

## DON'T EXPECT A SMOOTH CROSS!

John 19:1-7, 23-24

### I. JESUS CROSS WAS RUGGED!

Our Lord Jesus' cross was not finished smooth. It was "Rugged." The cross was never designed for comfort; it was designed for pain and death. Sadly for far too many today our Lord's death on the cross is just a pretty thought, but it was not pretty: Isaiah 52:14. The picture we have in our minds of our Lord's crucifixion is anything but the truth of what it really was. John 19:23-24. Jesus was naked as He hung on that cross. The cross was not only a place of pain and suffering and death, but also a place of shame and disgrace: Hebrews 12:2. Our Lord Jesus was scorned and ridiculed by the religious leaders of His day and all the people that came before the cross: Luke 23:35-37. So as we look at the cross of our Lord we see nothing smooth, nothing gentle, and nothing nice.

### II. IS OUR CROSS TO BE SMOOTH?

We love beautiful songs but do we ever think of the words we find so beautiful. In our opening hymn: "Must Jesus Bear the Cross Alone?" we sang: Must Jesus bear the cross alone, and all the world go free? No, there's a cross for everyone and there's a cross for me." Our Lord made it clear that each of His followers would have to take up their own cross! Luke 9:23-26: the cross our Lord Jesus is asking us to take up is not a symbol of beauty, peace, and joy. It was and always will be a symbol of suffering, humiliation, and death.

### III. FOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR CROSS?

There are four questions that we must answer or we will not take up our cross.

First: What will taking up my cross mean for me? It will mean self denial: Luke 9:23-24; 1 Corinthians 6:19-10; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15. If daily self-denial is not a part of your life, you are not taking up your cross daily and you are not a disciple of Jesus Christ!

Second: "What part of my life must die? Colossians 3:5-14; 1 John 2:15-17; Ephesians 4:29.

Third: How will my bearing my cross bring me humiliation? Just as our Lord was humiliated when He took up His cross; so when we take up our cross we will also find humiliation. 1 Peter 4:1-4. It will be our own families, our own friends who will heap abuse on us because in their view you now think you are holier than thou. Amos 3:3: we must remember; it is we who have changed not them: 2 Corinthians 5:17. As we chose to live for Christ we are also choosing to suffer with Christ: Philippians 1:29; 1 Peter 3:16.

Forth: What if any benefit will I receive for taking up my cross? So often it seems those who have never trusted in Christ or those carnal Christians who refuse to take up their cross seem most blest in this life; that is nothing new: Psalm 73:1-17; Malachi 3:13-18. There is a day coming when we will rejoice for every day we picked up our cross and died to ourselves and chose to live for Christ: Mark 10:28-31. We need to be careful that we don't try to make our cross too smooth! Romans 8:16-18.