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LIVING UNDER THE WEIGHT OF THE CROSS

By Joshua Stauffer

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CONTENTS

- 01 -- Living Under the Weight of the Cross
- 02 -- We Live Best Under the Weight of the Cross
- 03 -- We Journey Best Under the Weight of the Cross
- 04 -- We Labor Best Under the Weight of the Cross
- 05 -- We Pray Best Under the Weight of the Cross
- 06 -- We Preach Best Under the Weight of the Cross
- 07 -- We Give Best Under the Weight of the Cross

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FOREWORD

This sermon was preached at God's Bible School Camp Meeting, Cincinnati, Ohio, June 12, 1960, and was revised for publication. In the month of April, 1961, it appeared in print in God's Revivalist and Bible Advocate, which made it accessible to a larger group of people. Now it is appearing in booklet form, and it is hoped that its message will reach out to a larger group of people who love the Lord. May all who read be encouraged to cheerfully bear their cross in this life and wear a crown in the next world.

Joshua Stauffer

Owosso, Michigan

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01 -- LIVING UNDER THE WEIGHT OF THE CROSS

I am presenting two texts as the basis for my message. The first one is in relation to Christ, and reads like this:

"And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha." -- John 19:17

The second text is in relation to Christians, and reads as follows:

"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." -- Luke 9:28

For Christ to bear His cross and die upon it was an absolute necessity in order that He could save us from sin and death. Even so, the bearing of the cross by Christians is necessary in order to make it possible for Christ to crown them with joy and life.

The cross is not an ornament for decoration, that is, to wear around your neck, or pin on the lapel of your coat. Neither is the real purpose of the cross that it should be placed on the top of a church steeple. The cross is not a spiritual luxury. The cross is a crude instrument to bear, and on which to die. The cross symbolizes sacrifice, sorrow, suffering, shame, reproach, and death.

The sufferings and death which Christ endured on the cross were vicarious. These were endured for others, even for our experiential salvation. We are not called upon to bear His cross. Each Christian is called to bear his own cross -- not for his salvation, but because the Christian life involves conflict. Following Christ incites satanic hatred, opposition from sinners, and involves a conflict that demands endurance of hardships. There is no escape for the Christian to be exempt from trials and sorrows in this life.

The cross which Christians are called to bear symbolizes a forsaking of all to follow Christ. If we pursue the way of the world, we will travel on a downward road; but if we will take the way of Christ and the cross, we will go in a diametrical way to that of the world, which will form a cross to the way of the world.

The cross is an instrument to bear; the crown will be an instrument to wear.

The cross is only for this life; the crown will be for the next life.

The cross is merely for time, which is short and measured; the crown will be for eternity, which is not measured but endless.

The cross is for this world; the crown will be for the next world. The prophets prophesied concerning Christ, His sufferings, and the glory that follows. This was the order in the life of Christ, and the order cannot be reversed in Christian experience.

Where there is no cross, there will be no crown. This was so in the life of Christ, and it will be so in your life and my life. If we do not want to bear the cross, we will never wear the crown.

Have you ever considered how much was involved in Christ bearing His cross and going to Calvary to die? Oh, I could have a shouting spell over the fact that when the devil offered Jesus the crown and all the kingdoms of the world if only He would dodge the cross and worship him, Jesus did not accept the devil's offer. If He had, the devil would still be in the kingdom and Christ would have become an idolater. Christ would not take the short cut to the kingdoms of this world. He had His face set toward Calvary. He picked up His cross, bore it to Calvary, and died on that cross.

Let us consider some of the great issues which were involved in Christ picking up His cross, bearing it to Calvary, and dying upon it. It was while He was on the cross that He assumed all of the sins and all the carnality of all men of all time, and there made atonement for them.

Did you know that by virtue of Christ's cross, our sins can be forgiven? The penalty for sin was death, and Christ the sinless One died for all sinful ones; therefore He can legally forgive sins.

By virtue of the cross of Christ, carnality can be cleansed. Since death came by sin, sin can be destroyed by the death of the holy Lamb of God.

By virtue of the cross of Christ, we can be filled with the Holy Spirit. The releasing and coming of the Holy Spirit from the person of Christ was conditioned on the death and resurrection of Christ.

