

Main Idea: According to Jesus in Matthew 16:21-28, if we want to experience the profitable life (that’s the word Jesus uses in verse 26, *profit*), it’s vital that we embrace the cross. There are three scenes in this important passage.

- I. The centrality of the cross (21)
 - A. Jesus had to die.
 - B. Jesus had to be raised to life.
- II. The controversy of the cross (22-23)
 - A. To man, the cross is offensive (22).
 - B. To God, the cross is the only way (23).
 1. A lot of people accept Jesus as their example.
 2. God requires us to accept Jesus as our Savior.
- III. The consequences of the cross (24-28)
 - A. Here’s what you must do (24).
 1. You must deny yourself.
 2. You must take up your cross.
 3. You must follow Jesus.
 - B. Here’s why (25-26).
 1. It’s the only way to really live (25).
 2. It’s your soul that is at stake (26).
 - C. Here’s what you can expect (27-28).
 1. He is coming again (27a).
 2. He is going to give rewards (27b).
 3. He already gave some a preview (28).

Make It Personal: Three challenges for 2021...

1. Embrace the cross of Jesus.
2. Embrace your own cross.
3. Invite others to join you.

January Scripture Memory: Galatians 6:14

As we begin the new year, I want us to think about a word. *Profitable*. Would you like 2021 to be profitable, specifically, to be a year that leads to maximum profitability? That’s what I want, for you and for me. And Jesus is going to tell us how. He actually uses the term “profit” in the passage we’ll be studying this morning, Matthew 16. But first, let’s listen to a passage that makes it clear that there are enemies to this profit.

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

“What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?” Jesus asked the question. Jesus cares about profit, so should we. He warns against a temporary profit, which He identifies as “gaining the whole world.” Would you consider gaining the whole world to be unprofitable? Jesus says it can be. If...something else is true. If...you forfeit your soul.

The Lord urges us to consider an eternal profit, which He says is the opposite of “forfeiting one’s soul.” The profit that matters most is the well-being of our soul.

How does that happen? How do you make sure that all will be well with your soul for ever and ever? Jesus gives the answer in the preceding verses of Matthew 16, and the answer has to do with an object.

**Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ For a previous look at this passage, see the message preached at WBC on 4/20/03.

The cross. The key to eternal profit is embracing the cross. First, **Jesus' cross** (verses 21-23). Then, and this is something we don't talk much about but Jesus did, **our own cross** (verses 24-28).

I want us to talk about Jesus' cross and our own cross as we begin this new year. I want to do that because Jesus says that to experience maximum profit, we must embrace the cross. What does that mean? How do we do it practically speaking in 2021? And what happens if we do, and if we don't?

To answer those questions, we must first put the cross in its context. The Son of God came to earth, born as a baby in a manger two thousand years ago. He was given the name "Jesus," grew up in the home of Joseph and Mary, and became a great teacher and miracle worker in Israel. Then at the age of 33 He was betrayed, wrongly condemned by Jewish and Roman authorities, and then crucified. He was nailed to a cross.

But that of course wasn't the end. He was buried in a rich man's tomb, and then three days later, He conquered death and rose again. Over 500 people saw the resurrected Jesus in the next 40 days prior to His return to heaven from a hill outside of Jerusalem.

Those are the historical facts, documented in four gospel accounts by men selected and directed by the Holy Spirit Himself. The facts are well attested and powerful.

So is a person who believes those facts a Christian? Be careful. The religious leaders who tried to kill the followers of Jesus in the first century knew the facts. They knew that Jesus lived, died, and were aware of His resurrection (though they worked hard to reinterpret and even cover up the facts). Were they Christians?

No. Something vital was missing. What was it? According to Jesus, they refused to embrace His cross, and their own.

Friends, it takes more than knowing the facts of the cross to be a Christian. Take Bob, for instance. He went to Sunday School as a child, and now is a 35-year-old father of two. Ask him if he's a Christian and he'll say, "Sure. I believe in God. I always have." If you probe further and ask, "Do you believe in Jesus?" he'll tell you plainly, "Absolutely. He was the Son of God, the greatest person who ever lived. He even died for us."

