

# Don't Forsake the 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](http://TrinityGraceAthens.com).

! Apostle Paul writes, brothers, join in imitating me and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.

For many of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears walk as enemies of the cross of Christ.

Their end is destruction, their God is their belly, and they glory in their shame with minds set on earthly things.

Verse 20, but our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body.

[ 1 : 14 ] By the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself. That is the Word of God, the authoritative Word of God.

You know, we sing that song just a moment ago, show us Christ, the preaching of your Word. Not because of any preacher that stands up to preach, but because of opening this Word, there's power.

The church has stood on that for generations, and so we trust He will bring power this morning. As we unpack these verses. You know, in the 1960s, a British newspaper told the story of a memorable account of a London murder trial.

The murder took place in a Chinese restaurant, and one of the restaurant's waiters was a key witness for the defense, for the prosecution.

The prosecution built its case, and then called this Chinese waiter to testify. If you know anything about court cases like this, then the building up to that moment, that's the climax of the trial, right?

[ 2 : 31 ] So the prosecutor asked the waiter if he was able to identify in the room the man or the person who committed the murder, the man on trial. Now, his response stunned the courtroom.

He said he was unable to identify the man. Now, continually pressed by—you can just understand this prosecutor is a little flabbergasted by all this.

Continually pressed by the prosecutor, he admitted that he indeed had been in the restaurant that night. He admitted that he had indeed been working that night. He even admitted that he had seen the murder at close quarters, but he eventually responded, I'm very sorry.

I cannot identify the man. You see, all you Englishmen look alike. I can't tell you apart.

Now, you can probably imagine yourself being in a Beijing restaurant and being the witness of a murder and being put on the stand to identify a Chinese man. You say, man, all you Chinese men look alike.

[ 3 : 40 ] Because there are so many similarities. In a similar way this morning, this text trying to drive something home for us, that all Christians are to look alike. Not because we physically look the same or are the same nationality.

And not because we dress the same or even make the same choices with our time and with our money. And not because our cars have that fish on the back, you know, that identifies us as a Christian or our chest of drawers has plenty of old Christian t-shirts.

All Christians are to look the same because they're following Christ. All throughout this letter, Paul's been calling the Philippians and us to have the mind of Christ, to get low.

That's what he's been saying again and again. To humble ourselves, to endure suffering, to consider others more significant than ourselves, and to do nothing out of selfish ambition or rivalry.

And now, in these final verses of the body of the letter, Paul's urging is more pointed. The reason we're to do all these things is because we're to walk in the way of the cross.

[ 4 : 47 ] All Christians are to look the same because they walk in the way of the cross. Now, if we know anything about Christianity, this counsel is not surprising. Jesus himself said, if anyone would come after me, you probably know the end of the verse, He must take up his cross daily and follow me.

In the first century, if you saw a man carrying a cross, you would immediately recognize him as a convicted prisoner walking to his death. And so, too, these verses call us, as it were, to step into that path.

The cross is laid on every Christian.

The cross is laid on every Christian. When Christ calls man, this is the famous sentence.

He bids him, come and die. Come and die. All who follow Christ are to look this way. They're walking in the way of the cross.

[ 5 : 59 ] They're denying themselves. They're crucifying. They're crucifying. You know, that word that we use, the crux of the matter. They're crucifying the passions of the flesh and desires.

So, in a word, where we're going this morning is, follow Christ, and at all costs, do not forsake the way of the cross. Follow Christ, and at all costs, do not forsake the way of the cross.

Let's break this out in three points. First point is, following Christ means following others. Following Christ means following others. You know, all of us naturally follow.

All of us naturally copy and imitate those around us. When I was young, I used to mock. I used to mock people who so obviously did this. You know, I'd call the kids who wore skater shoes that didn't skate, posers.

And when I was a kid and you're 13, there was nothing worse than being called a poser. You didn't want to get found out. Well, all of us are the same way. We have this uncanny ability to copy and imitate those around us.

[ 7 : 07 ] Sometimes it's conscious, like those posers went to the store. They went to Journeys, and they bought those airwalks, even though they didn't know anything about skateboarding. And I never did skate, by the way. But I didn't wear the shoes either.

But, you know, sometimes our following, sometimes our imitation is conscious and deliberate. But sometimes it's unconscious. We follow people in ways that we don't even realize.

