

The King's Cross

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[0 : 00] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.! For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

! Turn with me to Mark chapter 8. I'm again reading in verse 31. The Word of God says, And 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.

And He said this plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. But turning and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter and said, Get behind me, Satan, for you're not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.

In calling the crowd to Him with His disciples, He said to them, If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

[1 : 11] For whoever would save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospels will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?

For what can a man give in return for his soul? Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.

And He said to them, Truly I say to you, There are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come in power.

It's the Word of God. The second book in C.S. Lewis' series, The Chronicles of Narnia, is Prince Caspian. It tells the story of Lucy and her three siblings and their return to Narnia.

It's been one year since they went through the wardrobe and explored Narnia, a place of wild-eyed adventures, talking animals, and the home of the great lion Aslan.

[2 : 30] When they arrived, though it had only been one year for the children, it was 1,300 years later in Narnia. As they began to explore, they find the castle now in ruins and old.

They find their weapons, but covered in cobwebs from unused. Even worse, they find that Narnia, the Narnia they love, is ruled by a foreign king.

Prince Caspian, the rightful heir to the throne, is not in power, and is in need of their help. And so Lucy, Peter, Edmund, Susan, along with Trumpkin, begin making their way to him.

After what had become a long journey, and after one of the days of this journey, while the rest of the crew were asleep, Lucy is waked by a voice calling her name in the night.

Several times she hears, Lucy. Lucy. She doesn't immediately know what to do. It isn't the voice. It's not a voice she immediately notices. It's not the voice of her father.

[3 : 35] It's not the voice of her brother. It's a different voice. So she begins to follow this voice out through the forest. And gradually she begins to make her way through the forest and into a grass clearing.

And there, under the moonlight, is the great lion Aslan. It was Aslan who was calling her name. She's thrilled with joy.

She runs to him. She hugs him. She kisses him. She wraps her arms around him. She says, Aslan, Aslan, dear Aslan, at last, I finally see you.

Lewis says, Aslan rolls over to look her in the eyes and to bring her near. He looks, she looks back at him, gazing at his huge, wise face.

And he says, welcome, my child. Lucy, though, is struck by his appearance. Aslan, you're, you're bigger. Aslan says, that is because you are older, little one.

[4 : 41] Are you sure? Is that not because you are older? Aslan says, I am not. But every year you grow, you will find me bigger.

Aslan, as we know, is the character patterned after Christ in the Chronicles of Narnia. And captured in this little scene is a wonderfully important biblical principle. The more you follow Jesus Christ, the bigger he will soon become.

The more you follow him, the bigger he will seem to become. And though the, though the disciples have been following Jesus for two years, though they have, and they finally seen that Jesus is a Christ and the rest of the gospel of Mark, Jesus will become bigger and bigger and bigger in their eyes.

Oddly enough, Jesus will not become bigger by, by getting bigger, but by going lower and lower and lower. After the wonderful confession in our verses last Sunday that Jesus is a Christ, the gospel of Mark turns abruptly and immediately and begins making its way to the cross.

There Jesus will become bigger and bigger, not by going up, but by going down. Not by gaining power, but by embracing weakness. Not by gain, but by loss.

[5 : 55] Not by worldly wisdom, but by foolishness. Not by ascending an earthly throne, but by being nailed to a wooden cross. And when the disciples finally see all that he came to do, they will say, surely this is the Son of God.

This is the Messiah. But as Jesus makes his way to the cross, he calls all those who follow him to follow him to the cross as well.

The cross is for him. The cross is also for you and for me. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said it well, the cross is laid on every Christian.

When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die. If you're going to follow Jesus, you must follow him to the cross.

In a word where we're going, if you're going to follow Jesus, you must follow him to the cross. We're going to unpack this in three points. The first is the king must take up the cross.

[6 : 55] The king must take up the cross. It's kind of obvious from our text, but we left the disciples. If you remember last week after they finally realized that Jesus is a Christ, that Jesus is the Messiah, that he is God's anointed king, that he's the one who's come to rule.

And so they immediately assumed that he's going to make his way to Jerusalem and going to overturn all the foreign rulers that oppress the people of God. That was, in general, the expectation about the Messiah, about Jesus Christ.

That's what they had been expecting for hundreds of years. Listen to this one little song, just written 100 years for the birth of Jesus that captures well what they expected from this king.