If you then ask, "Tell me, then, how does a person become a Christian," Bob would reply, "Just believe in Jesus, and do what He did. Of course, you can't do it perfectly, but God blesses those who try. And that's what I always seek to do, you know, keep the golden rule, do what Jesus did."

So is Bob a Christian? He thinks he is. He says he is. What would Jesus say? Let's find out what Jesus did say, about Bob, and you, and me.

According to Matthew 16:21-28, the key to not forfeiting one's soul is embracing the cross. First, His cross. Then, our own. What does that mean? Let's walk through the three scenes of this important passage and find out.²

I. The centrality of the cross (21)

Verse 21 "From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."

Let's unpack this important verse. *From that time on* Jesus began to explain. From what time? What happened prior to this? This verse marks a turning point in the

² This account is so important that Matthew, Mark, and Luke each record it (Mark 8, Luke 9).

ministry of Jesus. Before this, He was with the crowds. After this, He will put His focus on the twelve disciples. Up until now He has traveled throughout the country preaching the good news of the kingdom, healing disease and sickness, and performing spectacular miracles (see 9:38). But His public ministry is about to turn private. For the remainder of His days, He is going to make sure His followers understand the significance of why He came, for it would be their job to tell the world after He left. So Matthew says (ESV), “*From that time, Jesus began to show His disciples.*”

But there’s a more immediate context to those words. What happened right before this? In verse 13 Jesus asked His disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” The disciples responded by sharing what the polls were saying. But then Jesus asked the follow-up (15), “But what about you? Who do you say I am?”

That’s a critical question. Just who is this Jesus of Nazareth? Simon Peter, never one at a loss for words, spoke up, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” In other words, “Jesus, You are the long-awaited Messiah, the One God has sent in fulfillment of His Word. You are God’s chosen one.”

To which Jesus said [my paraphrase], “You got it right, Peter! But You didn’t figure this out on your own. My Father in heaven revealed it to you. What’s more, I am going to build My church on the rock of your profession, Peter, and hell itself can’t stand in the way. I’m going to give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. When You tell the world about Me, you’re going to bind some and set others free for eternity.”

“But not yet,” Jesus said. That’s what verse 20 indicates, “Then he warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.” Hold on. Why not tell them? It wasn’t time yet. The crowds wouldn’t understand. Even the disciples didn’t understand. And so, “*From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples (NIV).*”

Explain what? This. Verse 21 continues, “That he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.”

Notice the connection. Right after Peter’s proper confession that Jesus is the Messiah, the Master told the disciples, “Now that you understand who I am, it’s time to talk about why I have come.” Mathew indicates that Jesus “*began to show.*” This would not be a one time conversation, for this would be a hard pill to swallow. What Jesus told them in verse 21 He repeated again in 17:22, again in 20:17-19, and again in 26:2.

What did He tell them that was so hard to bear, yet so vital? He made two predictions, and both are vital to the eternal well-being of our soul.

A. Jesus had to die. Notice the word *must*. The KJV says it this way, “From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he *must* go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed.”

He *must* go, *must* suffer, *must* be killed. He had to die.

“You mean to say that it was Jesus’ plan to die?” Yes. His death would be no accident. “But why?” you ask. “Why did He say He had to die?”

It was His purpose for coming, a purpose given to Him by His Heavenly Father. The cross was no accident, no tragic quirk that happened because the hostile crowd caught Jesus off guard. It’s why He came. He came to die.

In a plan the Sovereign God designed in eternity past, it was decided that the Son of God would enter the world as a human being. He would come on a rescue mission, to redeem undeserving, sinful people who were facing the judgment of God. But to redeem

them, He would do more than show them the way back to God, for sinners need more than light. He would take the judgment of God for them, for sinners need a Savior. That meant He must *die*.

God predicted this through the prophet Isaiah 750 years before it happened, in Isaiah 53:4-6: "Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

It's significant that Jesus said specifically that it would be the elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law that would instigate His suffering and death. Let that sink in. If anybody should have recognized the Messiah, it should have been them. They were Israel's spiritual leaders. They knew the Scriptures better than anyone. They were men of the cloth. But they rejected the Messiah.

