

So You Want To Be A Preacher?

Reprinted from the book My Cross

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“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies. . . .” Romans 12:1.

“If any man will come after me, let him DENY himself, and take up his cross daily” Luke 9:23.

Since there are thousands of ministers here and thousands of lay members who eventually may be preachers, I want to pause and ask every one of you a question:

WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO GOD A REASONABLE SERVICE?

Many of you are talking about supernatural things. Many of you are talking about the gift of healing.

Wonderful!

Many of you are desiring the gift of miracles.

Great!

You’re talking about signs and wonders, and strange and mighty things.

Marvelous!

But I’m going to bring you down out of the sky tonight, and talk to you about a reasonable service!

Don’t get mad at me, now. It’s all right to get up in the sky. But there’s only one right way to get up there, and that’s to get on the ladder and start climbing! And you can’t start on the tenth rung first! You must start on the bottom rung. And that’s old-fashioned holiness, giving your body to God, a living sacrifice, which is none other than your REASONABLE SERVICE!

I’m preaching to you, not about signs, wonders, and miracles, gifts of healing, discernment, and prophecy. I’m preaching to you about your reasonable service—giving your body to God, letting him fix it up new, and fashion it like unto His glorious body.

I believe in miracles!

I believe in signs!

I believe in wonders!

And I believe in HOLINESS!

I believe in healings. But I believe in reasonable service, too.

There are too many people today who are walking around with their heads in the sky, who don’t even have their feet on old-fashioned holiness ground. They seemingly are finding demons in everybody. But they don’t even know how to cast one of them out!

“If any man—I add, or woman—will come after me, let him deny—(say no)—to himself, and let him take up his cross, [SEVEN DAYS A WEEK]!”

It says daily, but seven days a week means the same thing.

“Let him take up his cross DAILY, and follow me.”

Can you take it, if I give it to you right between the eyes?

I believe in shouting. I believe in clapping my hands. I believe in leaping for joy. I believe in doing it because I feel like doing it! But unless you live clean and godly, you haven't any business feeling like it! And if you feel like doing it when you are not walking on holy ground, you are the biggest hypocrite in the world.

Preacher, if you are here tonight, and you are a hypocrite, you are not going to like what I'm saying!

Lay member, if you are here jumping up and down, and talking about supernatural things, with a dip of snuff in your mouth, or if you left your cigarettes in the car so you wouldn't be seen bringing them in here, I'm preaching at YOU! If you're here tonight, and your guilty of committing adultery, even through your eyes, I'm after your hide!

I believe in miracles! I believe in signs! I believe in gifts! I believe in prophecy!

But I believe first of all in taking up an old-fashioned cross! And I've got sense enough to know you can't take up your cross until first you DENY YOURSELF!

My Bible says if any man follows after Jesus, he is going to have to deny himself! That means everything fleshly. Every unscriptural fleshly lust. It means many of the desires of the body.

I mean, there is going to come a time when you are going to have to say to yourself, to the old man, to the world, and to the things of the flesh, NO!

The old man that used to enjoy those things is DEAD! And if a man is dead, how in the world can he enjoy those things?

There are going to be some of you here tonight who may not like what I am preaching.

You may be saying to yourself, “I'm not so sure I want to belong to this miracle revival fellowship!”

Could it be what you are really saying is, “I'm not so sure I want to take up a cross. I'm not sure I want the blood of Christ to cover me! I'm not sure I'm going to walk in all the light of God's word!”

My Bible says to me, “If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin!”

I believe in the BLOOD! And I believe in FELLOWSHIP! And I believe in walking in the light.

Hear me, friends. If we are going to do the work that Jesus Christ did, we are going to have to live the same kind of life that he lived.

He took up a cross. He denied Himself!

And if we ever expect to accomplish the things that Jesus accomplished, if you ever get into the supernatural realm, heal the sick, and cast out devils, there is one thing that you are going to have to do. You are going to have to give your body a living sacrifice, and put it on the altar. Alive, yet dead! And that's what makes it hurt. If your body were really dead, you wouldn't feel some of these things!

I can hear some little woman say, "I don't believe I could do that!"

No! You are still too much alive!

There are some things you are going to have to die out to. You know what I am talking about. There are some things you will never really be dead to because the body you are going to have to place on the altar is still very much alive. But that is our reasonable service. You are going to have to quit your squirming, your kicking, your criticizing, your complaining, and your murmuring.

You are going to have to quit finding fault.

You say you are going all out with Jesus to win souls? Then what do you care whether you have an old Model A or a new Cadillac? If you are dead, you don't know the difference! What do you care whether you sleep in a teepee or a Spartan mansion? If you've taken up your cross and are denying yourself, beans will taste as good as T-bones.

I knew I wouldn't get any Amen's there!

If you've given yourself a living sacrifice, and have sold out to Christ, and you are dead, there are a lot of things you don't feel!

