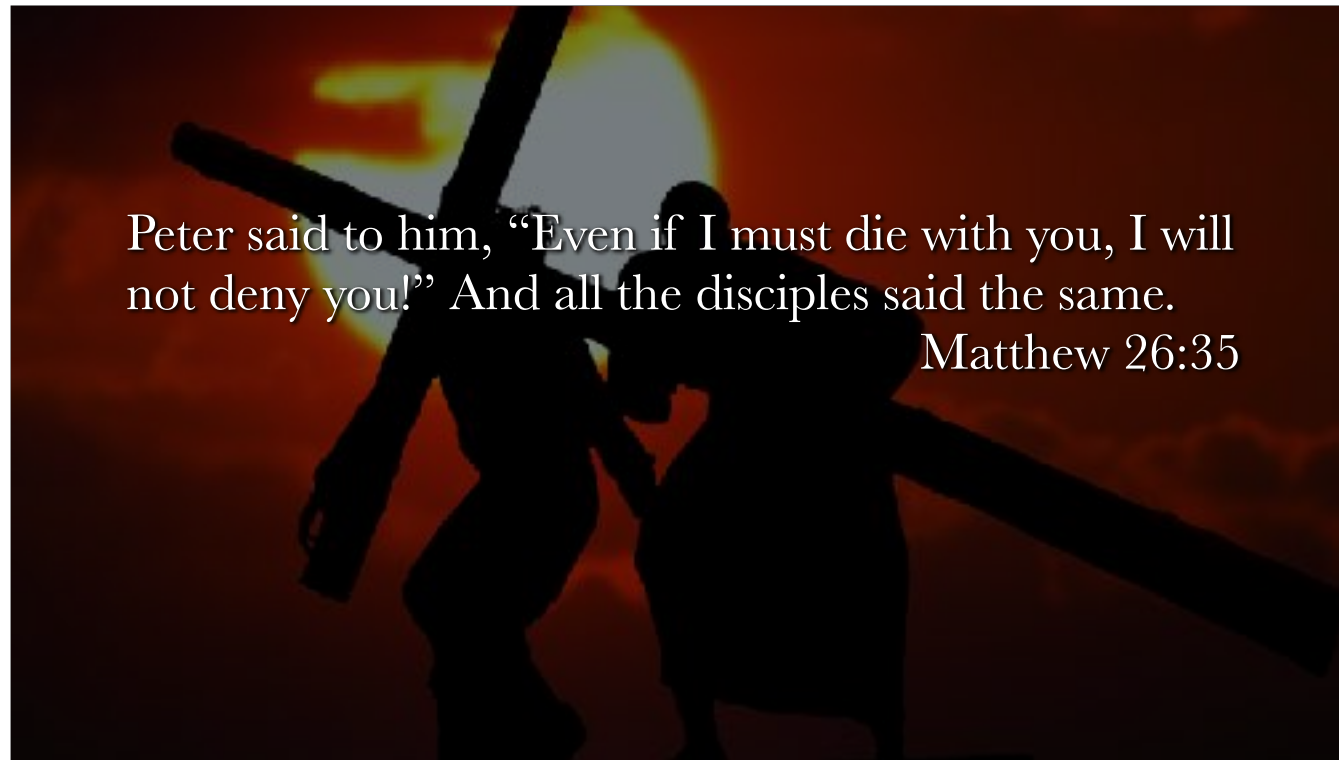
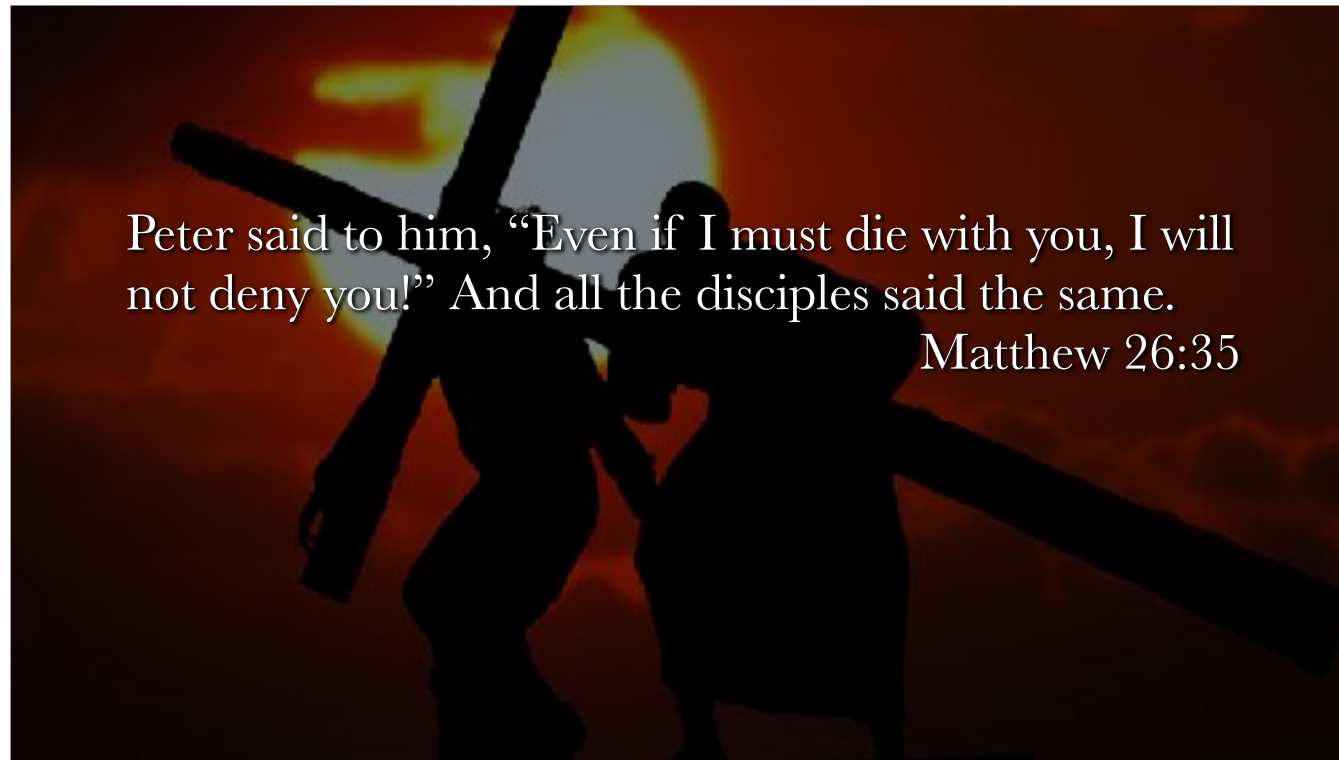


- John 19:16-18
  - So he delivered him over to them to be crucified.
  - So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross,
    - to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha.
  - There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them.
- Mark 15:21 And they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.



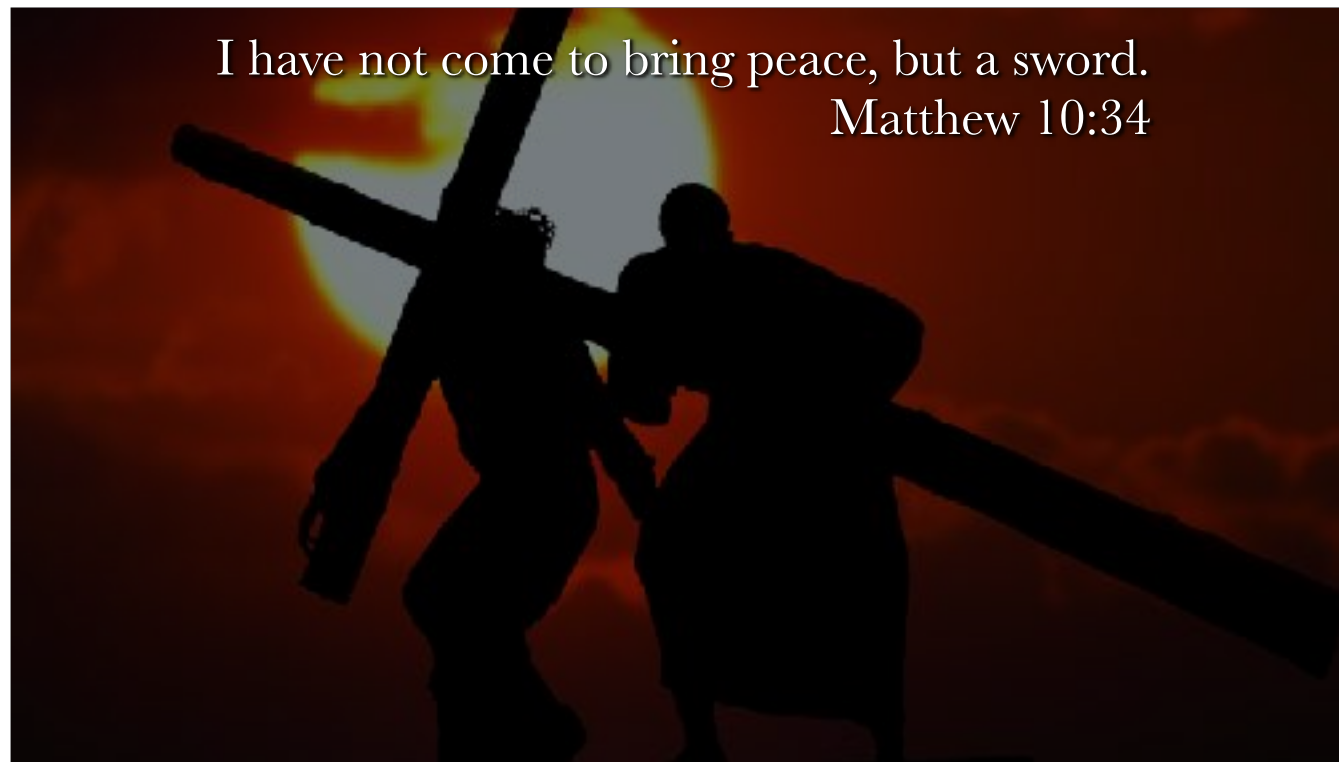
Peter said to him, “Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!” And all the disciples said the same.  
Matthew 26:35

- Willing to Die for Jesus
  - Matthew 26:35 Peter said to him, “Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!” And all the disciples said the same.
- When Jesus is seized in Gethsemane
  - Mark 14:50 And they all left him and fled.