Religion is one of the great foes of the message of the cross. In point of fact, religion often tries to redefine the cross to make it more palatable.

Years ago A.W. Tozer offered this insight, "The old cross slew men; the new cross entertains them. The old cross condemned; the new cross amuses. The old cross destroyed confidence in the flesh; the new cross encourages it."

We must preach the cross. According to His own words, Jesus had to die.

But thankfully, that's not all. Jesus' second prediction...

B. Jesus had to be raised to life. The text says, "He must be killed and on the third day be raised to life." Both verbs are passive. Rather than dying of natural causes, He would *be killed*. And rather than remaining in the grave, He would *be raised*. Death would not hold Him. Death *could* not hold Him.

He already illustrated His authority over death in chapter 9, when a ruler came to Him and pleaded, "My daughter has just *died*. But come and put your hand on her, and she will live." And He did. And she did live again.

Death is our greatest foe. We can try to postpone it by wise living and medical treatment. But let's not kid ourselves. We can't avoid it nor overcome it.

But Jesus did. He said He would be raised. He said that ahead of time, and He was.

This is our message, beloved. Jesus had to die and then be raised to life.

C. H. Spurgeon is one of the greatest preachers of all time. These were his first words in the pulpit of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London:

"I would propose that the subject of the ministry of this house, as long as this platform shall stand, and as long as this house shall be frequented by worshipers, shall be the person of Jesus Christ. I am never ashamed to avow myself a Calvinist; I do not hesitate to take the name of Baptist; but if I am asked what is my creed, I reply, "It is Jesus Christ." My venerated predecessor, Dr. Gill, has left a [theological heritage] admirable and excellent in its way. But the [legacy] to which I would pin and bind myself forever, God helping me,...is Jesus Christ, who is the arm and substance of the gospel, who is in Himself all theology, the incarnation of every precious truth."

We must never lose sight of the centrality of Christ, and chiefly, the centrality of the cross of Christ. But I must warn you. That's an unpopular message. Many churches

today are preaching a cross-less Christ. Many church-goers today want to hear about a cross-less Christ. Why is that? The reason is not new, as we see in the very next scene.

II. The controversy of the cross (22-23)

Listen to Peter in verse 22, “Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ‘Never, Lord!’ he said. ‘This shall never happen to you!’”

I’m sure Peter meant well, but watch what he does. He just acknowledged that Jesus is the Messiah, yet now he takes it upon himself to teach the Messiah. He takes Jesus by the arm, turns Him away from the group (so as not to embarrass the Master for His “blunder”), and then corrects Him. “Not so, Lord! Things are going great. The people love You. You’re the King. Don’t talk about this dying nonsense.”

Matthew, who’s recording this account, was there. He heard Peter’s rebuke and likely felt the same way. It just didn’t make sense.

A. To man, the cross is offensive (22). “Never, Lord!” Peter said. Peter couldn’t stand the thought of Jesus’ dying. A dying Messiah didn’t compute.

But God’s ways never make sense to carnal minds. Ask the average person on the street how to get to heaven and you’ll probably hear something like, “Just believe in God, do the best you can, and live a good life.” So what will you say to the Lord when you stand before Him? “I’ll say, ‘Lord, I may not be perfect, but I’ve tried. Look at all the good I’ve done.’”

Paul Washer tells the story about speaking in a university setting in Europe to a rather skeptical audience. “I am going to share with you the most terrifying truth in the Scriptures,” he said to them. “It’s the most terrifying truth anyone can ever know about God. Here it is. The most terrifying truth in the Scriptures is that *God is good.*”

At that point the students started snickering. Some even said, “What’s the problem with that? Why is it terrifying that God is good?”

To which he replied, “It’s terrifying to know that God is good...because we are not. So what does a good God do to people like us? We’re sinners. We’ve sinned against God. We’ve sinned against one another. We’ve sinned against nature. All of creation calls for our condemnation. If God is truly just, then what does He do with us? If a just God merely pardons the wicked, he is no longer just. If a holy God calls the wicked to Himself to have fellowship with Him, He’s no longer a holy God. So the question is this. How does a just God pardon sinners and still be just? The answer is found in the cross of Jesus Christ.”³

This is the reason the cross is offensive to the natural man. The cross says, “Your goodness is deficient. God is not pleased with you, and you cannot fix the problem. Only God can, and He did through the work His Son accomplished on the cross.”

