pride you know you might say well I'm sure there's a lot more well let's keep to the two thoughts of pride there's the natural spirit of pride pride that proud nature that we were born with and oh how grace is needed to that the Lord will subdue that old nature that sin of old nature the pride of one's own heart that it might be rather that we might be walking where

Nehemiah walked when he spoke to the people of Israel the Jews you remember that they were mortgaging their own people they were bringing their people into debts they couldn't pay and to pay their debts they had to mortgage not only their lands and their houses but their own families and he spoke about his pathway what it was since he was raised up of God to be the burden bearer of Israel and to do at Jerusalem what he was led of God to do but he said this so did not I because of the fear of God and that's the opposite of pride opposite of pride my friends and it's a grace that God does give his people the fear of God and it is in total contrary to the pride of all nature but then let me tell you another pride and that's spiritual pride and you'll have to pray against that also what's spiritual pride well my friends it's when you begin to think you've been taught a lot more deeper and a lot more blessed than someone else it's when you start to parade your blessings about the revelations you've had the tokens that the Lord has granted to you you begin to judge other people as being if not in word well somewhat more or somewhat less taught than you were oh what needs we have my friends when you look at this cross that we have in self to pray against pride and spiritual pride well the poet says and spiritual pride once creeps in will turn the very grace to sin it's very sad my friends whatever sort of pride it's very sad when you find a believer in Jesus Christ who is left to pride it's a cross that he has to bear it's a cross that he has to carry and the cause of it as it is revealed to him will bring distress will bring him to the mercy seat will bring him down and low at his feet tell you another cross you know that

I believe the people of God have to endure and this may sound strange in your ears but I believe this across in this form and in this way you know some of the Lord's people and I trust and believe some of the Lord's servants too have to so mourn because of their inability and their nothingness well you may say it's a wonderful grace to have not when Satan and not when self begins to turn it against you as to try to prove therefore you as not one of God's children when the fear of God is in exercise and when that blessed fear brings humility before the Lord and brings a sense of unworthiness of any of his mercy and his grace you go back to the second chapter in the book of Ruth and you find that dear handmaiden of the Lord confessing before

Boaz that she's unlike one of God's people one of Boaz's handmaidens why have I found grace in thy sight she said seeing I am but a stranger now that was the fear of God but you know my friends sometimes Satan turns that nothingness and emptiness and poverty as a means to distress and trouble the people of God he will point out therefore that a grace taught soul is one that is so well blessed with truth so well blessed with understanding so well blessed with knowledge and if he's a minister of the gospel he will turn the accuser and say well the Lord's servants they don't have this trouble and this trial on their hands they are adequately taught and graciously led and their sermons are full of truth and blessedness to the people of God but you you're ignorant and poor and empty and undone and you're like a beggar in the pulpit my friends it's a cross that the Lord's people have to carry and what cross is that well we said this morning utter dependence do you like to be absolutely dependent do you like to do if not in providential things my friends but in gracious things where you have to say in effect when he openeth his hands then he giveth when he closes his hands we are left destitute and we have to wait on him for every blessing and favour not having things to rest on himself to be emptied out and every prop removed and every comfort removed and as ours depended on him for gracious blessings as we are for the natural breath that we draw it is a heavy cross my friends to carry for a child of grace to be so poor and needy and then the natural spirit of a natural man is still as much evident in a gracious character as it is in an ungracious character don't pick up stones to throw my friends at the world with their nature as it is because that's the same nature that you carry about but for grace that subdues it but sometimes the Lord permits it to come to the surface so that it distresses the people of God so that they have to go back as it were in the sense of sin and the need of forgiveness and pardon to their

God I think for a moment of the apostle Peter in his impetuous spirit that he had oh you might say after days it was the most blessedly evident that spirit of grace that was with him but when his old nature come to the surface those times when he did not and has to be taught by the way the Lord Jesus Christ permitted him to be taught to know his hopelessness and his helplessness you remember when the Lord Jesus was about to be crucified or about to go to Gethsemane he says to Peter Satan hath desired to have you to sift you as wheat but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not and when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren well impetuous