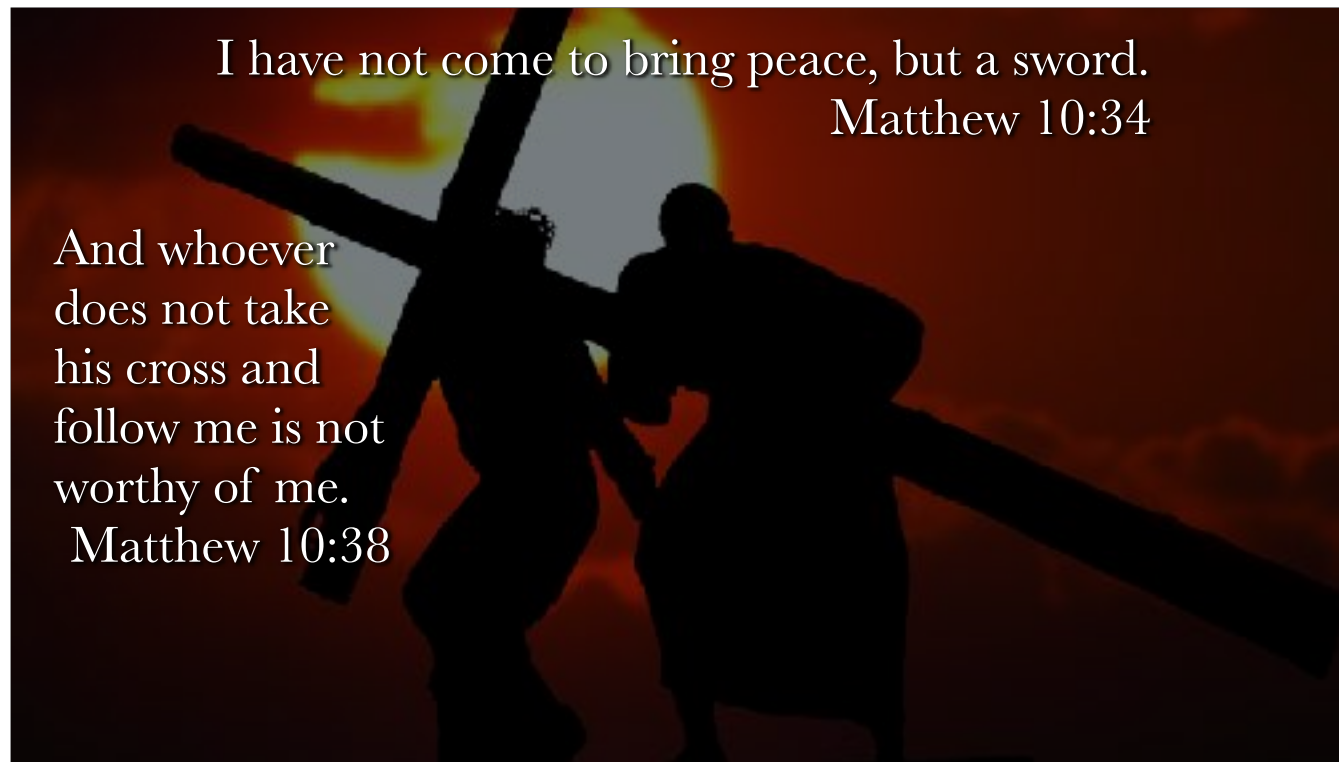


Peter said to him, “Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!” And all the disciples said the same.  
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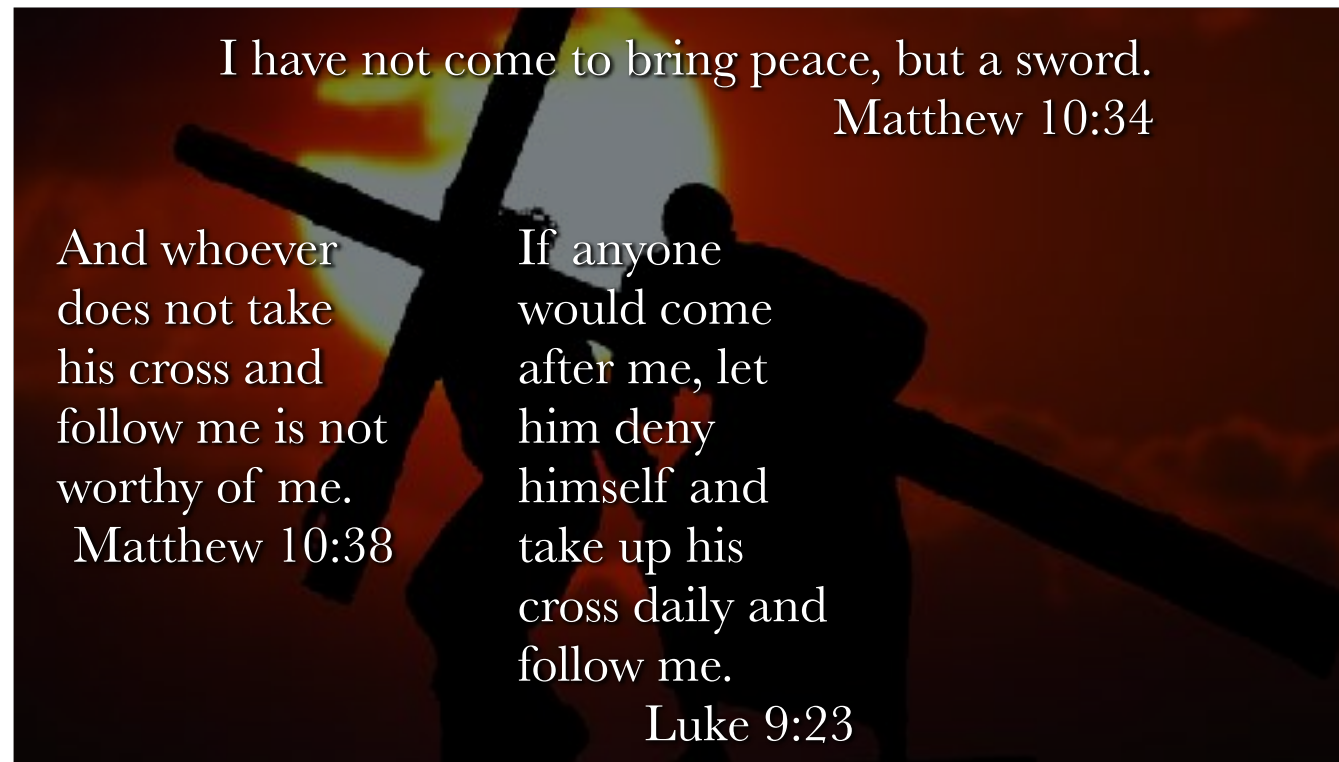
- But, eventually, most of them did die for him
  - James was beheaded
  - Philip: crucified
  - Matthew: halberd
  - Andrew: crucified
  - Peter: crucified
  - Paul: beheaded
  - Jude: crucified
  - Bartholomew: crucified
  - Thomas: spear
  - Simon the zealot: crucified



- Matthew 10:34 “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.



- Matthew 10:38-39: And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.



- Luke 9:23-25: And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. 25 For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?