B. To God, the cross is the only way (23). If you doubt that, watch how Jesus responded to Peter in verse 23. “Jesus turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.’”

Get behind me, Satan. Why did Jesus say that? Was Peter indwelt by Satan? No, Satan cannot take up residence in a believer. But he can influence him. This is why Jesus said, “Get behind me, *Satan.*” He knew the source of this temptation. He’d heard it before.

³ Transcript of message on, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TXOWyjB7d24>

Remember when Jesus endured forty days of fasting in the wilderness? What did Satan do then? He tried to get Jesus to turn stone into bread, to jump off the temple pinnacle, and to bow and worship him in exchange for the kingdoms of the world. In short, Satan tempted Jesus to avoid the path of suffering.

As did Peter. "No, Lord, don't talk about dying. You don't need to die."

Get behind me, Satan. That's exactly what I must do! It's why I've come.

What was Peter's problem? Jesus told him he was being a "hindrance" to me (ESV; a "stumbling block" in the NIV). That's ironic, isn't it? Just before this Jesus called him "Peter," which means "rock." But he's no infallible rock. Now he's a different kind of rock, a *skandalon*, a stumbling block.⁴

And why this charge? Jesus said it was because Peter wasn't thinking God's way, but man's way.

It's true. There are two kinds of Messiahs. There's the Messiah that the "good person" wants, and then there's the Messiah that God knows we need.

1. *A lot of people accept Jesus as their example.* People like Bob whom I mentioned earlier. They think they're a Christian because they believe in Jesus and keep the golden rule. But while they believe in Jesus, it's the Jesus they *want* rather than the Jesus God sent. They do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of man.

"You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins," said the angel to Joseph in Matthew 1:21. That's why He came. To save people. From their sins.

2. *God requires us to accept Jesus as our Savior.* Have you done so?

A man named D. M. Stearns was preaching in Philadelphia. At the close of the service a stranger came up to him and said, "I don't like the way you spoke about the cross. I think that instead of emphasizing the death of Christ, it would be far better to preach Jesus, the teacher and example." Stearns replied, "If I presented Christ in that way, would you be willing to follow Him?" "I certainly would," said the stranger without hesitation. "All right then," said the preacher, "let's take the first step. He did no sin. Can you claim that for yourself?" The man looked confused and somewhat surprised. "Why, no," he said. "I acknowledge that I do sin." Stearns replied, "Then your greatest need is to have a Savior, not an example!"⁵

When I say that the cross is the only way to be saved, please realize that it's not the cross itself that saves. By that I mean it's not the wooden object that's our hope. You can wear a cross necklace or put a cross on the wall in your home, but that doesn't save you. It's what Jesus did on the cross that matters. It's believing that on the cross, Jesus died as a substitute, in the place of every person who would admit their sinfulness and receive Him as their sin-bearer.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer once observed, "The figure of the Crucified invalidates all thought which takes success for its standard." It's true. We need more than an example. To be saved, we must admit we are lost. To be saved, we must embrace the cross and accept Jesus as our *Savior*.

The key to eternal profit is embracing the cross. First...*His* cross. Why do I say *first*? Because of what Jesus said next in the very next verse. He said there's another cross we must embrace. *Our* cross.

⁴ An "offense," as the KJV puts it.

⁵ [Source Unknown](#).

III. The consequences of the cross (24-28)

Embracing His cross is the key to salvation. Embracing our cross is the evidence of salvation.

Every good preacher does more than proclaim truth. He also gives an invitation, that is, He invites people to respond to the Word they've heard. Please pay special attention to the invitation Jesus extended. It might surprise you. It addresses three issues.

A. Here's what you must do (24). "Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.'"

Spurgeon rightly concluded, "There are no crown-wearers in heaven who were not cross-bearers here below." Vance Havner remarked, "We need men of the cross, with the message of the cross, bearing the marks of the cross."

The cross of Christ leads to certain consequences for us. What are they? Jesus mentioned three, starting with this one.