By virtue of the cross of Christ, the lost estate of Adam's race was recovered. Adam yielded to sin and in an illegal manner surrendered his estate to Satan, but Christ by His death paid the penalty for sin; therefore in a legal manner He recovered Adam's lost estate.

By virtue of the cross of Christ, Satan and all demons will be defeated and cast out, to be confined in eternal perdition. Death was the penalty for sin. Christ overcame Satan in the wilderness, and Satan, through wicked men, occasioned the death of Christ, an innocent and holy man, and in so doing he incurred his own defeat and destruction.

By virtue of the cross of Christ, the curse will be removed some day. Christ became a curse for us that He might redeem us from the curse.

By virtue of the cross of Christ, He will be crowned and enthroned, not by the devil, but by God the Heavenly Father. He overcame Satan and paid the penalty for man's sins. This gives Him the right to the kingdoms of this world.

By virtue of the cross of Christ, a mighty race of an innumerable number of sons of God will be brought forth. Adam, the head of the human race, produced a sinful race. Christ is the Head of the redeemed race of sons of God. This comes to pass through Christ the SEED, the "corn of wheat" falling into the ground, which is being reproduced in many sons of God who will be like the Son of God.

Oh, yes, by virtue of the cross and the death of Christ, a new heaven and a new earth will be ushered in where sin will never break out, because He will have abolished it before the new universe will be developed. How much was involved in Christ bearing His cross and dying on it! This will be the theme of eternity. The blessed results of the redemption He accomplished will never terminate. Well may we sing:

"Oh, the love that drew salvation's plan!
Oh, the grace that bro't it down to man!
Oh, the mighty gulf that God did span
At Calvary!

"Mercy there was great and grace was free;
Pardon there was multiplied to me;
There my burdened soul found liberty,
At Calvary."

Now we are not called upon to bear the cross of Christ. His sufferings were vicarious. But Jesus said, "If," which means, you do not have to but you may if you want to; nor does it imply that you would, but that you could if you would. "If any man will come after me," means forsaking everything worldly and sinful. He will not force you; He will not coerce your will, nor will He make you carry your cross. But He said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself," which means more than giving up his sins. It is no denial to give up sins; nor is it any denial to give up carnality. That is a blessed giving up. A sinner does not make any self-denial in giving up his sins any more than he would in giving up a cancer in his stomach that is eating away the very vitals of his life. If somebody could miraculously, mysteriously, instantaneously, and painlessly take that cancer out and give him a new stomach, what would you think of him if he would say, "It is too big a sacrifice"? That man would die, and so will every person who does not follow Christ. To bear your cross and follow Christ will mean hardships; it will mean sorrow; it will mean suffering; it will mean shame; it will mean reproach; it will mean self-denial and sacrifice. But if you will bear your cross, some day you can exchange it for a crown.

"Must Jesus bear the cross alone,
And all the world go free?
No; there's a cross for every one,
And there's a cross for me.

"The consecrated cross I'll bear,
Till death shall set me free,
And then go home my crown to wear,

For there's a crown for me."

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02 -- WE LIVE BEST UNDER THE WEIGHT OF THE CROSS

I suppose that I am speaking to some people who have been fretting, chafing, and complaining under the weight of your cross. Verily, we live best under the weight of the cross. Would you want to go to Heaven without any cross, without any trials, without any self-denial or sacrifice? You will enjoy Heaven much more by reason of the suffering that you endure down here. Did you know that when we get to Heaven, every person's cup will be full and running over? However, there will be different sizes of vessels. Some people may have only a pint-size capacity. If that is as big as your soul's capacity will be when you get to Heaven, God will fill it full and cause it to run over. If you have a quart-size soul, the Lord will fill it and run it over. Some people will have a gallon-size soul; it will be full and running over. Some will have a soul as big as a tub; the Lord will fill that vessel and make it to run over. Some will have a soul with a capacity as big as a barrel; God will make it run over also. Some are going to have a soul as big as a tank; the Lord will fill it and cause it to run over. There will not be any room for envy, because everybody's cup will be full and running over; however, some people are going to have a bigger capacity than others. Now wouldn't you like to have a big soul? May I tell you how the soul is enlarged? It is through trials, suffering, affliction, pain, and privation. Truly, these make more room for God and give the soul an expansion. David said, "Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress." We live best under the weight of the cross. You will enjoy Heaven much more for having borne your cross and denied yourself in following Christ.