I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.  
Matthew 10:34

And whoever  
does not take  
his cross and  
follow me is not  
worthy of me.  
Matthew 10:38

If anyone  
would come  
after me, let  
him deny  
himself and  
take up his  
cross daily and  
follow me.  
Luke 9:23

Whoever does  
not bear his  
own cross and  
come after me  
cannot be my  
disciple.  
Luke 14:27

- Luke 14:27 Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

Follow me	Come after me Follow me	Come after me
Take his cross	Take up his cross	Bear his own cross
Deny himself		
Daily		
Not worthy of me	Cannot be my disciple	

- Follow me; come after me, follow me; come after me
- Take his cross; take up his cross; bear his own cross
- Deny himself
- Daily
- Not worthy of me; cannot be my disciple



Follow me	Come after me Follow me	Come after me
Take his cross	Take up his cross	Bear his own cross
Deny himself		
Daily		
Not worthy of me	Cannot be my disciple	

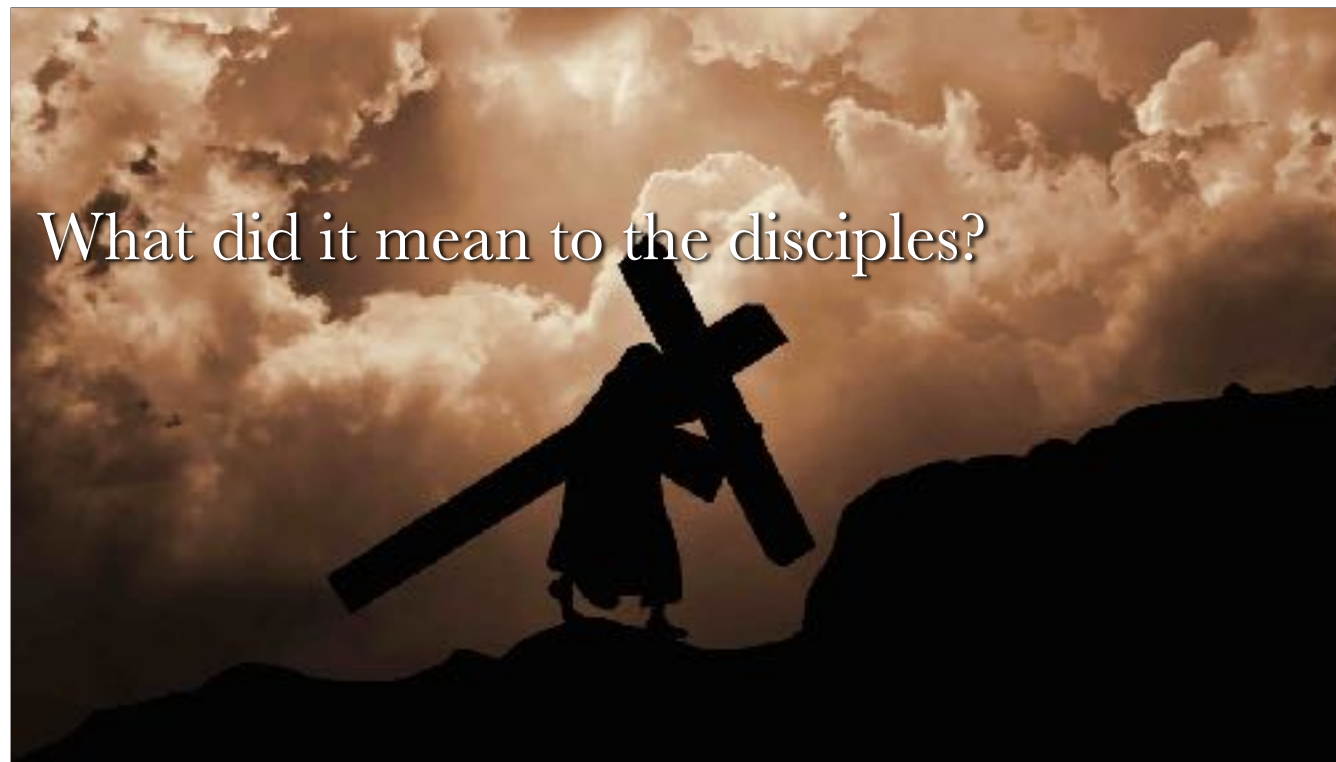
- Jesus said this before he went to the cross
  - We have, sadly, so romanticized the cross that we've lost the meaning of what Jesus is demanding of those who follow him
    - Follow me, come after me
      - Take his cross, Take up his cross, Bear his own cross
    - If we don't we aren't worthy.
    - We must deny ourselves.
    - We cannot be his disciple.
    - Daily

Follow me	Come after me Follow me	Come after me
Take his cross	Take up his cross	Bear his own cross
Deny himself		
Daily		
Not worthy of me	Cannot be my disciple	

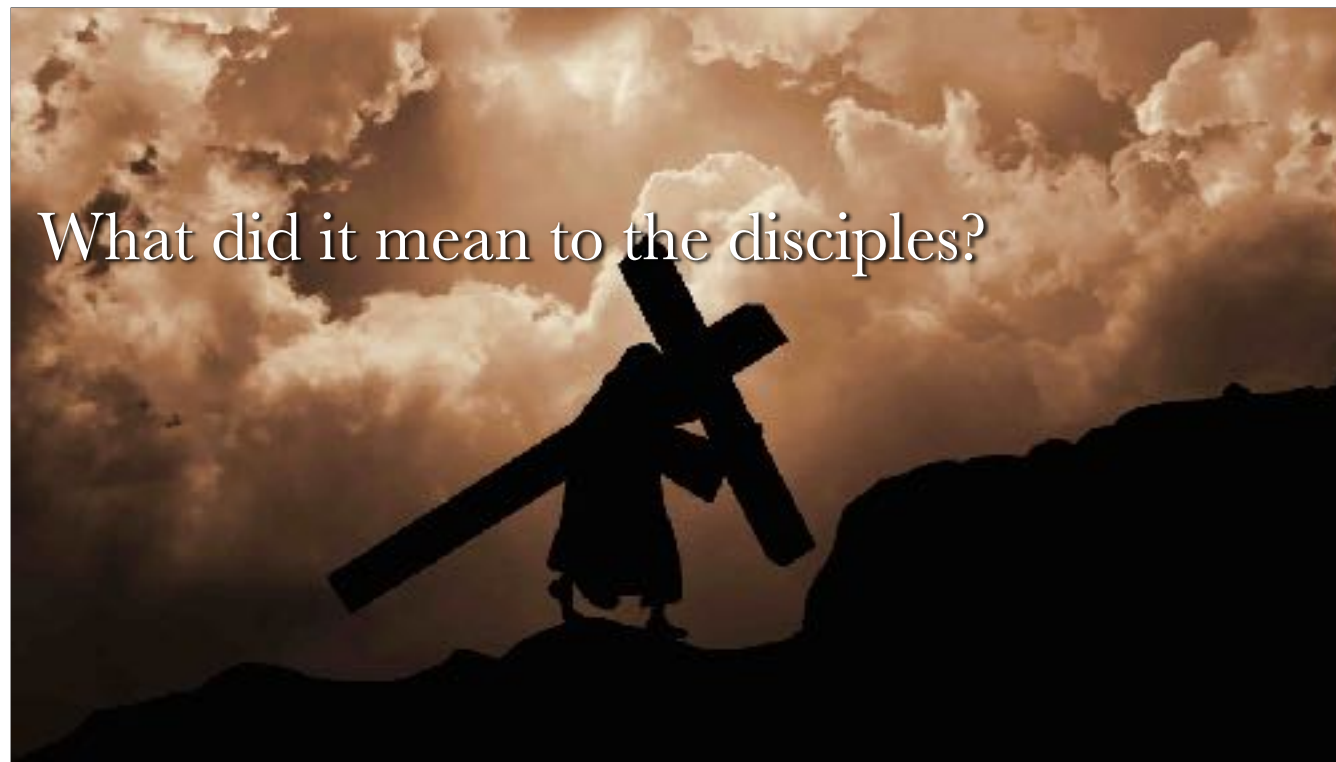
- It's vital that we understand what Jesus is asking us to do
  - take up his cross
  - take up his cross daily
  - bear his own cross



- What it does not mean
  - Common usage as an idiom meaning some difficulty that must be endured, cannot be avoided, circumstances that are unavoidable
    - Chronic illness
    - Difficult family member
  - Not saying that we don't have trials and temptations that must be faced and endured ... but is that what Jesus was teaching his disciples?



- What did it mean to the disciples?
  - what the word cross meant to Jesus' first-century audience.
    - When Jesus said, "take up your cross" to them, they thought of a cruel instrument of torture and death.
  - They thought of dying in the most agonizing method known to man.
  - They thought of condemned criminals hanging on the crosses by the roadside.
  - It was a one-way trip; never came back



What did it mean to the disciples?