It's why surfers use the same dude language. It's why high schoolers got to have the same shoes and the same hairdo as those around them. It's why children act like their parents without even trying.

They start talking like them, start praying like them, start doing things like them. But it's why fads rush in and spread everywhere and then quickly disappear, and the next thing comes. You know, you remember jam pants. They came and went.

Pumps, they came and went. Mom jeans came and went. Now they're back. I wish they would go again. But as Christians, we're to follow others intentionally.

[ 8 : 05 ] So we all do it kind of naturally, but we're to follow others intentionally. This is what Paul is saying in verse 17. Look at me. Join in imitating me.

All throughout this letter, he's been saying things similar to me, similar to this. He's saying, walk like me, be like me. But here he gets very specific. Imitate me. He says this several places in 1 Corinthians.

We see this. I urge you then, be imitators of me. He says in chapter 11, be imitators of me as I am of Christ. Now that's implied every time he says it.

Be imitators of me. I'm following Christ. Imitate me. Act like me. I mean, this word literally means watch my life, watch the way I live, and mimic it.

You know, a mime that would mime things, or maybe a mocking bird that might just follow what you're doing. It's to mimic, to consider my way of life, and to mimic it, to trace it, and follow the way it is.

[ 9 : 10 ] And this is not just Paul. In the Christian life, we're to intentionally follow and imitate not only Christ, but the imperfect godly examples of the others around us. You know, it's not merely a good idea.

Imitation throughout history has been seen to be vital to learning. Listen to this quote from a 19th century author who says, example is one of the most potent, powerful instructors, though it teaches

without a tongue.

It's an instructor, but it teaches without a tongue. It's the practical school of mankind, working by action, which is always more forceful than words.

Mark Twain said, he who carries a cat by the tail learns something he can learn in no other way. Now, you think about that for a moment. I could talk to you all day about carrying a cat by his tail. I could be careful. I could be persuasive. But you would not truly learn how to carry a cat by his tail unless you watch me carry this cat, which I cannot do, by his tail, and then did it for yourself.

[10:21] You see what I'm saying? Again, you know, example, watching is the deepest form of learning. So, but it's also, imitation is foundational to the church's mission.

You know, when Jesus says, imitate me, Paul says, imitate me, and others are put forward as examples to follow. Why? Because the gospel and the way of walking out the Christian life is passed down, not just through teaching, but through example, through the living faith of specific people in specific places and through the culture that they create.

Does that make sense? I mean, you're probably in the faith because someone didn't merely say something to you. They lived it before you. It's the most forceful, forcible form of learning.

So, who and what are we to imitate? Here's the key. The rest of verse 17, he says, brothers, join and imitate me and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. Keep your eyes on them. This word example is hugely important. It's translated in numerous ways, pattern, mold, model. It comes from a word that means to strike or to beat.

[11:32] So, the idea is that this word is trying to describe the impression left by a beating or left by a striking or something like that. It's what happens when something is struck or beaten or molded.

It takes a certain shape or form. Does that make sense? It becomes a mold. It becomes a model. In fact, it's the same word, same Greek word used in 1 Timothy 4.12, which Taylor just referenced.

Set for the believers. It's an example in speech conduct and all these ways. A mold. Like, fall into the mold. You know, the idea is like a potter. Another thing I don't know anything about, but if you were throwing a cup or a mug, you'd form one to figure out exactly how you want to do it.

You know, you would mass produce 20 at a time. You would form a model, a mold that you would then pattern all the other pieces after.

So, the idea is that Christianity takes a certain mold. Christianity takes a certain pattern. Christianity takes a certain distinct way of life. When Christ comes into life, it comes into a life.

[12:53] He leaves marks, and if the marks aren't there, it's because He's not there. That's what it's saying. So, what is this mold? What is this pattern? The mold is walking in the way of the cross.

Now, I'll defend that. Walking in the way of the cross. Paul's already set four examples for us. You remember that. He said, follow Timothy, who has a genuine concern for others. He said, follow Epaphroditus, who made great sacrifice for you.

He risked his life. And now he says, follow me. You remember what he said? He said, to me, to live is Christ, to die is gain. He says, whatever gain I had, I count as loss. Follow me. I've counted everything as loss.

