

Daily Devotional by Dr. Gloria P. Holmes

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"Gateway to God's Glory in the Midst of the Coronavirus Pandemic"

"DENY YOURSELF"

"Then He said to them all. "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me." St. Luke 9:23

Jesus taught His disciples that to follow Him, they would have to deny themselves and take up their crosses daily. I am sure they did not fully grasp Jesus' meaning. However, this important lesson applies to all Christians. If we are honest, we must admit that we do not like denying ourselves of anything we want, and we most certainly do not like bearing crosses. The entire fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians is very insightful as Paul teaches in detail about the meaning of the gospel. This idea of dying daily to self was emphasized by Paul in First Corinthians 15:31: ***"I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily."*** One of my Sunday school teachers from childhood liked to repeat the phrase: *"I die daily."* Of course, I was an adult before I fully understood what she meant and before I began striving to put *"dying daily"* into practice. We also admit that we do not like to deal with death and dying which causes us great fear, pain and grief, and rightfully so.

During this coronavirus pandemic, coupled with news of the unjust murders of black men and women, we are experiencing an exceedingly high level of stress and distress. But while death is not a pleasant subject for any of us, it is a topic that is central to the Christian faith. The gospel is good news. This was Paul's message in First Corinthians 15:3-4: ***"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the scripture; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures."*** Believers confess and profess that Jesus is our Savior who died on the cross for our sins. Someone noted that *"I"* is right in the middle of sin. When *"I"* accepted Jesus as my Savior and became saved, it was because *"I"* recognized that *"I"* needed a Savior. ***"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."*** (Romans 3:23) Christians also believe that Jesus now sits on the right hand of the throne of God making intercession for us. ***"Who is he that condemned? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us."*** (Romans 8:34) Consider then the deep meaning of Galatians 2:20: ***"I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."*** Yes, as we die daily to ourselves, we gladly take up our crosses and follow Jesus. Listen to a few words from my father's favorite hymn: ***"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."***

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,
Today I deny myself, take up my cross, and follow Jesus because He died for my sins. May the Holy Spirit guide me into all truth. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

How will you respond to today's message?