This is one of the Psalms of Solomon. He says, O Lord, raise up their king, the son of David, that he may reign over Israel, thy servant. Gird him with strength that he might shatter unrighteous rulers, that he might purge Jerusalem from nations that trample her to destruction.

With a rod of iron he shall break in pieces all their substance. He shall destroy the godless nations with the word of his mouth. He shall gather together a holy people whom he will lead in righteousness.

[8 : 15] Jesus is the Christ. And so they assumed this is what he came to do. But immediately after they confessed that Jesus is the Christ, Jesus begins to teach them that what he came to do is not what they expected.

In a word, he says, the king must take up the cross. Look in verse 31. He said, He began to teach them 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. There's many things we need to see here. We only have a few minutes. First, Jesus calls himself the son of man.

I heard the story of one pastor at a conference preaching a message that was quite atypical, quite unusual. He didn't go up to the podium and immediately open up a text and begin to preach it. He began slowly, though, reciting all the names for Jesus Christ and the scriptures. On and on and on he went. Many, many different names.

[9 : 20] By one count, 198 names for our Lord in scripture, each one telling uniquely of his finished work. And yet, the name son of man is our Lord's favorite.

Almost each of the hundred times this name, the son of man, occurs in scripture. It is used by Jesus speaking of himself. Son of man.

The son of man. First time it appears in this gospel. Son of man is used generally in the Old Testament for son of a man or son of a woman.

So it's not surprising that Jesus uses this title in the midst of talking about his suffering of all that he must endure being God, the son incarnate, becoming a man.

So it's not surprising that he uses that. But this name also refers to something else. I think we have it for you. Daniel 7, 13 and 14. The prophet Daniel says, I saw in the night visions and behold with the clouds of the heavens there came one like the son of man and he came to the ancient of days and was presented before him and to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all people's nations and languages should serve him and his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away is kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

[10:44] You see it right there. I saw in the clouds of heaven they came one like the son of man. Disciples would have known this prophecy well and Jesus is saying I am the one that Daniel prophesied about.

My kingdom is from everlasting. It shall never pass away. At this point you can imagine the disciples beginning to lick their chops. I don't know what he's talking about with this suffering piece but it surely seems this is the son of man.

Move over Caesar. He's about to show everyone who's boss. But then our Lord says the son of man must suffer. Must suffer many things.

Be rejected. Be killed. You can imagine the explosion in the mind. The son of man must suffer. The son of man must die.

Your kingdom is forever. A live dog Solomon says is better than a dead lion. What kind of kingdom is a kingdom surrounded by a dead man?

[11:50] But Jesus knows exactly what they're expecting and is carefully unpacking the perfect plan of God. He says the son of man must suffer. This little word is often translated it's necessary or just simply necessary or must.

It's a little word unveiling the plan and will of God. Often labeled by theologians as divine necessity. What Jesus is saying is that it is necessary for the son of man to suffer in order to fulfill the will of God.

Jesus lives with an acute sense of the will of God. We've seen this all throughout the book of the gospel. Mark, he knows what he came to do. He knows what he didn't come to do and part of that perfect will conceived in eternity past is for him to suffer.

Acts 2 captures this very well. Men of Israel hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst as you yourselves know this Jesus delivered up by Pilate.

You fill in the blank. Delivered up? No. According to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

[13:08] So Jesus lived with an acute sense that he was called to suffer. It's important for us to see Jesus is not reading the room. He's not sizing up the opposition. He's not a coach on the sidelines saying well those linebackers look really really big and so most likely we're going to lose tonight.

Prepare you guys for a big loss. He's not even predicting or prophesying about what will happen. Jesus is unveiling the will of God so that when it happens his disciples will not be surprised.

He must suffer. The will of God that rules over everything all things work according to the counsel of his will has determined that the son of man who comes to save us must suffer.

Each of the words that come after that these verbs emphasize the passiveness of Jesus Christ that he would suffer that he would be rejected that he would be killed indeed that he would rise again.

So he tells look at verse 33 32 he said this plainly. He said it plainly he must suffer but Peter immediately has nothing of it.

[14:18] Jesus begins teaching him how he must suffer Peter begins rebuking him for what he is teaching. One theologian said that well for Peter the indication that the son of man will die is unthinkable for Jesus it is inevitable.