It was while Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman was in an evangelistic campaign, in the city of Philadelphia, that a beautiful young lady who was very vain and worldly attended the services. She had an infidel father, who was also a millionaire. This young lady attended the services, and was captivated by the Gospel story. The Holy Spirit witnessed to the truth, convicted her heart, and she yielded to His wooings. She accepted Christ and was wonderfully converted. She came home and told her father and mother about her conversion. Her father said, "You must stay away from those services, for there is nothing to Christianity. It is just an hallucination, and I want you to get that out of your head." But she had it in her heart. She said, "I cannot give up salvation, for Jesus has saved me, and I love Him." She kept attending until, after a few weeks, she said, "Father, I am going to unite with the church. I want to be identified with the saints of God." That so enraged her father that he had a carnal spell. He said, "Daughter, if you unite with the church, I will disown you, and also disinherit you. I will give you until tomorrow at the breakfast table to give your answer. You have to make your choice."

That girl had to bear her cross. She went to her room to settle this issue. We settle and fight most of our battles in the secret closet before we win our open victories. Reeling and staggering under the weight of her cross, she had to decide whether she would retain her father's favor and inherit his possessions, or would retain Christ and be true to Him. There, alone in her room, she settled it for time and eternity that she would be true to the Lord, that she would rather lose the favor of her father and mother than to go back on Christ her Lord. The Lord blessed her, and she had a night of peaceful sleep.

The next morning her father and mother called her to come for breakfast, at which time she must give her answer. She came down the stairway, but instead of turning to the right into the dining room she turned to the left and went into the parlor, sat down on the piano bench, and began to play some sweet strains of music. Then she picked up the words of the beautiful consecration hymn, "Jesus, I My Cross Have Taken," and sang her answer.

"Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave, and follow Thee;
Destitute, despised, forsaken,
Thou, from hence, my all shalt be;

Perish, every fond ambition,
All I've sought, and hoped, and known;
Yet how rich is my condition,
God and Heaven are still my own!"

God was there and honored her testimony, her confession of faith, and her decisive answer. This song went home to the hearts of her parents as they were listening. She sang on,

"Let the world despise and leave me,
They have left my Saviour, too;
Human hearts and looks deceive me;
Thou art not, like man, untrue;

And, while Thou shalt smile upon me,
God of wisdom, love, and might,
Foes may hate, and friends may shun me;
Show Thy face, and all is bright."

As her parents listened, the Holy Spirit so overmastered that father that he wilted under the powerful, heavenly influence which brought him low, so that he came running into the parlor and fell at the feet of his daughter saying, "Daughter, I want your Jesus. I want your religion."

Soon he was wondrously converted. Her mother could not resist any longer, and she came running in and said, "Daughter, I want your Jesus, too."

If that girl had shunned her cross and laid it aside, she would have forfeited the favor of the Christ of Calvary and glory, would have lost her experience, and her father and mother would not have been saved. Truly, we live best under the weight of the cross.

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Christian experience is set forth under various figures in the Bible. One is that of a pilgrimage, even a walk with God. As we make the journey of life as a follower of Christ, we cannot evade the cross, we cannot dodge it. We absolutely cannot get out from under it. We must bear our cross. I like that song which says. "The Way of the Cross Leads Home."

"I must needs go home by the way of the cross,
There's no other way than this.
I shall ne'er get sight of the Gates of Light,
If the way of the cross I miss."

I especially like this part:

"Then I bid farewell to the way of the world,
To walk in it nevermore;
For my Lord says, Come, and I seek my home,
Where He waits at the open door.

"The way of the cross leads home;
The way of the cross leads home;
It is sweet to know as I onward go,
The way of the cross leads home."

Did you ever read that beautiful poem entitled, "The Forgotten Cross"? It represents a Christian young lady who became weary of her trials, problems, and persecutions, wearied under the weight of the cross which Christ called her to bear, and she laid it down. God spoke to her that night in a dream. This young lady dreamed that she was traveling the journey of life. We must all travel the journey of life. If we are going to Heaven, we are saved through the cross of Christ, and we must pick up our own cross and bear it in following Him. It is incumbent upon everybody to bear a cross.