I've given up everything to him. The idea is, do you see what he's saying? He's saying, you should follow those who walk in the way of the cross. They're not grasping for gain. They're emptying their lives.

That's what it means. To step into the line of those who follow Jesus Christ to the cross is not one that's lived for this earthly gain. Sometimes we almost joke with that phrase.

[13:55] I just got to take up my cross. That's just my cross to bear. We can use it for annoying things in our life, you know, like an aggravating sister-in-law or a nagging boss or an ingrown toenail.

Maybe, maybe not. D.A. Carson helps clarify this for us. Look at this quote. To take up your cross does not mean to move forward with courage despite the fact that you have lost your job or your spouse.

That's a serious sentence. He says it means that you're under the sentence of death. It means that you're taking up the horizontal cross member on your way to the place of crucifixion.

It means you've abandoned all hope of life in this world, and then, Jesus says, and only then are we ready to follow him. That's the mold.

That's the model. Not those who are striving to make a name for themselves and fighting to be great in this life. We're to follow those who've lost all hope and are willing to get low.

[ 15 : 12 ] We follow those who, when we get a little bit closer, we can see the beam. We can see the cross on their shoulders.

When we ask a few more questions, we can see the agony. We follow those who, when we get a little bit closer, they have the familiar marks.

You remember in Acts 4, when people were interacting with Peter, they said, the people around him said, he's one who's been with Jesus.

And I can tell by the way he lives. Well, that's what we see when we get a little bit closer from someone who's been with Jesus. We see the familiar aches. We see the lines.

I'm 38. I was laughing at the more lines that are on my forehead. It seems to grow every year. We see those wrinkles. You know, we see familiar anxieties.

[ 16 : 20 ] We see familiar self-denial and sacrifice. And those who follow Christ have the same marks. If we don't see them, don't follow them. Follow Christ, all costs. Don't forsake the way of the cross.

It's life or death. Point two, following the wrong people ends disastrously. Following the wrong people ends disastrously. If following Christ means following those who walk in the way of the cross, then following Christ means avoiding those who don't.

That's kind of what he's saying. The text is sharp. He's saying keep your eyes out. He literally says that in verse 17. Keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.

But quite obviously that means keep your eyes out for those who don't and avoid them. Look at verse 18 and 19. He says, For many of whom I have often told you now tell you with tears walk as enemies of the cross.

Their end is destruction. Their God is their belly. They glory in their shame with minds set on earthly things. Now we don't know who these people are. Paul doesn't give us enough information right here.

[ 17 : 33 ] You know, Paul's dealt with several different opponents that I pointed out as we've gone along in chapter 1 and earlier in chapter 3. But we don't know exactly who these people are.

They are either people who add works to the cross and undo its power. So they're legalists. They're what we talked about at the beginning of chapter 3. Or they are those who subtract self-denial from the way of the cross and empty it of its power.

Does that make sense? They're either those who add to it or those who subtract self-denial from it. Either way, they're many. That's what he says right there. For many, many walk as enemies of the cross.

There are many in Paul's day. How much more are there many now? And Paul's pushing us to look back at his example and to see how they differ.

So there's a couple things we can identify. Paul says there's a couple things we can identify these enemies by. One is they walk as enemies of the cross. And that sounds like I'm just saying the same thing over again.

[ 18 : 37 ] But the focus is on the way they walk. The focus is on that pattern, that mold. He's pushing us back to look at his example and then to look at the example they set.

Are they fallen into the mold? Does that make sense? Are they fallen into the line? Are they fallen into the line of what Christ set before us? Are they different? How do they walk? Walking is the most basic human movement.

And Paul is using it as a metaphor for all of life. So how you walk is meant to equate to or equal to how you live. For your character, for your behavior, for the decisions you make, for the basic way you plod through life.

That's what he's saying. So watch the way they walk. He says you can identify the wrong people because of the way they live, the way they walk, and the fruit they bear. And you can identify them because they're enemies of the cross.

The idea here is the cross is the center of Christianity. Without the cross, there is no Christianity. Now quite obviously, this means there's no Christianity without the death of Jesus on the cross on our behalf.

[ 19 : 45 ] But Paul's also saying there's no Christianity without the followers of Christ walking in the way of the cross. Remember, he said, If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself. So anybody that takes self-denial out of the message of the gospel, he's not preaching the gospel.