- In the Roman world, the cross was a symbol of shame, guilt, suffering, and rejection. There could be no more despicable way to die. Crucifixion was not mentioned in polite conversation.
- Jesus also emphasized that this is a choice we make: To Be a disciple
  - count cost
  - consider if able
  - forsake all



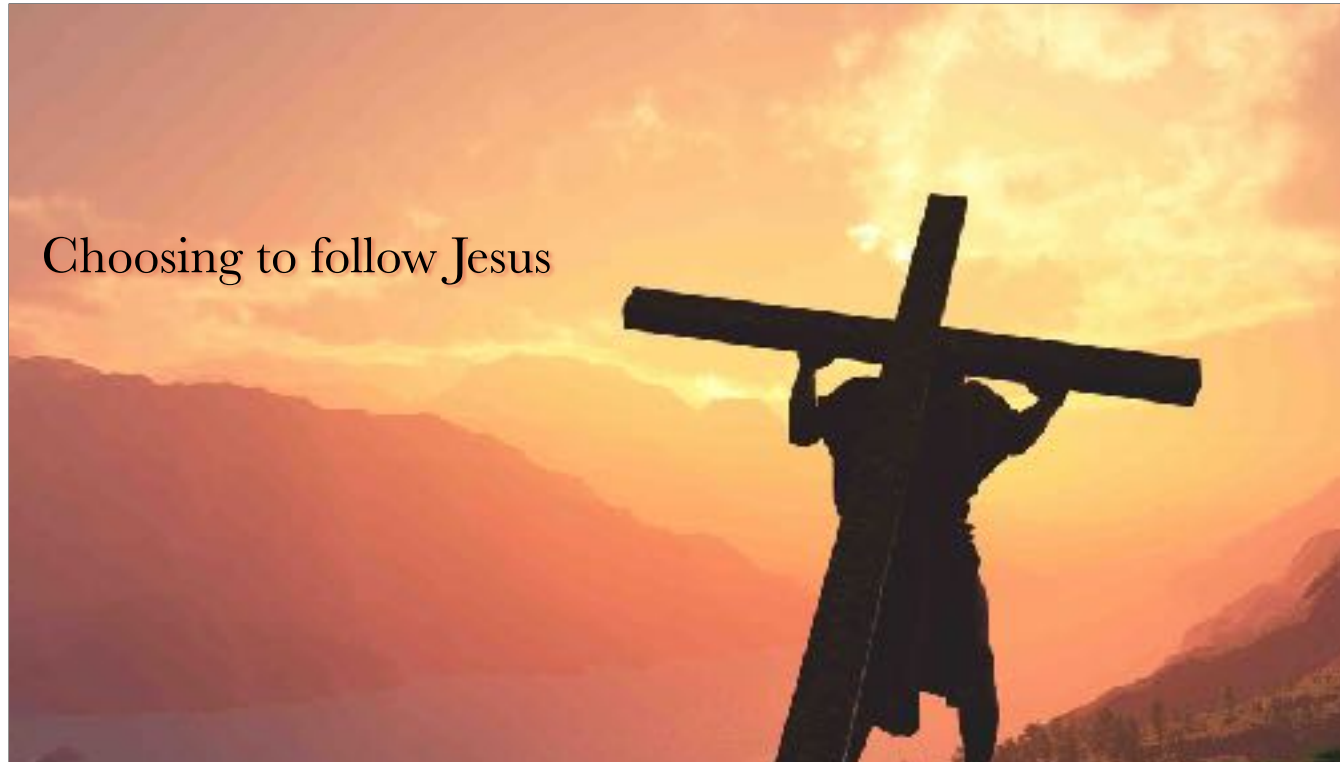
- What does it mean?
- Jesus Came to Suffer and Die: Luke 9.22
  - Luke 9:22 “22 saying, “The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.””
- Paul Understood this
  - 1 Corinthians 15:30-32 (ESV)
    - 30 Why are we in danger every hour? 31 I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day! 32 What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.”



- Acts 21:13-14 (ESV)
  - 13 Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." 14 And since he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, "Let the will of the Lord be done."

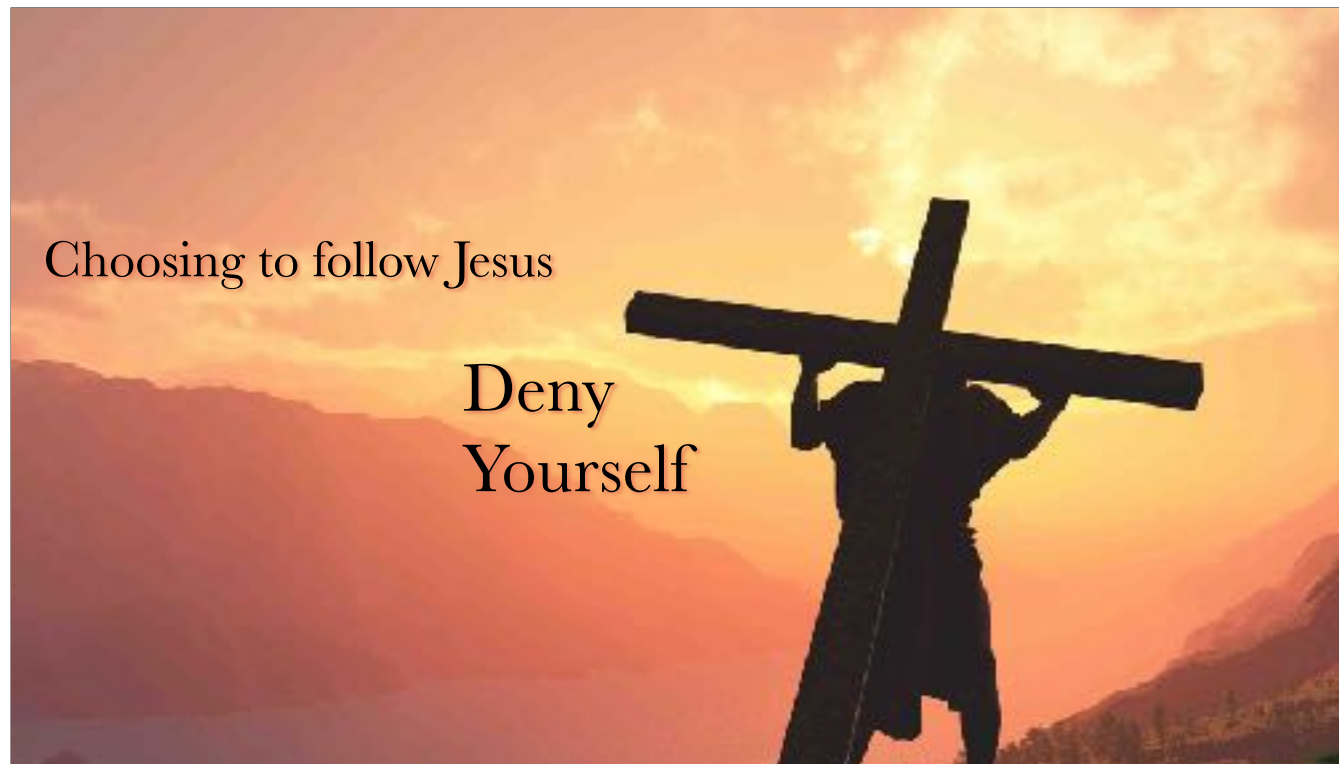


Choosing to follow Jesus

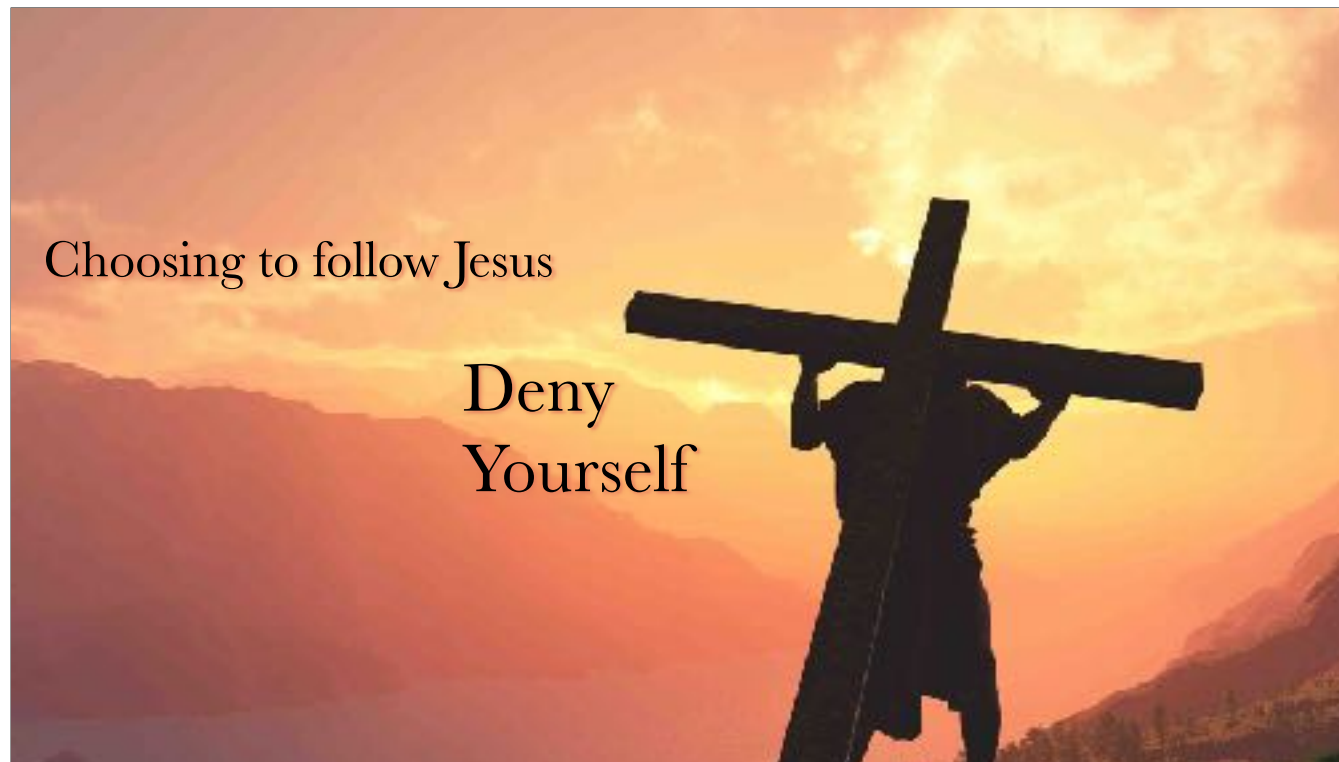


- Choosing to follow Jesus: What it means to bear my own cross
  - Must not take this lightly