And so Peter says to him he took him aside and he began to rebuke him. You can imagine you will not die you can't die you're the Christ what are you talking about?

The cross is a stumbling block for Jews because they thought the Messiah would reign forever on an earthly throne and so Peter stumbles over the stumbling block and rebukes Jesus.

Now why did Peter not believe in this moment? Peter has all the scriptures that you have or he had all the Old Testament that you had he knew in Isaiah 53 that he would be purest for our transgressions bruised for our iniquities he quotes it in 1 Peter perhaps it's a case of cultural conditioning many studies have come out revealing why we see what we see one study I read about recently was comparing North Americans and Mexicans each person was presented with a different image at the same time in each eye so Mexicans and Americans North Americans were presented with a different image in each eye at the same time they were presented with one eye they were presented a baseball player in the other eye they were presented a bullfighter you can imagine what the study revealed overwhelming majority of North Americans saw the baseball player something familiar to them the overwhelming majority of the Mexicans saw the bullfighter so the study concludes we see because of the culture that conditions us so if that's true is that what's going on here it's Peter just seeing in Jesus what he wants to see in Jesus

I think Peter's rebuke or Jesus' rebuke of Peter reveals that something more is going on look at verse 33 he says get behind me Satan for you're not setting your mind on things of God but on the things of man Peter rebukes him get behind me Satan how the mighty have fallen Peter confesses him that you're the Christ Lord just minutes later Jesus says to him you are Satan Jesus is saying this is more than cultural conditioning the devil has been opposing the work of Jesus all along devil emerges in this little scene wooing Peter over to the devil's work because there's nothing the devil is more opposed to than the cross his great undoing so the king must take up the cross you may know about the name king's cross from London from a London subway made famous by Harry Potter but it's also the name of this series and we see exactly why in this text in many ways the first eight chapters show us that Jesus is the king and the next eight chapters from these verses onward show us that the king must take up the cross point two all who follow the king must take up the cross as well all who follow the king must take up the cross

[17:59] Jesus said if anyone would come after me let him take up his cross and follow me the same word actually is used there when he says get behind me Satan he says if anyone else would come behind me where Satan you belong let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me for the original recipients the meaning of these words was obvious but let's unpack them slowly the first if anyone would come after me he must deny himself you know we often associate self-denial with those who abstain from certain things in order to please God they may abstain from electricity or technology or dancing or alcohol or chocolate or whatever but Jesus is after something more fundamental here than denying yourself certain external things it may be good you may want to celebrate

Lent or something like that but Jesus is after something more than merely external things that you deny yourself because of sin there's an ingrained pecking order inside each of us in which we always want to be on the top there's an ingrained desire to be number one now you may say that's not me nope not me I'm fine being on the sidelines I'm fine doing the grunt work but when you look at a high school picture class picture perhaps a family reunion picture whose face do you go to first whose hair do you analyze or whose lack of hair do you analyze or when you get in an argument a big one one of those world war three type one in ten arguments and you go away steaming think of all the things you wish you had said all the comebacks you should have uttered who wins who wins I've lost a lot of arguments but never one in my head

I want to be first I want others to put me first I want my problems to be first for everyone I want to be the center of the universe and I hate to break this to you so do you and in general modern psychology does you no help when it comes to understanding and turning from this innate self absorption Martin Luther famously said sin curves us in on ourselves and tries to make us the center of everything John Calvin says there is no one who in his heart of hearts does not imagine he deserves to outrank everyone else now that's a good one there's no one who in his heart of hearts does not imagine he deserves to outrank everyone else thus each person in his own way fondly nurses an entire kingdom kingdom in his heart that's what Jesus is getting at each person nurses an entire kingdom

Jesus said before you can follow me you must push yourself off the throne Jesus warning there's there's a way of trying to follow Jesus Christ in which you try to remain number one in which it's really all about you it's all about your applause all about your acclaim all about your causes all about your decision all about your money there's a way of following Jesus Christ trying to baptize all of the things that this innate desire that's really all about you honestly because of this ingrained

desire we're all like this we want to say Jesus you must increase but can I increase too can you throw me a bone you know can you raise my level too and Jesus says before you can follow me you must deny yourself you must turn away from saying