Remember, he said, Jesus said, A servant's not above his master. Remember, Luke said, Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. You see, followers of Christ follow Christ down the way of the cross.

A crossless Christianity is no Christianity at all. And so when we hear a new teaching, we should ask, What do they do with the cross?

What place does the cross have in their theology? When we hear somebody talk about marriage, and finding the right spouse, and how to deal with the struggles of marriage, what role does the cross play?

Does this teaching give us a free path to divorce when things aren't going well? Which I'm not, I mean, not all divorces are created equal.

[ 20 : 59 ] I don't want you to misunderstand me there. But does the teaching give room for the cross? Does it give room for enduring a difficult marriage for Christ?

What about counsel on dating, or career, contentment, or anything? Where does the cross fit in, is what Paul is saying.

If it doesn't fit in, it's not Christianity. Second, they live for self-fulfillment. Look at verse 19. This is pretty obvious from the way he writes, Their God is their belly.

Now this verse is very terse and cutting. I mean, we include is in these different statements, but they're not there in the language. It's saying, they're in destruction. They're God, belly.

They glory, shame. Instead of following the way of the cross, they're focused on fulfilling themselves. Their God is their belly. Now what's that mean?

[ 21 : 58 ] It just means that what rules them are their appetites. What controls them are their cravings. They're not controlled by the Spirit of Christ, as we talked about in verse 3.

They're controlled by their cravings. It reminds me of a toddler in my house after nap time, and it's snack time now. You stand in the way of that snack, and they get hangry, which is a perfect word for this odd thing that happens to them when they don't get their snack as fast.

But the same thing is going on. They can't see past their cravings, and therefore enemies of the cross. You know, along these lines, one of the most common enemies of the cross right now is the so-called prosperity gospel.

Prosperity preachers teach that success and wealth come from believing in Jesus Christ. They say, believe this message, and trouble won't come to your house. Believe this message, and you'll get rich.

Believe this message, and you'll, quote, prosper in every way. That's a direct quote from someone's website yesterday. And it's raking in literally millions among the poor people of this country and the poorer nations of the world.

[ 23 : 11 ] But it's not the gospel. Christ did not die so that we would have an easy life. Christ died to deliver us from the wrath of God. Christ did not die to make us prosper in every way.

And this context, what's hard for us to get our minds around is that the gospel, really, what the gospel is, says believe this message, and you'll have an unshakable inheritance, but you may lose everything else.

I can't promise anything. I can promise eternal life, but I can't promise anything else. Perhaps a more subtle enemy is the gospel of self-fulfillment.

Focuses on how we feel. Focuses on our needs, our desires, our wants. It focuses on us. It's a gospel message that's really all about us. It says, come to Jesus if you're empty, and he'll fill you.

Come to Jesus if you feel depressed, and he'll make you happy. Come to Jesus if you want purpose for your life, and he'll give you purpose. It's tricky because Jesus does. He did say, I came to give life and give life abundantly and all these things, but many times he does not.

[ 24 : 29 ] Some of the great saints of our Bible, they didn't have purpose. Are you kidding me? They hated their calling. Jeremiah, Jeremiah, I got this thing burning in my chest, and everybody hates me because of it.

You think he loved that? That, you know, it's tricky. They advertise the gospel according to subjective personal benefits. Jesus did not say to us, follow me, and I'll make you a better you. He said, follow me, and I'll deliver you from the wrath of God, and I'll make you more like me, and I'll call you to deny yourself. We got to watch out. Those enemies still walk around, and they're focused on this world.

You know, verse 19, the last clause there, with mind set on earthly things. This flows naturally from the previous line. The only gain that matters to these guys is the gain, earthly gain, and this means their minds are actually focused on attaining earthly things, but the idea, though, is more than that. It's the idea that they can't get their mind to see anything else. Their mind is locked in this world. They're always striving and grasping.

[ 25 : 46 ] They cannot look to another world for ultimate security and peace. You don't stand up here like Janelle and say what she said if your mind is focused on this world. There must be another world that outshines and outstrips all the joys of this one, and that's what's going on, and their end is disastrous.

The opening thing right there in verse 19, their end is destruction. Each of these statements bite with irony. The idea is that they describe the way these enemies of the cross live, but they also unveil the disaster that they will inevitably experience.