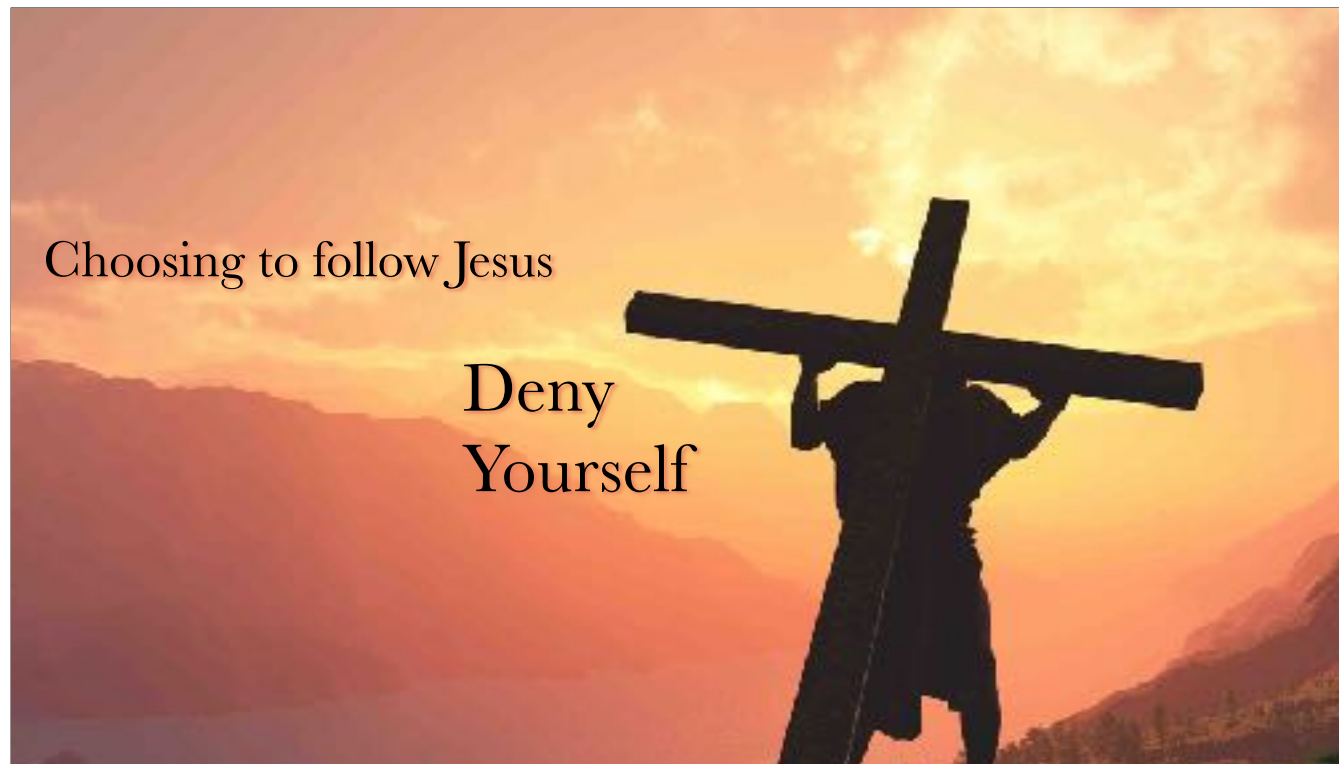




- Choosing to follow Jesus means denying yourself
  - Denying yourself doesn't mean you don't exist.
  - It doesn't mean that you hate yourself, or act like you have no usefulness
  - It doesn't mean you become like a working drone (bee), lacking personality or abilities
- Confidence in myself vs. Confidence in Jesus



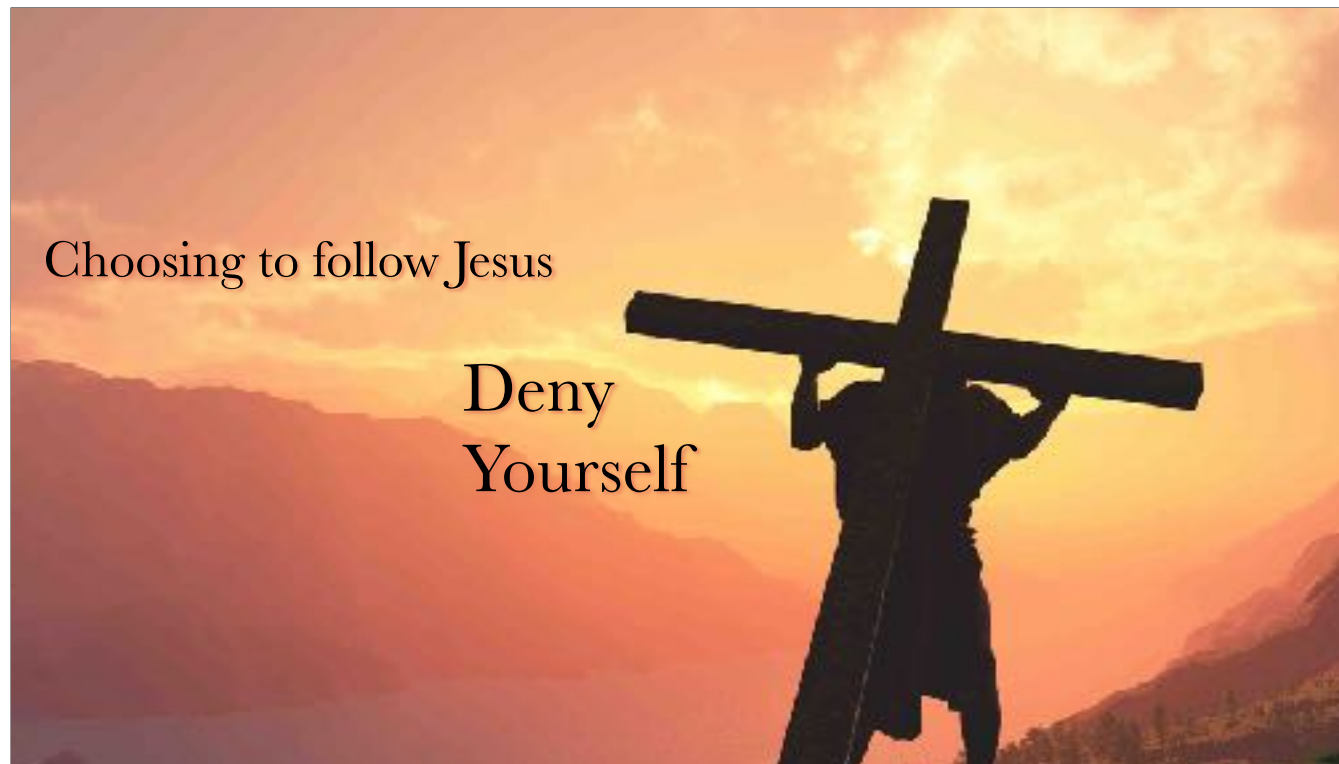
- Saul: Philippians 3:4-11 (ESV)
  - 4 though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also.
- If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more:
  - 5 circumcised on the eighth day,
  - of the people of Israel,
  - of the tribe of Benjamin,
  - a Hebrew of Hebrews;
  - as to the law, a Pharisee;
  - 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church;
  - as to righteousness under the law, blameless.