1. *You must deny yourself.* "If anyone would come after me, he must *deny himself.*" Jesus isn't talking about giving up chocolate or some other pleasure here. This isn't Lent. It's a comprehensive call. This is a decision to dethrone self and enthrone God from this point forward.

It makes perfect sense, doesn't it? We were hell-bound, in bondage to our sin. But when Jesus died for us, He made a payment for our sin. He purchased us. He bought us. So we now belong to Him.

As Romans 12:1 puts it, "I beseech you, therefore, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God." If you want to become a disciple of Jesus, you must deny yourself and turn the controls of your life over to Him.

2. *You must take up your cross.* What does that mean? In the first century, the cross, of course, was a cruel instrument of death. To be my disciple, says Jesus, you must deny and die. You must die to yourself. You must renounce self-righteousness, self-sufficiency, and pride. You must die to the agenda that's controlled you to this point, your own agenda.

This is not optional. If *anyone* would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross. Luke's account adds the word "daily," for this is no one time event but a life-calling. To be Jesus' disciple requires total commitment. We must embrace the cross every day, His cross, and our own.

3. *You must follow Jesus.* In reality, this third command is what makes the first two possible. You don't have the power to deny yourself and take up your cross unless you come to Jesus. You must follow Jesus, follow Him all the way to His cross and to His empty tomb, for it's His atoning work (and His alone) that can set you free from the bondage of self-love, so that you can then truly love God and others.

There's incredible grace in this invitation. Do you see it? Look again at the charge Jesus gave Peter in verse 23. "Get behind me, Satan." That sounds similar to what He told the devil when He tempted Him in Matthew 4:10, saying, "Away from me, Satan!"

Similar, yes, but with a huge difference. To the devil Jesus said, "Get away from me." But to Peter He said, "Get behind Me." In other words, Peter, retake the position that a disciple should have. Become My follower again. Don't try to tell Me what to do. Get behind Me. I'm the Master. My role is to lead. Your role is to follow. Follow Me.

How kind of the Savior! “Get behind Me,” He says to us when we like Peter forget our place. Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Me.

“But that’s costly, isn’t it?” Yes. Embracing a death instrument is costly. You die when you do that. So why then would anyone want to do it?

B. Here’s why (25-26). For two important reasons, according to Jesus.

1. *It’s the only way to really live (25).* “For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.” To become a Jesus-follower, you must admit your need, your desperate condition, and come to Him wholeheartedly, with no agenda other than His. You must lose your life, and then you will find it.

Let this sink in. *You will find it.* “Whoever loses his life for me will find it.”

2. *It’s your soul that is at stake (26).* “What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?”

Peter didn’t want Jesus to die. But Jesus had to die. The souls of men were at stake. Your soul was at stake, and mine.

A lot of people don’t give much thought to their soul. They’re consumed with their five senses, with the stuff of this life and getting all they can get now. And some seem to be succeeding. They have bank accounts and titles and healthy kids. But it’s not a profitable venture, for it’s costing them their *soul*.

What good is it? This is Jesus’ question to us this morning. What will it profit if you gain the whole world and lose your own soul?

Is it costly to die to yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus? Yes. But the cost doesn’t even compare with the alternative, to lose your soul forever.

That’s why you should become a Christian. It’s the only way to really live, for at the end of the day, it’s your soul that’s at stake.

You say, “Okay, what does that mean, that my soul is at stake?” Jesus doesn’t leave us hanging, but spells it out clearly.

C. Here’s what you can expect (27-28). Three incentives.

1. *He is coming again (27a).* “For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels...” Peter had wanted a victorious Messiah, not a dying one. So Jesus told Him, “That will come in time, but first the cross. Then the crown.”

Dr. Seamands tells of a Muslim who became a Christian in Africa. “Some of his friends asked him, ‘Why have you become a Christian?’ He answered, ‘Well, its like this. Suppose you were going down the road and suddenly the road forked in two directions, and you didn’t know which way to go, and there at the fork in the road were two men, one dead and one alive--which one would you ask which way to go?’”⁶

Dear friends, Jesus embraced His cross and then conquered death. Today He is in heaven, and one day He will return to the earth in glorious splendor, not as a suffering Savior but as a victorious King. Why should you submit your life to Him now? Because that day is on the calendar. He is coming again. A second incentive...