Their end is destruction, and the outcome of their way of life can only lead to one place. Their end, what he's talking about there is just the outcome, where their life has gone the whole way.

It's only going one way. It's only going to one place, and so whether they perceive it or not, the place of disaster and destruction is all they've ever pursued. If you've only lived for this life, and that's the only thing you live for in the end, and when this world ends and is destroyed, so too are they.

It's a hard word. That's why Paul says, I say it with tears. It's a hard word. Their end is destruction.

[ 27 : 03 ] They get what they pursued the whole day long. It tells us that no one goes to hell who didn't choose it.

C.S. Lewis says it like this. There are only two kinds of people in the world. There are only two kinds of people in the end. Those who say to God, Thy will be done, and those to whom God says in the end, Thy will be done.

All that are in hell, choose it. It's a hard word. He says with tears, it's a hard word that we need to hear.

If anybody comes into this meeting this morning and feels as if they are trapped in this world's standards of gain and grasping, and they don't know if they can see beyond it, I want to present to you the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I can't promise you a happy, healthy life with a happy, healthy marriage, but I can promise you eternity if you trust in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. The gospel says that Christ died, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, that he might bridge the gap, so to speak, because we could never approach God without fear because of our sin, all the ways we had strayed from him, but Christ forgave us for our sins if we trust in him and promise his eternity with him.

[ 28 : 43 ] That's the truth of the gospel. I invite you to receive it. It's the only way to escape this destruction that will come. And the implication of all this, you know, I'm talking about following others, following the right, wrong people ends disastrously.

The implication is all who follow these guys go there with them. All who follow these guys go there with them. That's what Paul's saying. Paul's warning us to resist.

So who do we follow? I found it humorous yesterday to think that word follow. Jesus said so many times.

You know, I went over this week with my kids. Follow me. First words he said to people that don't know him. Follow me to Peter and Andrew. The same word we use when we follow someone on social media.

Now, I'll save my Facebook and Instagram speech for another time, but who do you follow? Take inventory. Now, nobody likes being unfriended, and so we don't have to get into all that.

[ 29 : 53 ] But do the people you follow leave you longing for this world or the next? Do they leave you measuring your life to this world's values or the next?

If they don't, unfollow. I do this every little while. That's why some of you got dropped. No, I'm just kidding.

The people you follow point you to security in this world or the next. Oh, man, it just comes in so quickly, and we start to imitate. Follow the right people.

Point three, following the right people ends gloriously. Now, after following the right people ends gloriously, like, now, after all that, we might expect Paul to say, you know, he's so focused on

disaster, so intense.

You know, we might expect him to say, following the right people and following the way of the cross, because in the end, it's just better. It's just, you know, blue skies and sunny days. You know, it's just better.

[ 30 : 58 ] And he could say that heaven will be better than the world's greatest gain. Heaven will not be a boring place where we float around on a cloud and play a harp. It will be filled with wonder, with adventure, with freedom, contentment, and so much joy.

But he doesn't say that. But what he says is so helpful, and perhaps better in this context. Look in verse 20, he says, but our citizenship is in heaven.

Our citizenship is in heaven. Now, he said things similar to this throughout the letter for those who are in Christ and in Philippi. Remember, they're dual citizens.

They're already citizens of heaven. They're to live worthy as citizens of the gospel. And I've said before several times that Philippi was a city ruled by Rome. And so it was as if it was on the Italian peninsula.

So what he's saying is how much more, therefore, to be a citizen of heaven. But here the emphasis is even better. What he's saying is that we have already gained heaven. So their end is destruction.

[ 32 : 04 ] They don't know it. That's where they're going. He's saying we have already gained heaven. We are already enrolled there. Our names are recorded and registered there.

Our citizenship papers are in. He's saying this to us so that we can say this with all assurance.

When the role is called of yonder, when the role is called of yonder, praise the Lord, when the role is called of yonder, I will be there.

You will be there. If you trust in Jesus Christ for the beginning of your sin, what he's saying is that your citizenship, what makes you who you are and who you will be is already there in heaven.

And so we follow Christ not to gain the other side. We follow Christ because we've gained it. The outcome of my life, the outcome of your life, is not hanging in the balance.

Oh, that is so amazing, so freeing. It's not up to how well we follow. It's not up to how much money we make or what we do with our lives or what we do with our ambitions or any of these things.