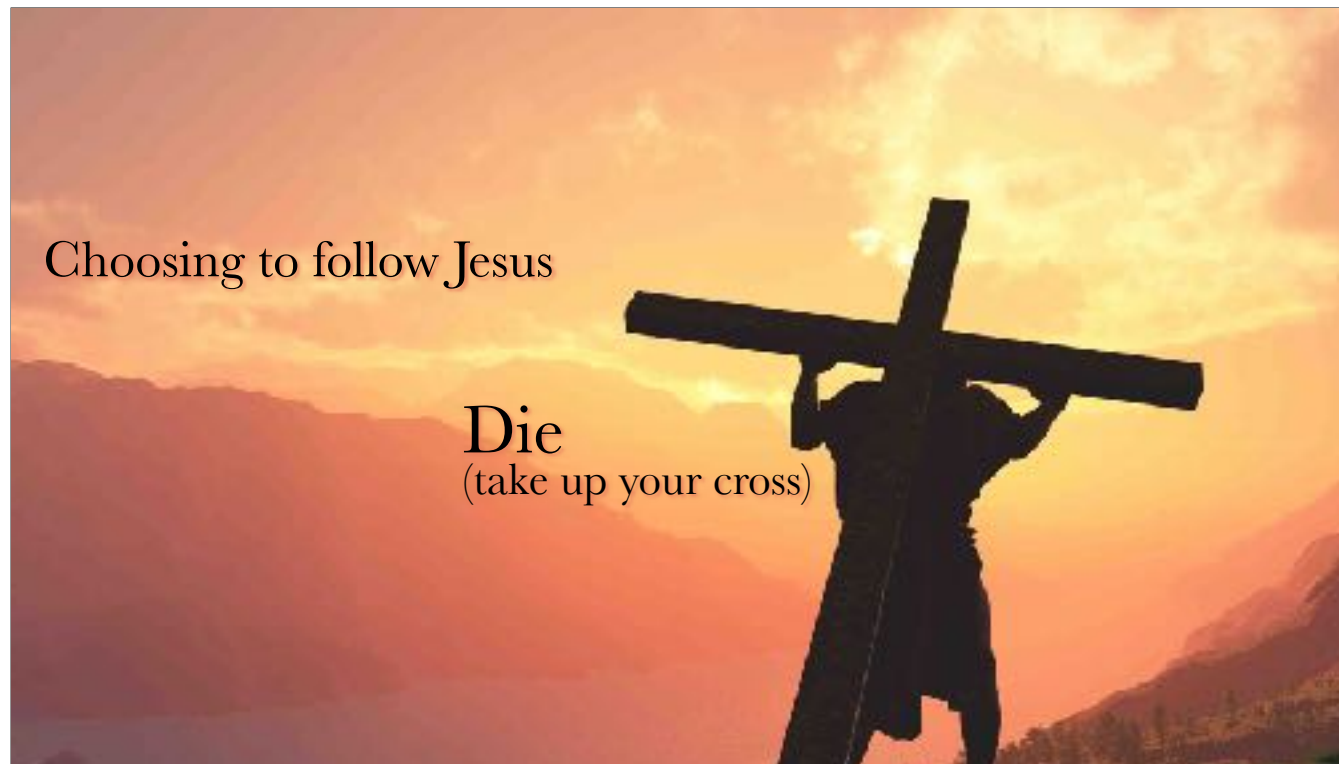
Choosing to follow Jesus

Deny  
Yourself

- 7 But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.
- 8 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.
  - For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish,
  - in order that I may gain Christ



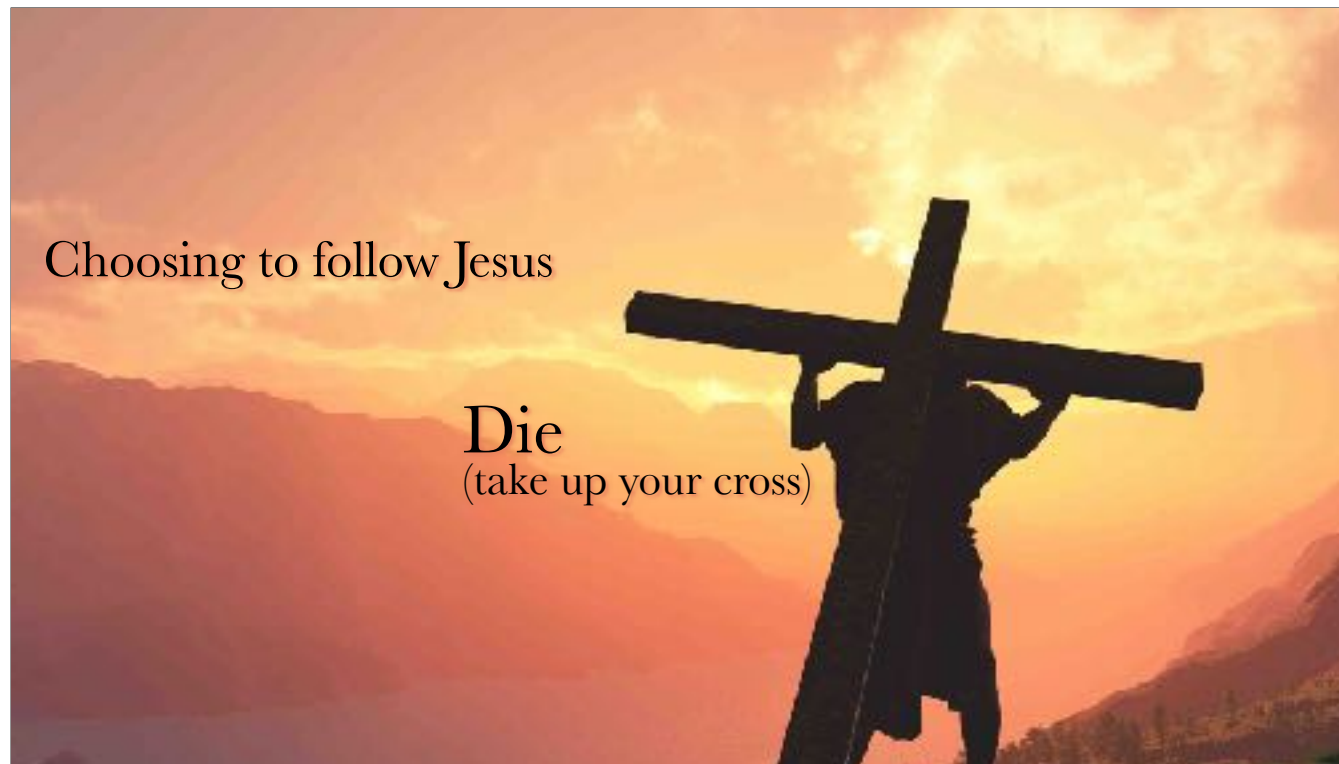
- 9 and be found in him,
  - not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law,
    - but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—
- 10 that I may know him
- and the power of his resurrection,
- and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,
  - 11 that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.



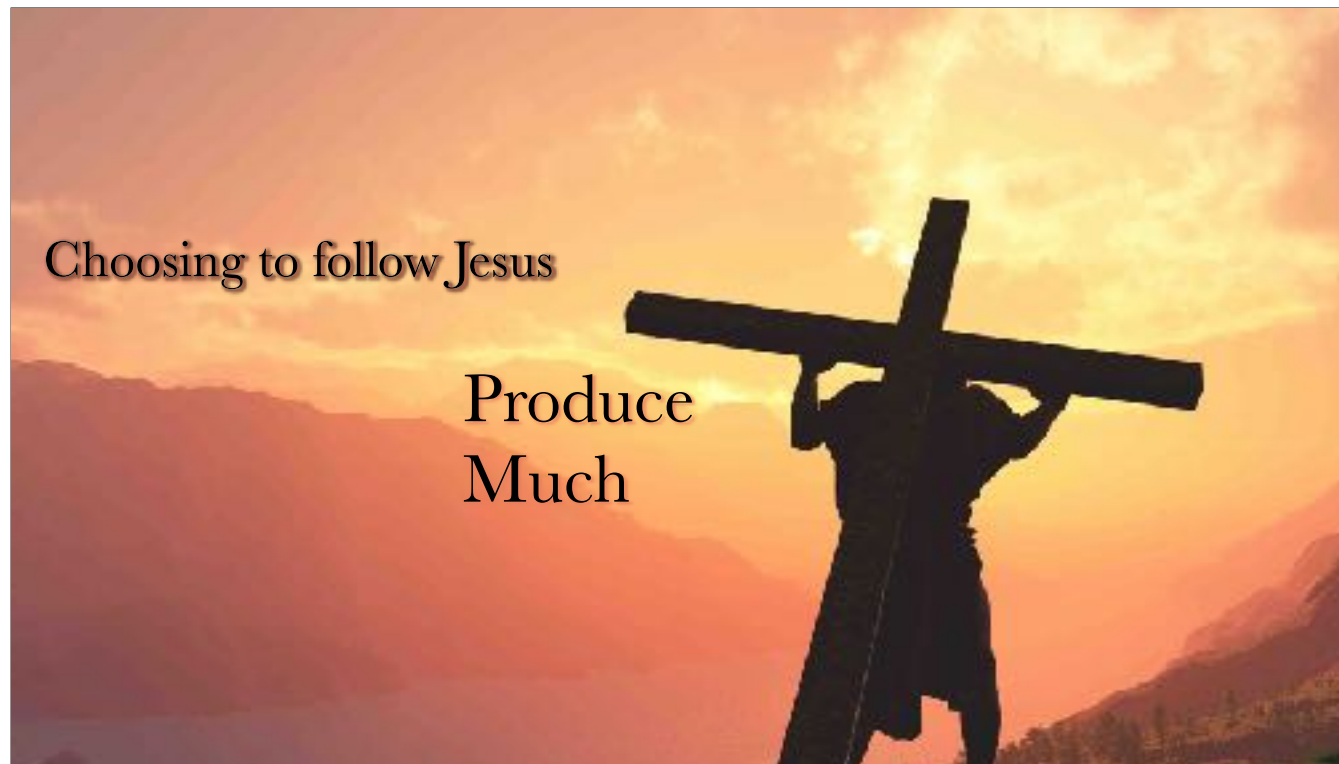
Choosing to follow Jesus

Die  
(take up your cross)

- Choosing to follow Jesus is a daily choice to die
  - 1 Corinthians 15:30-31 (ESV)
    - 30 Why are we in danger every hour? 31 I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day!