I must increase you must turn away from advancing your kingdom you must lay down the weapons of your warfare then he says if anyone would come after me let him take up his cross death by crucifixion was sadly a common way of execution in the Roman Empire in 71 BC one Roman general crucified 6,000 of his enemies along the European way coming out of Rome the road can you imagine 6,000 crosses that's if there's a cross every foot that's over a mile there's no way a cross is on every foot maybe every five feet five miles men hanging on crosses experiencing the most painful shameful and repulsive way of execution the human mind has ever invented but the spectacle of crucifixion did not begin when the criminal was hung on the wooden beam the spectacle of crucifixion began when the criminal began carrying his own cross beam to the place of his death if you saw a man carrying a cross beam in the first century he was not a carpenter lending a hand he was a man on the way to his death on the way to execution and

[23 : 47] Jesus is saying that's the way I want my disciples to look that's the way I want my disciples to look like men walking to their execution you know among Christians you know it's I mean we have this little phrase I just got to take up my cross you know we may talk about these petty annoyances of life that we have to deal with an irritable husband an overbearing mother-in-law an ingrown toenail a global pandemic these little irritations that we have to deal with and we say we all have our crosses to bear we gotta just press through these hard things that's what he's talking about but that would have been unthinkable for the disciples D.A. Carson says it like this to take up your cross does not mean to move forward with courage to fight the fact that you lost your spouse lost your job or your spouse to take up your cross does not mean to move forward with courage despite the fact that you lost your job or your spouse it means you're under the sentence of death you're taking the horizontal cross member horizontal cross member on your way to the place of your execution you've abandoned all hope of life in this world and then

Jesus says and only then are you ready are we ready to follow him take up your cross doesn't mean you're persevering joyfully through something difficult take up your cross means you've died to yourself you've abandoned everything else and turned in complete allegiance to Jesus Christ no matter what it costs for some taking up the cross demonstrating full of allegiance to Jesus Christ will mean murder many of the apostles as you know were murdered their allegiance to Christ cost them their life many who received this gospel in Rome in 8065 or so were being martyred you likely remember in 8064 just after this gospel was written things went from bad to worse a disastrous fire swept Rome in July of that year and the emperor Nero began to blame Christians and he began to persecute them because of this blame this this this indictment that they started this fire he watched them be dismembered by dogs he nailed them to crosses he set them on fire to serve as lamps in the night and these words would have steeled their veins for when the henchmen came no surprise it's what's predicted it's what's promised many are still being martyred throughout the world including what we hear

Christians in Afghanistan right now so for some it will mean martyrdom intense persecution for all of us it means death to self Jesus begins you must deny yourself but then he adds when he's saying take up your cross you must die to yourself taking up the cross is not about denying yourself chocolates or cakes or cigarettes or cocktails taking up the cross is about living like you no longer live there's there's an old movie from the mid 90s that I haven't seen but the title alone captivates me it's called dead man walking it's about a man on death row for murder and though he tries to deny the crimes he's committed the movie goes step by step as he moves from receiving the sentence of death to receiving the execution of death the movie begins on death row and ends at lethal injection he was throughout this whole movie a dead man walking the sentence had come down this guy was just he had no other name to identify himself in so many ways he was just a dead man walking and that's what

Christians should be like we to be dead men walking so here's the great takeaway for you great application play dead play dead as best as you can be a dead man or a dead woman walking or moving about or going to work or doing the dishes what's that mean what I mean by that you no longer live you don't do what you want you don't do what you like you don't do what you desire to do you don't do what you feel like doing you are a dead man if you're following Jesus Christ you know I would commend to you something I do very often one of the ways I preach the gospel myself is I try

to imagine I go to the funeral of the old Walt Alexander every morning I go there I take up Galatians 2:20 and I preach to myself I've been crucified with Christ therefore I no longer live I've been crucified therefore I no longer live the things

I live for success approval 401k any stupid thing like that I'm not living for those things anymore I no longer live the life I live now live by faith in the son of God who loved me and gave himself so visit your grave so it means you don't live for all those things it means the only thing that matters is following Jesus and doing what pleases him that's what Jesus is getting at Matthew 10:38 whoever does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me he's not worthy I mean you know Jesus this is harsh this is hard this is the only way to live this is the life of absolute joy because you no longer matter I mean imagine if we adopted this mindset it would transform our home and marriages John Stott says Christian homes in general and Christian marriages in particular would be a lot more stable and a lot more satisfying if they were marked by the cross