In her dream this young lady came to a large pile of crosses -- there were crosses of all sizes, descriptions, and makes. She had to choose her cross. As she looked at them she saw a little cross that was made of gold and studded with diamonds. "Oh, that is the cross I want," she said. She picked it up, but the gold was so heavy that she trembled in bearing it. She laid this cross down. "That is too heavy for me," she said. Then she saw another cross, artistically designed, and there were some roses on it. She said, "That is the one I will choose." But when she picked it up the thorns pricked her flesh, and she laid it down. Then as she looked over the pile of crosses she finally came to a very plain one. It had some words of love written on it, and it was very light. When she picked it up she said, "This is the one I am going to choose." As she started on her journey, she discovered that she had found her own lost cross.

It may be that you have been tempted to think that your cross is heavier than any other person's cross. I have thought so, too, in the past, but I do not any more. I discover that all people have sorrows and troubles, many times such as I know nothing of. God knows best what cross to choose for us. It is good to know that the cross is not greater than His grace, nor can the storm hide His blessed face. He will supply sufficient grace that we may joyfully bear our cross.

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04 -- WE LABOR BEST UNDER THE WEIGHT OF THE CROSS

Not only do we live best under the weight of the cross, and we journey best under the weight of the cross, but brethren, ministers and ministers' wives, all Christian workers, we labor best under the weight of the cross. Somebody may anticipate that when he is graduated from Bible School, and through with his ministerial course, he will have a nice church and a beautiful parsonage with a liberal salary, and then will live in comfort and ease. Let me disillusion you. When you go out into the ministry for the Lord, trials will come. Probably some of you pastors, missionaries, and Christian workers have thought something like this: If it were not for a certain person in the church, or if it were not for that condition, or that situation which exists, life would be much easier. That may be the cross you will have to bear.

Some years ago, a beautiful young lady obtained a rich experience from the Lord. She had a wonderful testimony, and was made a great blessing to many. Others loved to get next to her to imbibe a little of her cheerful spirit. Her experience and testimony incited satanic hatred. Friends, when you testify for the Lord you will meet opposition from Satan. The weakness of many Christians is their failure to witness for Christ. I do not mean merely witnessing in church, but witnessing to sinners. It does not require much grace to testify in prayer meeting, but when you are out on the street, or come face to face with the world and sinners, then it will require more grace and courage to witness. They are the ones who need our testimony. The Holy Ghost was given specifically to give us power to witness for Him.

This young lady's testimony began to incite satanic hatred, and the devil made it hard for her and persecuted her. She was nicknamed the religious Miss B____. The day came when she was to go on a vacation with another family, to be the servant girl. They were going to the seacoast to spend a few months. She made up her mind, "I will never testify; I will not let my light shine; I will not let anyone know that I am a Christian."

The days passed by, but she was not happy. Weeks passed, and finally the time drew near when she was to return home. Just before she left, a vain, worldly young lady came to her and said, "Where is your sister?" "Why, I do not have a sister." "Yes, you do. Where is she?" "I do not have a sister." "Yes, but you do. They call her the religious Miss B____. I heard that she was coming to this resort, and I came especially to get under her influence. Oh, I am so sick and tired of my worldly life, and I desired to come under the godly influence of your sister. I thought she could help me."

Then the other young woman had to confess: "I do not have a sister. I am what they used to call the religious Miss B____." She had laid down her cross, had lost the power of her testimony, and she failed to win that soul to Christ. Verily, we labor best under the weight of the cross.

Several years ago, at the Round Lake Camp Meeting, the subject of bearing the cross came up. A middle-aged woman stood up to give her testimony, and her face looked like the Sea of Galilee when Jesus said, "Peace, be still." She said, "My dear people, it has always been my cross

to shout. When the Lord saved me, He gave me a wonderful experience, and I just couldn't help shouting. My father was a Presiding Elder in the church, and when he traveled over the district, he took me along. I would get blessed and shout under my father's preaching. One day, as we were driving home, my father said, 'Susan, not so fast. Not so fast, Susan. Your conduct is not enjoyed by many people who have been in the way longer than you have been in the way.' 'Father, I will try to reform,' but still I would get blessed, and would forget and shout."

