

Bearing our crosses is to deliberate choose the life God gives to us

"We all have our crosses to bear," we sometimes say, when the talk falls upon our troubles in life. And by that we usually mean that nobody gets to go through life without having to face at least some degree of inconvenience and unpleasantness. Whether we are aware of it or not, though, we are referencing some sayings of our Lord Jesus, by which He actually indicates that we do not all have our crosses to bear!

"Whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me", He says; in other words, there are those who are not bearing their crosses. More importantly, though, His words indicate that there is more to bearing our crosses than that nobody goes through life without inconvenience and unpleasantness. He is comparing the burdens He calls His Christians to bear with the cross He Himself has borne, and upon which He has borne the fullness of suffering for our salvation! Clearly, He has more in mind than inconveniences and unpleasantness. Accordingly, He has had His holy Apostle Paul write that "by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." In other words, the cross He calls His Christians to bear is that by which we die to the world, in that we die away from our love for this world and our trust in this world, so as to *fear, love, and trust in God above all things*, as the Small Catechism says it.

Furthermore, our crosses are for us to take up for ourselves. This does not mean, though, that we are to make it up for ourselves; rather, it means that we are to make it our deliberate choice to accept our burdens in life as the burdens God has given to us to bear, and to bear them patiently, without falling into despair or bitterness, but looking to Him, always mindful that whatever burdens we bear in this world are nothing compared to the burden He Himself has freely and willingly borne for love of us, for our salvation - and mindful, also, that "the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed upon us", as He has also had the Apostle write it.

"If we endure, we will also reign with Him", He has also had the Apostle write; "If we deny Him, He also will deny us; if we are faithless, He remains faithful, for Himself He cannot deny." And so we are reminded that even when we fail in bearing our crosses patiently, without succumbing to despair and bitterness, His promise still stands of full forgiveness for all our sins and shortcomings, also in this regard. What He has done for us is greater than all, and trumps everything!

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