

**June 13, 2010**

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## **Monday**

Mark 8:31 He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Christianity is a dying religion. No, I don't mean that it is a religion that is dying out, but it is a religion based upon the dying Savior. Without the suffering of Jesus, without the dying of the Son of Man, without the sacrifice upon the cross there is no hope for you, for me, or for any other human being. We run too quickly from the suffering side of our faith. Our hope is based upon suffering and death. We must not allow our religion to become a bloodless, feel good set of maxims. Jesus suffered and died. He said it plainly. It was our only hope.

## **Tuesday**

Mark 8:34 And He summoned the multitude with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

The Martyr Bonhoeffer wrote: "When Jesus bids a man come, He bids him come and die." And this is the call to every man or woman who would follow the Savior. To take up the cross is not a pleasant thought and it should not be overlooked. It is a willing and intentional self-sacrifice. Just as Jesus willingly died, so He calls you to die. What does this mean? Simply to kill any pretense of living for oneself, to sacrifice any attempt at gaining ones ease or following ones own desires. These must be crucified when I follow the Lord to His death.

## **Wednesday**

John 11:16 Therefore Thomas, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, so that we may die with Him."

Thomas should not be saddled with the nickname "doubting", of that I am sure. He was the first to genuinely offer to follow Christ to His death. If Jesus called on men to die, then Thomas was ready to die! Thomas would later give his life in India where he traveled to carry the Gospel. I have stood on the spot in Madras where reportedly his life was taken. Where are you willing to go and die? Where are you willing to share the gospel even if it cost you your life or your comfort or your reputation? Will you go to a neighbor? How about across town? Across the globe?

## **Thursday**

Gal. 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

The Apostle Paul embraced the summons of Jesus to come and die. He envisioned his life as crucified, giving up his rights, his comfort, his planning to the Lord. This was not a symbolic statement for Paul nor was it a statement that merely looked back to the cross and the moment of salvation. The crucified life meant giving up His plans for God's plan on a daily basis. It is God's call to you today. Give up your plans for His. Will you do it? No matter where it takes you? No matter the call?

## **Friday**

John 2:3 When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus \*said to Him, "They have no wine."

Dead men don't need much to make them happy. That is the secret to the fulfilled life. When you have died to your own expectations and your own demands and your perceived rights, then every gift of God is seen as grace and wonder. Now every path is an adventure given by God's loving hand. Every trial becomes an opportunity. Every insecurity becomes an opportunity for faith. Surrender yourself to God, along with your future, your plans, your hopes, your dreams. Join the victory available only to dying men.