She said that after awhile her father became somewhat reconciled to her shouting, and the years sped by. He came to the evening of his life, when his sun in life's day was about to set, and he was in what proved to be his last sickness. When this time comes in a person's life, he will look backward and the past will be reviewed; he also will look forward, and the future will be viewed. It is then that a person will examine the foundation of his standing to see whether it will hold in the hour of death. There will come a time in life when everything earthly will fail. Heart will fail, flesh will fail, nerves will fail, memory will fail, health will fail, doctors and their medicines will fail. One will wonder: Will my foundation hold in the hour of death?

That father had come to such a time, and a cloud came over his face. It was different than he anticipated it would be. That woman said, "The family prayed and prayed, but no light broke in." Then the dying father said, "Let Mother and all the sisters and brothers retire. Susan, I want you to stay with me until light breaks through." Susan said, "We prayed and prayed. It was a fierce battle, but after awhile light broke through. My father became supremely blessed, happy, and reconciled, and all was well." Then he said, "Let the family return and, Susan, when I am taking my departure, I want you to shout me through." She said, "I had to do it." The last words her father said were, "Susan, go ahead. Go ahead, Susan," and she shouted all the while, until he passed over into glory. Again, I say, we labor best under the weight of the cross.

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05 -- WE PRAY BEST UNDER THE WEIGHT OF THE CROSS

Not only do we live best under the weight of the cross and journey best under the weight of the cross, and labor best under the weight of the cross, but we pray best under the weight of the cross. Have you ever had the Holy Spirit come your way and lay a spirit of prayer on your heart? In these days we do not hear much concerning a spirit of prayer. What is a spirit of prayer? It is the Holy Spirit overshadowing us with a burden and concern, seeking our cooperation, asking us to enter with Him into the secret closet and there to pray under the weight of the cross, in agony, in tears, in sorrow, and in suffering. This will be costly, but we pray best under the weight of the cross.

Why do we not have more of what we used to call a spirit of prayer? The reason is very obvious -- we are too busy. There may be too many demands in our lives. One or two generations ago, idleness was a besetting sin and a mighty tool that the devil employed; but today it is busyness that robs us of our time for meditation, family worship, and private prayer. Actually, there are people who are so busy trying to accumulate wealth, have a good time, and make everything convenient that they do not even have time to get sick when they die. They just go, go, go, and the first thing you know, they are gone. When the Holy Spirit comes to overshadow you, prompting you

to go with Him into the secret closet to agonize in prayer, and you fail to respond, or you wait until the evening when everything else is done, He may then withdraw. You may say, "Holy Spirit, come now; I am ready to pray." But He isn't there. If you repeat such neglect of prayer when He prompts, you may forfeit the ministry of intercession. If you want to retain it, you need to co-operate with the Holy Spirit.

I wish we had more saints who, though they may not be able to preach, would cherish the ministry of intercession. What a blessing it would be if every missionary on the field could have at least one saint, who possesses the ministry of intercession, standing behind him with his prayers. Some of you elderly people might think about such a ministry. Some of you may have become homesick for Heaven, but do not be in too great a hurry to get to Heaven. You inquire, "Why?" For this reason: You are needed on earth. We should desire to do more for the Lord -- to weep, pray, labor, preach, and win more souls before Jesus comes.

A lady came to me one Sunday afternoon, and said, "Oh, Brother Stauffer, I get so blessed under your preaching that I become homesick for Heaven. Last winter I was so sick that I wanted to go to Heaven. I don't know why the Lord did not permit me to go." I looked at her and said, "I know why." "Brother Stauffer, how do you know why?" "Well," I said, "the Lord doesn't want you to go to Heaven yet." She replied, "My children are grown, and my grandchildren also are grown, and there is not much that I can do." "Yes, there is," I replied. "God wants you to assume the ministry of intercession. When you have done your share of the work for the day, why don't you sit in a rocking chair and, as you rock, hitch your heart and mind up to the throne of grace, and pray for a missionary for several hours? Then at night when your bones ache, and your muscles are weary, and sleep has departed, hitch your heart up to the throne of grace again and pray an hour or two for that missionary, and you will be worth just as much as any worker actively engaged at the battle's front."