[17 : 30] Peter as usual would say well if it needs be I'll go to death with thee oh I wouldn't forsake you I wouldn't I wouldn't in any way do as these others will do though all men forsake thee yet will not I but dear friends you have within you just as much an evil nature as the world have there's no difference in your heart your natural heart nor your natural mind than the world live also it's only as grace will subdue it if it's any different at all but then we find Peter going to the judgment hall to listen to the accusations that were made against the Lord Jesus Christ and there we find if not three there was two wasn't it damsels who said in effect that he was one of those who were followers of the

Lord Jesus the fear of man is a snare but it's in your heart and mine you know but for grace and the fear of the result of being found amongst God's people in that moment of time brought him my friends to be ashamed of Christ and I remember to this you know we read somebody said to him you know your speech betrayeth you you talk like one of them you talk like one of those people who go with Jesus Christ and then we read of Peter that with oaths and curses he denied the knowledge of Christ my friends what a cross to bear is this self and what great lengths will self get up to and go to to as it were remain dominant and to be superior to the way and to find fault with God and godliness and to turn the soul away if it could from the one and only way of salvation and the path unto glory the Lord puts you into the path of tribulation my friends you will find your old nature resisting it going against it but there was a cure and there was a blessing in these ways in which

Peter walked the Lord Jesus reminded him that the cock must crow three times it must crow that he should deny him three times rather and when he heard the cock crow the dawning of the day my friends comes the spirit of repentance repentance the spirit of sorrow and tribulation of heart he recalled the things of Jesus Christ he remembered his words how he has spoken that in that day and in that moment of time he should deny him this righteousness this was the man who said he would go even unto the grave with Jesus Christ even unto death this was the man who said thou art the Christ the son of the living God oh what a cross is self what a cross is this old nature what opposition is found in nature's mind and heart and spirit against the ways of

God not to be identified with those who are crucified but rather to save one's own skin but there was a cure there was a blessing in this cross you know then Jesus turned and looked upon Peter and he went out and he wept bitterly that's the that's the blessing my friends oh do you know these times when ashamed you are of your sin and of self and of the way in which you have indeed so showed that fear towards men in face of men because of Jesus Christ but the mercy my friends is that Christ is a faithful God faithful to his people too redeem them from the Adam fall he will not lose them though he understands their frame and he remembers that they are but dust oh he bears with their sinfulness and ways and oh what mercy there was mercy that look what mercy there was too as it's recorded in

John's gospel when he asks Peter three times those words Simon Peter lovest thou me more than these as they led him away they laid hold upon one Simon the Cyrenian coming out of the country and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus and then my friends this natural mind that we have this we are born in sin and shaped in iniquity capable of all sorts of sin but for mercy and grace that will subdue that natural mind do you know my friends there is something too that a child of God is troubled with and it's part of his sad state by nature that there's no other person is troubled with a person in the world that's made no profession or shall we say a false professor who has religion in his head and nothing in his heart he's not guilty of this sin it's only a believer there is you'll say what sin is that the sin of unbelief my friends it will be across to you the sin of unbelief the apostle writing to the Hebrews says something to this effect let us lay aside every weight and the sin which thus so easily beset us that's the sin of unbelief my friends

[24 : 01] I've heard people scurl around trying to find out what this besetting sin is people will say well it's because his heart it leans this way his mind it goes after this thing and he's making idols of it and this that and the other well it may be true my friends what you and I have as a believer if we are believers in him and that will be our trouble my friends and we shall have to bear it and bear it before the Lord too is the sin of unbelief doubts and fears all turn at rise they surely do my friends but unbelief will be with you in his house unbelief will be by your side when you try to pray before the mercy seat unbelief if you've got any duties in his house unbelief will stand by your right side and deny these things before you and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus but we can sing 320 blind unbelief is sure to err but scan his work in vain