[30:10] Christian homes more stable a lot more satisfying if they were not marked by chasing success if they were not marked by selfish ambition if they were not marked by selfishness or any of these things but if they were marked by self denial by the cross imagine in a culture where we're constantly told to monitor what we need what we desire what we want what if our homes were about giving ourselves away imagine if husbands freely and gave themselves away in love and sacrifice and care imagine if wives freely and repeatedly gave themselves away in support and respect and following imagine if there were no self referential thoughts how does this make me look is this what I want to do right now any of those things they were all gone it would be such a stable and satisfying place no shoes to step on if we adopted!

this mindset transform our work as well imagine if you were out of the equation at work if work was no longer where you were obsessed with jockeying for the position you want if selfish ambition was not there imagine if work was no longer something you chased after to buy the things to let others know you made it imagine if work was no longer where you look for approval or affirmation imagine if work was just a place where a dead man was coming to serve you okay taking out the trash absolutely you okay taking care of these things absolutely my desire is to glorify Christ tell you one thing you'd be a lot more fun to work with as would I that's what he's getting at dead men walking that's where I want to be so we need to be point three all who take up the king's cross will be welcomed into his kingdom all who take up the king's cross will be welcomed into his kingdom finally

Jesus assures his disciples that the kingdom will come in power and all who follow him will be welcomed into the kingdom after the command to deny yourself take up your cross and follow me Jesus assures his disciples that all who follow him will be handsomely rewarded the structure is very clear and you probably see that in the text after the command there are four reasons why taking up the cross is gain doesn't look like gain each of the four sentences in 35 to 38 begin with four which means because or since unpacking reasons and these cluster verses hangs on the word life or soul the same word is used four times in this passage either translated life referring to physical life or translated soul to refer to spiritual life or eternal life and we could spend weeks on these sentences drawing out implications and

I only have a few minutes a couple things I want to say Jesus is saying in a word I'm breaking out in three sentences he says whoever denies Christ in order to save his physical life will lose eternal life whoever denies Christ in order to save his physical life will lose eternal life that's what he's saying in verse 35 whoever would save his life will lose it but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospels will find it whoever tries to save his physical life will lose his eternal life life whoever loses his physical life for my sake and the gospel will save his eternal life Jesus saying denying me in order to save your physical life will cause you to lose eternal life you cannot save your physical life without losing your soul your eternal life you can't gain eternal life without dying in this way and now we might want to say wait wait wait wait

I thought you said the gospel was by grace you have been saved not by works isn't this adding to the work of the gospel my acceptance before God is based on whether I deny or do not deny Jesus Christ and obviously we do believe the gospel is you're saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ not a work of your own not something you can do when trouble comes and persecution comes the test of whether your faith is genuine or fake will be whether you deny him or not you know we tend to believe that the core of our faith is between us and God it's private it's personal it's our business it's none your business I mean this is my thing I mean we live in a country where individual liberty

the freedom of religion is woven into how we think and so we think this is just individual this is just who I am and if I just keep it personal keep it between me and God that's all that matters but [35 : 28] Jesus is saying personal faith overflows in public witness now it doesn't mean you got to paint Jesus saves on your van but it does mean you must! and deny your identification with him come the stakes are high Christianity is not a silly simple religion Neil Postman in his famous book Stop Amusing Ourselves to Death says I believe I am not mistaken in saying that Christianity is demanding and serious religion when it is delivered as easy and amusing it is another kind of religion altogether what we see in hard times the vast majority of Christians are only Christians in name whoever denies

Christ or saves his physical life will lose eternal life whoever gains the whole world but loses eternal life loses everything that's the logic of verse 36 and 37 for what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul for what can a man give in return for his soul these questions are so searching they're so wonderful was it profit a man to gain the world and forfeit his soul what can a man give in return for his soul the idea I think behind these verses if you deny Christ in order to save your physical life and go on to secure great wealth!

would you gain anything if you lost eternal life no you would actually gain nothing why wouldn't your great wealth help wouldn't it help you no because eternal life cannot be bought what's the price of eternal life there is none except the blood of Jesus Christ and so you will lose your great wealth and your eternal life and these verses are just wonderful you know they they alert us to what's true these verses are like smelling salts to a bloody boxer I mean they awaken him what looks like gain is not gain what looks like loss is not loss because whoever gains the whole world but loses eternal life loses everything but why you know all this seems so harsh this seems so cruel and we see the reason in this last sentence in verse 38 for whoever denies