We pray best under the weight of the cross As you pray under that weight, remember that the Christ of glory will look down and smile upon you. If the Holy Ghost is in that prayer, God in Heaven will not deny Deity, that is, the Holy Spirit on earth. As you engage in prayer, you become the medium of contact between God the Holy Spirit on earth, and God the Father and the Son in Heaven, through Whom the Divine current flows that makes contact with the powerhouse which brings things to pass on earth.

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06 -- WE PREACH BEST UNDER THE WEIGHT OF THE CROSS

You ministering brethren will know what this means. Let me illustrate. Some years ago a pastor came to me and said, "Brother Stauffer, the other Sunday night I was preaching, and was having the time of my life. I had the best liberty and fluency of speech -- it seemed as if the words came and just rolled out of my mouth. I preached about an hour. When I was through and sat down, the message seemed to rebound and cover me, and I felt as if I was being smothered." While that minister was indulging in preaching, the people just sat and looked at him as if to say, "What are you trying to say?" No one was blessed in that service. He said, "Brother Stauffer, I never want to preach like that again."

Brethren, we should preach objectively instead of subjectively. I have told the Lord time and again that I would rather be a failure in my own eyes-labor, struggle, and preach under the weight of the cross -- than to merely preach subjectively, or to selfishly indulge in preaching. Of course, there is joy in the midst of sorrow for a saint as he labors for the Lord. Many times when a saint is having the greatest sorrow, he will also have the greatest joy. Many songs that have blessed people were born in the night-time, in time of great sorrow, This is often the time when God gives songs.

Several years ago, after speaking to ministers in one of our Eastern Districts at a Ministerial Conference, on the subject of the sufferings, trials, sorrows, joy, and rewards of the minister's labors, I mentioned that during the night period of trials, which are endured, God will give songs in the night. Sister Bessie Hatcher came to me after the service and said that the truth of the message was wonderful, and that God had given her songs during the time of great trials. She related that during a period of prolonged trial, when all was dark around her, with no ray of hope, Satan had pressed her severely to give up. Then the Holy Spirit whispered to her that if she gave up, and failed to endure, she would forfeit her salvation, the hope of Heaven and the rewards promised for service and endurance. It was then that the song, "I Would Not Want to Miss It," was born. When she thought of giving up, the thought also came of all she would miss -- eternal life, Heaven, walking on the streets of gold, seeing her Saviour, and meeting loved ones. It was while she was enduring the trial and determining to be faithful that the song was speedily formed. She penned the words and set them to music. This song not only blessed her, but it has blessed multitudes over the nation as they have heard it sung.

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07 -- WE GIVE BEST UNDER THE WEIGHT OF THE CROSS

The spreading of the Gospel will never increase as it should until there enters into it a greater element of sacrifice. On the Divine side, there has been an infinite sacrifice. On the human side, there must, of necessity, be sacrifice. It is no sacrifice when you merely give your tithe. You do not give your tithe, you pay it. The tithe belongs to the Lord, and that is the minimum of giving. There are some people who should give two-tenths, some four-tenths, and some ought to give five-tenths. Such giving would bring greater blessings to them and to others.

Has it ever occurred to you that God carries on His work largely through the sacrificial giving of His children who are poor in material things, but rich in faith? Oh, yes, there are a few Christian financiers. I have met some of them, and what a blessing they are! If I were a pastor I would wish to have a half dozen sanctified businessmen in my church-men who could give a hundred dollars as easily as some could give a dollar. There are a few such businessmen who glorify God with their business, but these are far too few. The fact remains that God carries on His work mainly through the sacrificial giving of His children who are poor in material things, yet rich in faith.

In 1929 and 1930, I lived and labored in Wichita, Kansas. When the information went out that I was in the city, there came a call for me to preach at the Lee Mission which was situated on

East Douglas Street. I preached there again and again with good results. On the platform, behind me to the left, hung the portrait of one of God's great saints of the past generation by the name of W. H. Lee. He had then been dead about ten years. He had lived such a godly life, and had labored so sacrificially and fruitfully, that his life and labors had cut a channel so deep that his influence was felt long after he was gone. He had evangelized mainly in the tri-state area of Kansas, Oklahoma, and Colorado. Many churches, missions, and one Bible School were opened under his ministry. The Lee Mission in Wichita, Kansas, has since then developed into the First Pilgrim Holiness Church of that city.