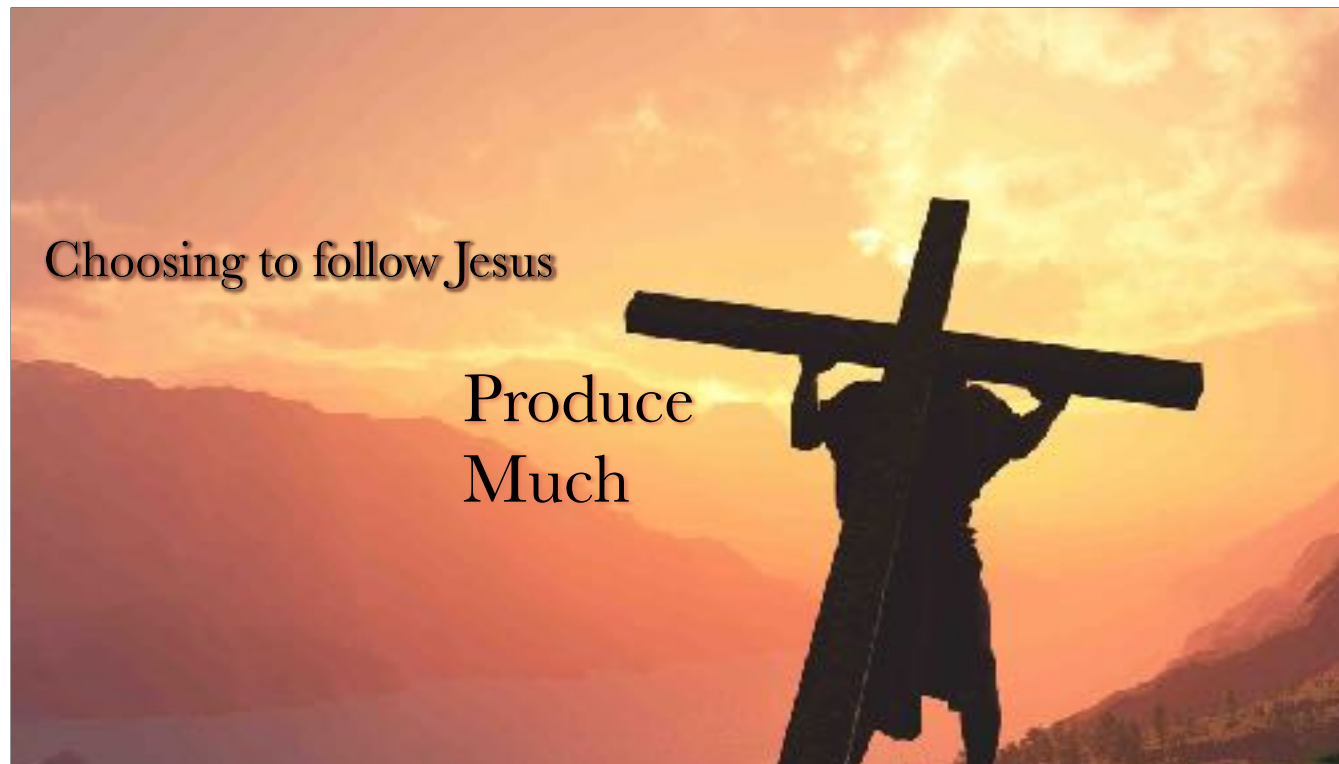


- Galatians 2:20 (ESV)
  - 20 I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
  - Christ lives in me
    - Faith
    - Love
    - Giving for others



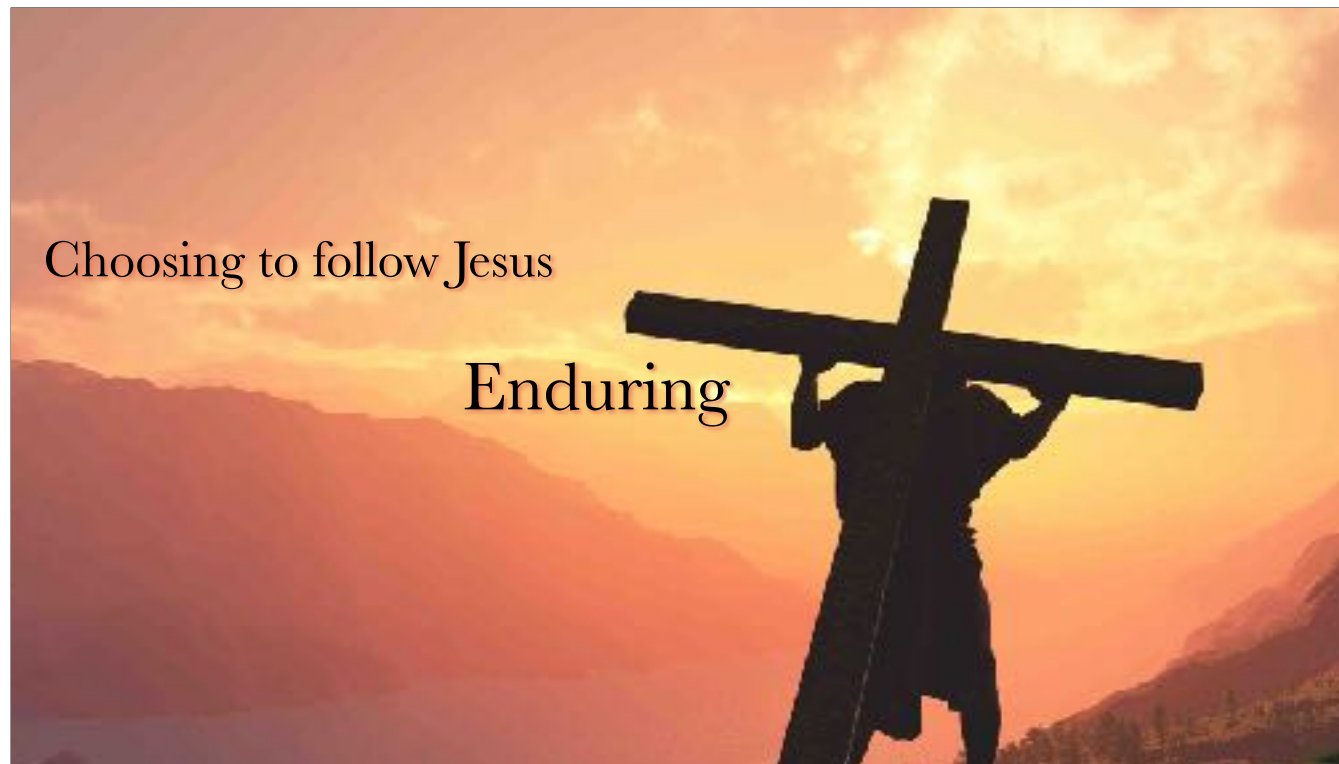
- Choosing to follow Jesus means producing much
  - John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.
  - John 15:2 and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.
  - John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.



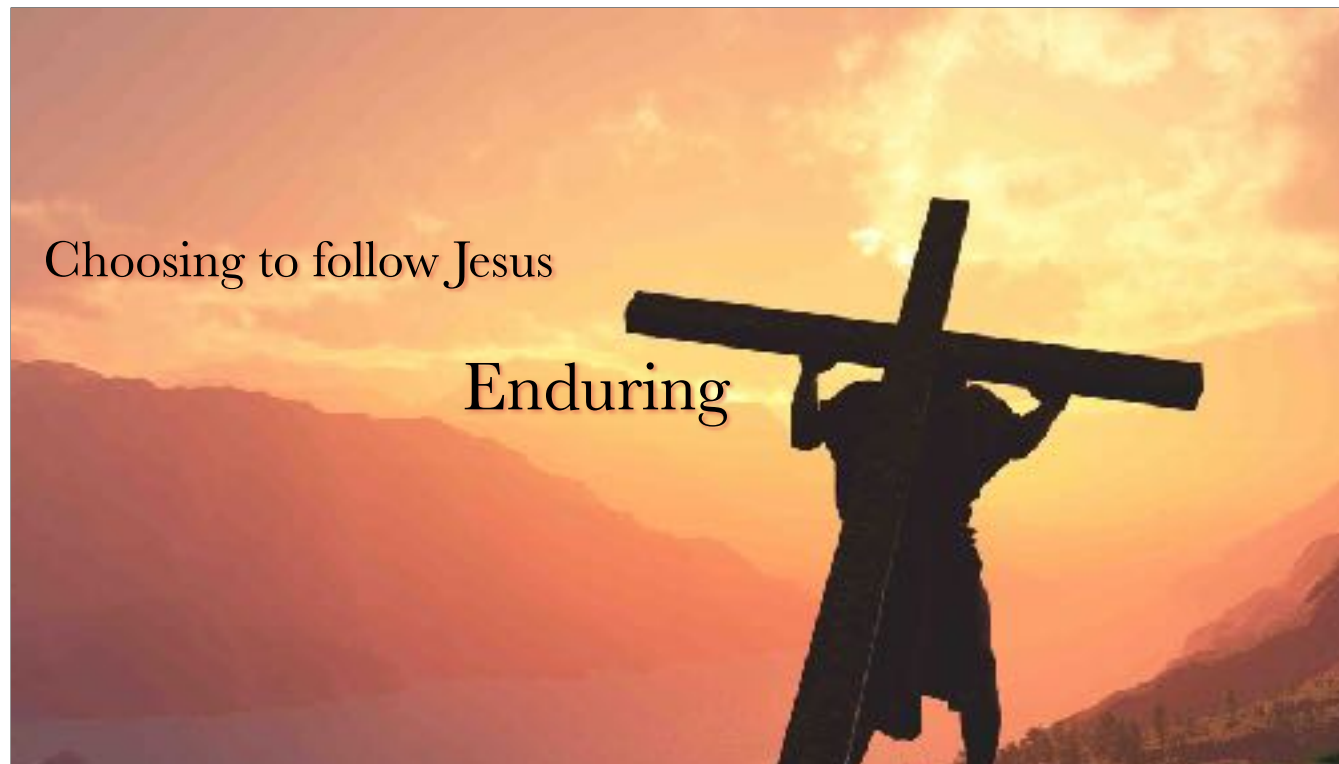


- Are you growing? Are you producing?
  - Nutrition: minerals, water, light
  - Jesus, Spirit
  - God's Word
  - Brethren
  - Effort
  - Fruit: sowing seeds