God is his own interpreter but he will make it plain my friends it is a part of self and it's something that a child of God is troubled with and he'll have to express that sin and iniquity before his God that he will pardon him for his unbelief I looked at a hymn in the vestry and it's this one 1075 O crucify this self that I no more but Christ in me may live bid all my vile affections die nor let one hateful lust survive in all things nothing may I see nothing desire or seek but thee this self I believe my friends we must be right here self is that dreadful complaint which comes against the ways of God comes against the will of God comes against the purposes of God you know but it is also blessedly and mercifully in God's hand to be the means of being subdued by his grace as they led him away they laid hold upon one

Simon a Cyrenian coming out of the cross on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus now my friends let me say this about this cross too something which I trust that you and I may experience sometimes you know especially in those early days of blessing those times when the Lord has appeared and delivered us from our sins and made us meet for the father's use brought us as it were as a child into the fellowship of the gospel brought us into some assurance and comfort of our eternal state the Lord so bless one's soul with his love and with communion with Christ and indeed that about union to the people of

God and you may have this misunderstanding that well if this is the way of salvation how gladly we walk in it if this is the way which is called the narrow way which leadeth unto life then well indeed is the most blessed way well you just sung a hymn something that I remember the dear old pastor at Lambouros used to say quite often to indeed sometimes to the comfort of those who heard it he loads their shoulders well with woe and thus obtains his end because I'm sure of this if I know anything truth about this truth you know of a cross my friends it is really sent for a purpose to separate ourselves from the love of this world the heaven that is spoken of for the people of

God is not on earth you will have heavenly blessings you will have gracious favours you may be blessed and may you be so with the smile of the Lord Jesus Christ upon you and his rich presence and to hear his voice too or these may be your blessings and favours and seek for them because there is nothing better my friends but he will bring you home to glory one day and he'll make by his administration of the cross those appointed matters for your soul he'll make you sick of self and fond of him and he'll make you also sick of this world you know if your heart and affection as needs be set and it shall be set on things above he will put death upon this world and its things and its many ways and he will stir up the path and he'll stir up your soul in that path so that you shall be found not with your affections on things below but on things above the world my friends would live forever in this world and they are only content as they gain more and more of this world and then they're not really content do you know what blessings balance is the pathway of the people of God he said this morning that the lot of

[30 : 13] God's people must surely be as the lot of Jesus Christ must be he was holy undefiled separate from sinners but his pathway was tribulation and a cross at the end and death before his and as you and I if we are to walk according to his ways and will those that will live godly in this world shall suffer tribulation and by this tribulation by this cross and by these ways of which God will see fit that you and I shall come into it will bring us to desire that glorious country that heavenly place you may find too in your hearts you know such a desire to be rid of these things which only distress and trouble you here below and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after

Jesus but with these crosses with these reproaches for Christ's sake when there is a taking up of the cross you know there is a acquiescing of the way I'm going to use a word which I found by experience it is indeed able to be used it's a word that we avoid it's a word that we avoid as a people I believe we do in a certain way it must not be avoided and that's the word choosing you'll have many preachers say rightly so that you cannot in any way choose your path God has chosen it for you but you can be brought into a place my friends when you when you acquiesce when you agree to the way of God and the word of God and I'll tell you how we do it well he did it this way with me on one occasion he overturned what

I believe was the way that was supposedly I should go overturned it brought it to nothing brought it completely to nothing and then he so broke my heart with his love for him it was one of the most sacred days of my life and I blessed God from my heart for his overthrowing of the path that I thought I would walk in but he set before me another path my friends which was the path of obedience the path of decreed will the path of appointments but you know my friends when he breaks your heart with his love well then you are brought to that place where you submit to the will of God and you submit to your pathway and you as it were if it may be described like this