2. *He is going to give rewards (27b).* “For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, *and then he will reward each person* according to what he has done.”

To put it as simply as I can, we can choose to live for the *here and now*—for *this* life—and that’s what we’ll get. That’s *all* we will get. Or, we can live for the coming

⁶ Warren Webster, April, 1980, *HIS*, p. 13.

age, with the assurance that when Jesus returns, He will do what He said He would do. He will repay each person according to what he or she has done.

He sees all, and the day of accounting is coming. Revelation 20:12 says, “And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.”

Would you answer this question? Are you living *now* in a way that will result in profit *then*?

You say, “What is the right way to live now?”

Jesus just told us. He says to deny yourself, die to yourself, and follow Him. Follow Him to His cross where He died for your sins. Follow Him to His empty tomb, for He rose again to give you new life.

I urge you to embrace the cross in 2021. His cross, and your own. And be assured. It will be worth it all. How do I know?

3. *He already gave some a preview (28).* “I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

Why did Jesus end His invitation to embrace the cross, His and ours, by saying this? I think we see the answer in the next chapter. In fact, all three synoptic accounts include this passage we’ve considered today, and all three place the same event right after it.

The transfiguration. Jesus went up on a mountain and allowed Peter, James, and John to catch a glimpse of Him in His glorified state. He gave them, as it were, a preview of the glory of His kingdom that’s coming.

Now let’s make it personal...

Make It Personal: Three challenges for 2021...

1. *Embrace the cross of Jesus.* My non-Christian friend, for you this means putting your total trust in Christ and what He accomplished. Repent, believe, and be saved.

For you who know Christ, the cross is like the north star. If you get lost in the wilderness, just look up, find the big dipper, then follow the pointer stars in the bowl to the north star. The north star always holds the same place in the night sky. It shows you how to go north. With all the voices and clutter and clamor of life, it’s easy to get lost. So we need to gaze regularly on the cross.

We do that every time we enter this room. We see the cross on the stain glass in the front. We see it when we leave on the back wall (the two beams came from the rafters in our first building built in 1878).

Make it a point to gaze upon the cross personally 2021. I encourage you to memorize verses on the cross. As a church we’re memorizing Galatians 6:14 this month, “May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”

You might begin the year by reading a good book that explores the wonder of what Jesus accomplished on the cross. Such as: *In My Place Condemned He Stood*, by J. I. Packer & Mark Dever.

2. *Embrace your own cross.* That is, affirm every day that you have died. Memorize and cite Galatians 2:20 regularly. You were crucified with Christ. You are not your own. He now lives in you.

It helps me to sing a song about the cross every day. You might write your own song about the cross. Like Elizabeth Clephane did in 1868.

Beneath the cross of Jesus
I fain would take my stand,
The shadow of a mighty Rock
Within a weary land;
A home within the wilderness,
A rest upon the way,
From the burning of the noontide heat,
And the burden of the day.

Oh, safe and happy shelter!
Oh, refuge tried and sweet!
Oh, trysting place where heaven's love
And heaven's justice meet.
As to the holy patriarch
That wondrous dream was given,
So is my Savior by the cross
A ladder up to heaven.

There lies beneath its shadow,
But on the farther side,
The darkness of an awful grave
That gapes both deep and wide;
And there between us stands the cross,
Two arms outstretched to save,
Like a watchman set to guard the way
From that eternal grave.

Upon that cross of Jesus
Mine eye at times can see
The very dying form of One,
Who suffered there for me;
And from my smitten heart, with tears,
Two wonders I confess,
The wonders of His glorious love,
And my own worthlessness.

I take, O cross, thy shadow
For my abiding place;
I ask no other sunshine than
The sunshine of His face;
Content to let the world go by,
To know no gain nor loss,
My sinful self my only shame,
My glory all the cross.

3. Invite others to join you. Your children and grandchildren. Your friends and neighbors. Let's not keep the profit to ourselves. Let's encourage them to embrace the cross along with us, first His cross, and then their own.

Closing Song: #183 "*Beneath the Cross of Jesus,*" all three verses