We moved into a new area one time, and we didn't have a bit of milk for our baby, nor a bit of money to buy milk for him. We paid \$10 a month rent for an upstairs hall to have Sunday school and church. We couldn't afford to rent a house, too, so we stretched up a clothesline across the back of the hall and hung up our sheets to make ourselves a room to live in. We had to make car payments, \$12 per month. Back in those days that took a lot of faith!

My wife got desperate. She said, "Jimmie has to have milk. He'll begin to suffer from malnutrition. He needs milk to build strong bones and teeth. He's got to have milk!"

There were farmers coming to our church. Do you think any of them would bring milk for our baby? No! They didn't care whether our baby had good bones, or strong, white teeth, so long as their own needs were met!

If you want to be a preacher, fine! But I'm going to try my best to talk you out of it tonight! And if I can, then God never called you in the beginning! If He has, it doesn't matter what I say, I can't talk you out of it!

How many of you here feel the call to the Christian ministry?

I trust you will still feel that way when I get through!

Wait till the babies start coming, and there's no money for a doctor. What are you women going to do? Pack up and go home to mamma? Are you going to get scared? Or are you going to stand by the stuff, and trust God?

I didn't know much about the Bible when I got married. But my wife knew a verse of scripture. A cousin of hers had known it and stood on it. It says that if the husband and wife both continue in holiness, and faith, without fear (Paul wrote it to Timothy), "Notwithstanding, she shall be saved in childbearing" (I Tim. 2:15).

My wife said, "Honey, there's not a thing in the world to worry about. Look what Jesus said. We're not living under the curse. We are living for God. We are clean. We are godly. We are holy. The pain of childbearing is part of the curse. We are not under the curse. We are serving God, and we have his promise. If we both continue in the faith and trust Him, and do not fear, God is going to spare me and save me from that pain. I have nothing to worry about, doctor or no doctor. This is God's child, and He can deliver it!"

Do some of you girls still want to be a preacher's wife? Well, you may not always have money to go to a doctor for an examination every week! Some of you may not even have money for a doctor at delivery time.

I feel sorry for some of these little sissy girls. They want to be a preacher's wife. But they want to spend their time putting up pin curls and polishing their nails! You had better back up now!

Some of you little boys that think you are called to preach spend your time fixing your hair in drake tails and upsweeps!

You may not love me after this. I'm old-fashioned. How many of you are old-fashioned with me?

I'm talking to you tonight about taking up a cross! Denying yourself. And not getting mad at the man you marry because he's not rich, and because he can't afford the things some other preacher is providing his wife! Not getting mad at him because he must do God's will at any cost.

Thank God for a woman who will stand by a man! But we prayed, "God give us some milk for Jimmie!"

That night, here came a lady with a gallon bucket of milk!

We said, "Thank you, Jesus! Now Jimmie will have some milk to drink!"

She said, "Oh, you needn't mind. We've got lots of it. We just pour gallons of it out to the hogs every day. I thought we might as well bring you a gallon. We had more than the pigs really needed."

When we took the lid off, I could see why they gave it to the pigs!

They used one of those water separators. You know, the kind where you pour the milk into a big container and pour in as much water as milk. Then you wait until the cream rises to the top and gets sour before you skim it off!

I said to myself, "Allen you might as well deny yourself! You said you would take up your cross! You gave yourself a living sacrifice. You put yourself on the altar. Now, keep your mouth shut, and keep sweet in your soul. God will provide milk for your baby!"

My wife looked at it and smelled it. I saw a tear running down each cheek. She said, "I prayed God would send Jimmie milk. But God didn't send this!"

I said, "What will we do with it? You couldn't even make gravy out of that!" Back in those days no one could say we were preaching for the money, or because it was easy! I could have made more money cutting logs. And I loved it. I'd rather work hard than anything else in the world. I'd trade my job for yours any day in the week if God would let me! But God won't let me!

Well, we had a prayer meeting. We prayed, "God, somehow, send our baby some milk that is fit for him to drink! Get hold of that woman's heart and make her save out some good milk tomorrow. Make her bring some whole milk!"

You may as well stay sweet. There's no use to lose the victory and fall out with God because He put you in such a hard place! Didn't you sing, "I'll go with Him all the way?"

But next the night (we were in revival) here came the same little lady. In her hand was a bucket just like the one she had brought the night before. But when I felt it, it was still warm. She said, "It's fresh! When I got ready to come to church tonight God rebuked me for the milk I brought last night. He told me to strain out some of this sweet, warm milk, and not dare to take out one drop of cream. Forgive me for bringing that milk last night!"

Friends, listen to me. God is faithful. No one has ever given himself to God a living sacrifice, laid himself on the altar of God and meant it, and God let him go hungry very long. You may be tried, and you will be tested, but God is victor.

David said, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Psalm 37:25).