I can't describe it any other you in total agreement with it you choose it as yours what it's written in the Hebrews of the Lord servant Moses choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin which are but for a season and I believe there is a real choosing my friends not a natural choosing this is not weighing up the consequences when you he will constrain them to walk that path not by the methods that the world use but by love from him to your soul and this was very sweet to me loved of my

God for him again with love intense I burn chosen of thee time began I choose thee in return the love of Christ in your heart you won't count the cost you won't see the tribulation in it you won't see in any way the distress that will come my friends tribulation is as it were will be overcome by the love of Christ in your soul there is a right choosing of the way and though that way may turn out to be so opposite to nature as it surely must be if God has appointed it nevertheless the love of Christ and that flowing into the heart from him will indeed be your strength and comfort as you go on and it is a true thing it is often said so but it is that love will enable you to choose the path or acquiesce to the way fall under the divine appointments of

[35 : 57] God my friends nothing put his people in the pathway that leads to glory and he'll put those things in the pathway which will so cause them to walk willingly in that way at times and so turn their back on this dying world if you read Pilgrim's Progress my friends you'll find that he put his back to the city of destruction and his face toward the city towards heaven and he found that the pathway to heaven was very rugged and very hard continuing grace that was given not to turn back as Jews the Jews of old did to the Egypt of this world but to go on to that glorious possession of Canaan and as they led him away they laid hold upon one Simon a Cyrenian coming out of the country and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus and this too my friends which will be the strength and the comfort of you in the way of the cross and this will be too that which will balance the cross as far as your soul's benefits and blessings are concerned when you get self-pity when that old nature starts to rebel against the distress of the way and cause more distress to the soul my friends the Lord take you and I into the pathway of Christ and then teach you by those words which we see was much rougher did Christ my Lord suffer and shall

I reply oh how willing you are then when there is shown to you the path of Jesus Christ this will be the comfort of your soul this will be the strength that you will need left to yourself while you fight against it you'll roar before the Lord because of the hardship of the way never thought being a Christian should be so hard so difficult so much opposition so much persecution but my friends when you find him in the way and bear it after Jesus when you find him in the way how it makes the will the gracious will that is before the Lord to so fall into and agree to that path but there is a grace needed here too we must ever remember we often hear said and say it I suppose of that grace of obedience the love of Christ constrains the grace of obedience works in the heart of the people of

God my friends the grace of obedience is a most blessed grace to pray for oh within that obedience there is that agreement too that falling under the will of God that made willing in the day and that willingness is made by the love of Christ the 110th psalm the Lord speaks to Christ in that psalm and he says thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power you know when a child of grace takes up the cross when he walks in the ways of God when he finds love to walk in that path so long so long as the love of Christ influences them and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus the

Cyrenian coming out of the country and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus I would say this when my friends the wilderness journey is before us each some some have a short journey to take some have longer journeys but in that journey whether it's short or long there will be these things given to you as ballast that the Lord will see fit that you carry and bear before him but with it will be the grace that is needed and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus Amen close by singing hymn number 771 the tune is

Remington 395 hymn number 771 to know my Jesus crucified by far excels all things beside all earthly good I can't but loss and triumph in my Saviour's cross Lord may I bear my every loss be patient under every cross never may I my my saviour blame though I am despised for his dear name hymn number 771 71 100th 2001 prone the love and cross and but the

[44 : 58] Romans pré's hub I never see the namesarts Scholars predigmatic group To confond Halimansa, the humanised merely, O no, I most ■■■■ ascent may be by the macro Weltan muss.

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The End

O Lord, we would pray thy forgiving love be over all that has been amiss this day.

[49 : 11] Lord, how it all needs to be washed. And yet we pray that thou would bless thine own holy word. Now go on with us, Lord.

A few more steps of this day. Go on with us, be with us. Undertake for us. Meet with us in thy sanctuary.

Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, the fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit, remain with us, both now and forever.

Amen.