In the year of 1916, W. H. Lee went to Pueblo, Colorado, with a concern to start a mission in that city. He located an empty store building at a very strategic place, and upon inquiry learned that the building was for rent. The price was \$500 a year, and the rent had to be paid in full a year in advance. Brother Lee did not have the money. He was publishing a small religious paper, and in it he mentioned his concern, the empty store building, and his need of \$500.

In Eaton Rapids, Michigan, lived an aged, godly widow. She was very poor and took in washings to make her livelihood. This widow had a son who was wayward and sinful and did not heed the prayers of his godly mother. In the providence of God, one of these papers fell into the hands of this widow, and God spoke to her, saying, "My child, I want you to send your \$500 to W. H. Lee." She felt the weight of the cross pressing heavily on her soul. She said, "Lord, this is all the money I have, and I saved it for my burial expenses." But the Lord said, "Send it to W. H. Lee." This woman staggered under the weight of the cross for a little while, then submitted to the voice of the Lord, which brought peace to her soul.

The next morning she took her bank book and the religious paper to the bank and said, "Banker; I want you to take my \$500 and give me a bank draft made out for W. H. Lee, and I will send it to him." He looked at the paper, and said, "Lady, I wouldn't do that if I were you. You need it more than he does and, moreover, he may have sent out a thousand of these papers. You had better keep your money." She said, "Banker, the Lord told me to send it, and this is my money. I want you to give me a bank draft for that amount." She signed it over and sent it to W. H. Lee. He received it and, by the way, that was all the money he received; but it was enough to pay the rent for an entire year. W. H. Lee cleaned up the building, placed seats in it, erected a platform, and then started a revival.

The Lord did not forget this godly lady in Michigan and her giving, which was under the weight of a cross. Neither did He forget her prayers for her wayward son who was running away from God and his mother's prayers. In this revival meeting, in which Brother Lee preached, the very first seeker who came to the altar to seek salvation was a handsome, middle-aged man. He wept, repented, confessed his sins, and believed in Christ. He was the first convert in that revival. But the thrilling fact concerning this first convert was that this man was none other than the son of that poor, saintly widow who had given her \$500 to start this mission.

Who can feature the happy surprise that came to this newly-converted man when he discovered that his aged, praying mother in Michigan had given out of her poverty, given until it hurt, given her all to open that mission in which he was converted! Who can feature the joy that must have come to this devout, widowed mother who had given all her life's savings to open this

mission when she learned that the first convert was her wayward son! Who can feature the joy that must have come to the loving heart of the Christ of Calvary and the cross, who also is the Christ of glory, Who died to redeem the lost, and especially to save this wayward son of a godly mother who had given under the weight of the cross! Christ honors and blesses all labors, sacrifices, and prayers that come under the weight of the Christian's cross that is borne cheerfully for His sake. The providences of God may be clearly observed in this incident. God first worked at one end of the line and moved this godly woman to give her life's savings. When she obeyed, God began to work at the other end of the line and brought her unsaved son to this mission, and there He fully answered her prayers by saving him.

Do you see that we give best under the weight of the cross? If this mother had kept that money for herself and her burial expenses, very likely her unsaved son would never have been converted. Anyway, this is the manner in which God chose to save him.

In conclusion, let me recapitulate. We live best under the weight of the cross; we journey best under the weight of the cross; we labor best under the weight of the cross; we pray best under the weight of the cross; we preach best under the weight of the cross; and we give best under the weight of the cross. It may not be long until the Christ of Calvary and glory will come with a shout. He will come from glory, with glory, and in glory. Then we will lay the cross aside, and the Lord will give us a crown -- crowning us with glory. The cross is to be borne, and the crown will be worn. The crown of life will never wear out, and we will never get through wearing it, for it will be worn forever.

"To the old rugged cross I will ever be true,
Its shame and reproach gladly bear;
Then He'll call me some day to my home far away,
Where His glory forever I'll share.

"So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,
Till my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross,
And exchange it some day for a crown."

If any person reading this message has become weary in carrying his cross, or has laid it down, will you not pick it up again and follow the Christ of Calvary? All who have not been redeemed, come to Christ and let Him save you, then take up your cross and bear it for Jesus' sake. It will lead you into glory where you will receive your crown.

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THE END