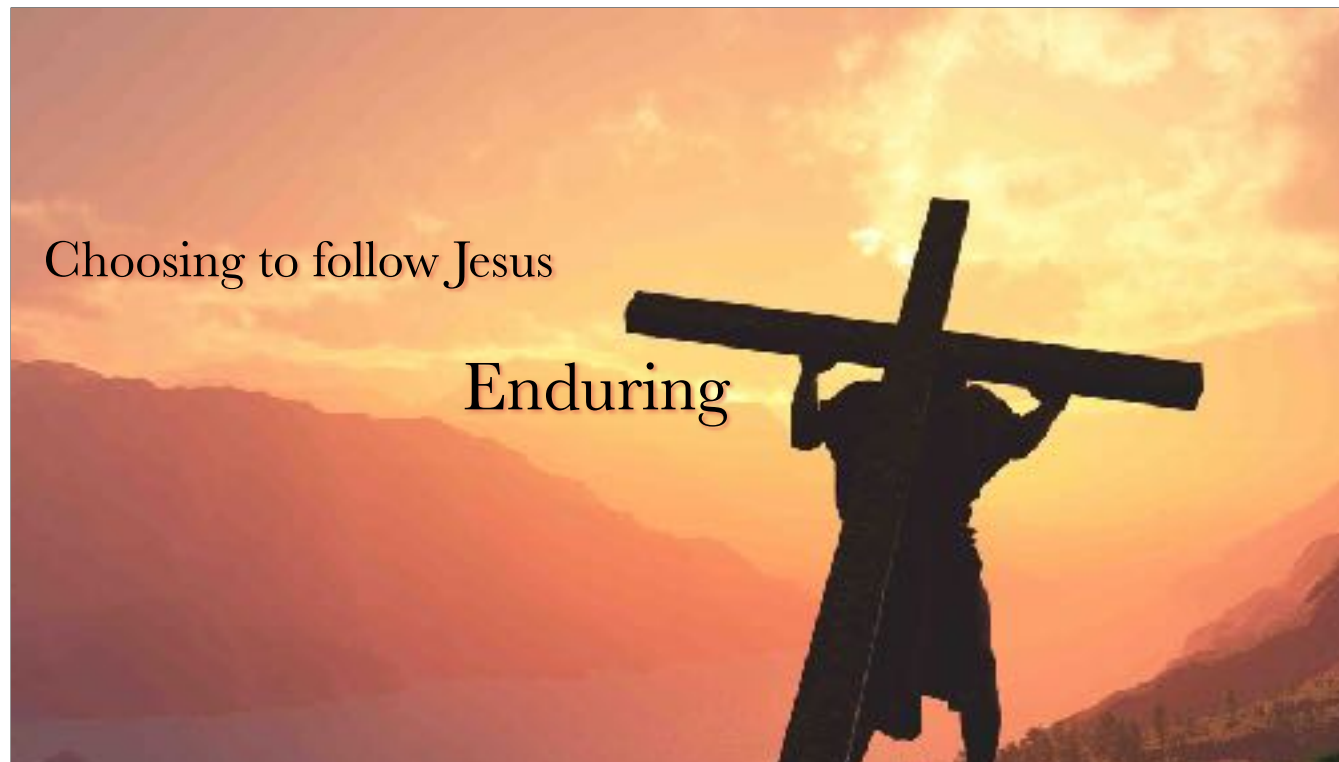
- Choosing to follow Jesus means enduring to the end
  - Difficult
    - John 14:6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”
      - it’s the only way, therefore the easiest — but it’s still going to be hard
        - trials and temptations and suffering
        - challenges



Choosing to follow Jesus

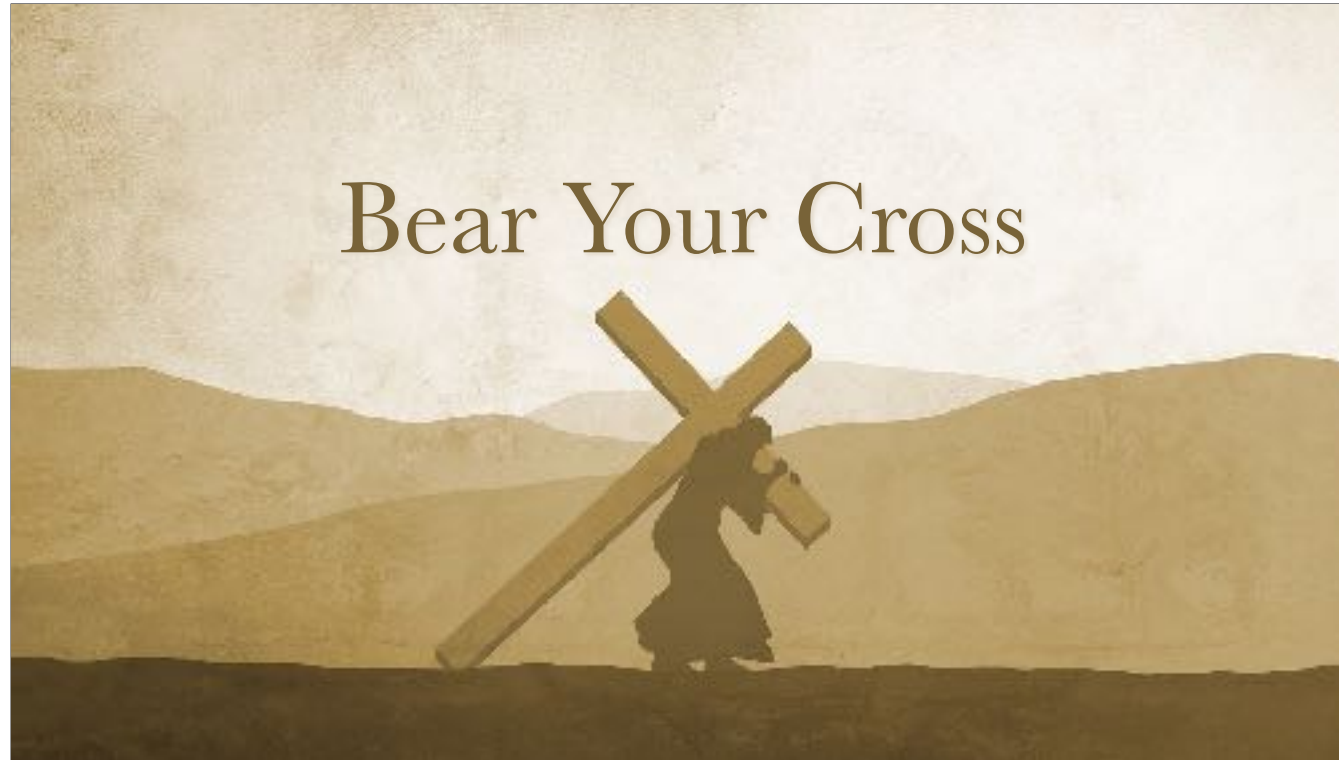
Enduring

- Jesus' Example: Hebrews 12:1-3 (ESV)
  - 1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every **weight**, and **sin** which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the **shame**, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured from sinners such **hostility** against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.



- The Dangers:
  - Grow Weary
  - Fainthearted
- Lightening our Load
  - Lay Aside (deny self?) — Weight (hindrances) and Sin
  - Shame
  - Hostility
- Enduring
  - Run
  - Joy Set Before him
    - Often think of reuniting with Father
    - But also accomplishing his purpose — salvation for all

# Bear Your Cross



- You can be worthy of Jesus
- You can be his disciple
- Follow him.
-

We implore you  
on behalf of Christ,  
be reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 5:20

Call to Action

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THE EASTER STORY

## JESUS IS CRUCIFIED

Matthew 27: 27-37, Mark 15:16-25, Luke 23:26-34, John 19:16-27

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## Bearing the Cross

John 19:17

Synopsis: Jesus reminds us that to be worthy and to be his disciple we must bear our cross. He was not using this as the common idiom we use in English (which robs Jesus' statement of it's meaning and power). In this lesson we look at what it means to bear the cross: denying of self, dying, producing much, and enduring.

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**"Let all that you do be done with love."**