Christ in order to save his physical life will be denied entrance into the kingdom verse 38 whoever is ashamed of me and of my words and this adulterous and sinful generation of him will the son of man also be ashamed when he comes with the glory of his father with the heavenly angels Jesus concludes this warning in a most haunting way the son of man who came to suffer is the son of man who will stand in judgment we must all appear second Corinthians five before the judgment seat of Christ Jesus says whoever is ashamed of me whoever hears my words and follows me but denies me I will be ashamed of him as well when I come into the glory of the father all who deny him will receive and experience the eternal torment but wonderfully the reverse is true

I trust you see that laced through these negative aspects whoever loses his physical life will gain eternal life there are already in heaven a room set aside for those martyrs in the faith that's what we see in revelation and they're waiting for the full number to come in maybe some from Afghanistan right now maybe some from this country in some time so whoever loses his physical life for the cause of Jesus Christ will gain eternal life whoever loses the world turning his back on this world gain will gain!

[39 : 52] the life to come who is ever not ashamed of Jesus Christ he will not be ashamed of him in the end now let's wrestle with this this week why does Jesus say he will not be ashamed I mean that I will not be ashamed of you that hardly feels like a warm welcome I am not ashamed to have you in my house there's something very important going on in an honor and shame culture like that of the first century the desire to gain honor and avoid shame shape nearly every decision they say that no one has more friends than someone with a truck and it's similar in an honor and shame culture in honor and shame culture you're always trying to get around those who will help you gain honor and recognition you're always jockeying for position for the man with the truck you get next to him work with him hang with him you're always avoiding those though who might bring you shame and discredit but

Jesus turns this upside down he says all who deny him because they care too much about their honor and the way they appear for others to be all those who do not deny him though they be guilty and vile though they have sinned against him countless times in word thought and deed though their faces may still be covered with shame for the sins they have done he will not be ashamed of them will not be ashamed to call them brothers and sisters he will welcome them into his kingdom enter into my joy and enter into great reward here we see the upside down world of the gospel the way up is down the way of foolishness is wisdom the way of loss is gain the way of worldly shame is rejoicing the way of death is life the idea you Jesus will not be your debtor you follow him you take up your life you die you will gain!

reward all you lose and follow him will a year or so ago I watched the movie The Hidden Life with Kim I don't know if I recommend the movie not because of anything questionable! but because Kim found it so slow that she slept right through it! I watched it to the end though it told the true story of a young Christian man from Austria who chose the guillotine that is death rather than fight with Nazi Germany have you ever wondered why stories like this are so uncommon because most so-called Christians in Germany bowed the knee to Hitler anyway he served briefly in 1940 before being discharged to care for his farm he was called out three years later this true story but he refused he experienced some sort of religious awakening and he said it was impossible for him to be a Christian and a national socialist possibly be a Christian and be associated with Nazi Germany he was arrested time and again they said to him all you have to do is sign up and you will be free he kept telling himself

I am free I'm already free he wrote his wife from prison I write to you with bound hands but bound hands are better than a bound will giving myself over he walked straight to death knowing that he was leaving his wife and children behind and knowing that his death would not stop the Nazi war machine even worse his decision in his death was looked on as foolishness!

[44 : 02] by all his friends as stupidity and made life for his family now fatherless more difficult but this man and everyone else who's not ashamed to stand for Jesus Christ will be welcomed into his kingdom if you're going to follow Jesus follow him all the way to the cross that's where all this is going we might be dead men walking into new life more and more and more and more let us pray father in heaven we thank you for the privilege of gathering to consider this call Lord we praise you and worship you that we have your word that locates us and makes sense of so many things that are challenging in this world Lord we long to be those who take up our cross and follow you that our lives would be more and more cruciform dead to our own flesh and our own passions our own desires and alive more and more to you to your purposes to the spirit to the word and the cause of Christ we pray for it awaken us there's so much white noise right now pray through all that you would call us out to follow you and to follow your steps to the cross for there we'll find our salvation but also our glory and our great reward we might become like you not having a righteousness of our own that comes from the law but the righteousness that comes by faith that by any means possible we might attain the resurrection of the dead and receive our citizenship! in heaven praise you and worship you amen you have been listening to a message given by walt a leed pastor of trinity grace church in a th c for more information about trinity grace please visit us at