[ 33 : 12 ] It's not up to us and the way we're walking. We follow Christ because we've already gained it all. And so we follow him because we want to know him. If he did this, if he said, I go to prepare a place for you, we want to know him when we get there.

We follow Christ because we want to get low like him. We want to walk in his footsteps. We want to be like him. Remember it says his face was set like flint for Jerusalem.

We want to be set like flint for the cross. That just means we want to walk with determination in these short little days we have. The lie is that this life is forever.

That's the lie. This life's a mist. It's a breath. We want to live for him in the hard places so that everyone sees that our gain is not here.

And he continues. I just love this. It just blows me away. He continues, From heaven we await a Savior. The Lord Jesus Christ, there'll be no more puny presidents and stand in kings to cloud our view.

[ 34 : 27 ] Our Savior is coming. The King of kings is coming. The Lord of lords is coming. The one before whom every knee will bow and every tongue will confess is coming. We're not waiting on a better job.

We're not waiting on a better house. We're not waiting on a better car. We're not waiting on better relationships. We're not waiting on a better marriage. We're not waiting on marriage. We're waiting on a king. He's coming.

He said he'll come. You won't miss it. I'll come in the same way I came before the clouds and all creation might be drawn up in the worship. He's coming.

Is that what we're waiting on? He says I'll transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body. I'll transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body.

All who refuse to follow the way of the cross will become like those they follow. But all who follow the way of the cross will ultimately become like Jesus Christ. after all the boasting and all this world and its boasting and going on is destroyed and everything is brought into subjection to Jesus Christ.

[ 35 : 32 ] All who follow the way of the cross will be transformed. We'll get a new body. Maybe a six pack. Maybe the ability to walk through walls.

I don't know. I mean he walked through walls. Remember he entered that prayer room through the other door. We'll see him. We'll be like him.

Right now we behold Jesus with the eyes of faith but soon faith will give way to sight. Right now we're in the age of the ear but soon we'll be in the age of the eye. There'll be no more sermons being preached except for the sermon from the King of Kings.

And you know if we're doing this right if we're walking in the way of the cross heaven won't feel like a nice upgrade like going from coach to first class or going from the ground floor to the penthouse. Heaven will feel like release from a prison. Now famous prisoner of war Hal Kushner spent five and a half years in prison by the Viet Cong in the Vietnam War.

[ 36 : 55 ] Life in prison was brutal. Wish I could tell you his full story. Being shot down from a helicopter trying to jump out and the helicopter spinning out of control blowing up such that the guns inside were shooting down at him and his back was riddled with bullets as he fell.

But in God's kindness after being in prison for five and a half years he was released. I want you to hear these words of what it felt like. He was moved to the Gai Lam Airport in Hanoi which is just the capital of North Vietnam.

I only know this because my wife's Vietnamese. He said, I quote, they called out names and I walked into the sunlight.

The first thing I saw was a C-141 star lifter with an American flag emblazoned on the tail. I was overwhelmed. I almost fainted.

I can't describe the deep emotion I felt when I saw that flag after five and a half years. He continues, there was a table with Vietnamese and American authorities on one side and there was an Air Force Brigadier General in a Class A uniform.

[ 38 : 20 ] He looked magnificent. I looked at him and he had a thickness that we didn't have. He had on a garrison cap and his hair was plumped moist and our hair was like straw and I went out and I saluted him which is a courtesy that had been denied me for five and a half years and he saluted me.

He shook hands with me and hugged me. He actually hugged me, I quote. and he said, welcome home, Major.

We're glad to see you, Doctor. The tears were streaming down his cheeks. It was just a powerful moment and then this liaison officer came out and got me and escorted me onto this C-141 and they had these really cute flight nurses on there.

They were tall and blonde and they were just gorgeous. Just felt like I couldn't cut that out and he said, and we got on this thing. We got on this plane and we sat down on those seats and one nurse says, we have everything you want.

What do you want? He said, I'll take a Coke with crushed ice and some chewing gum. If we're doing this right, if we're walking the way of the cross, heaven will feel like release from prison.

[ 39 : 48 ] We'll finally see the sun. Don't you want to see the sun? Don't you want the night to be over? If we're following the way of the cross, we'll see the sun.

We'll finally be home. No longer strangers. No longer out of place. We'll finally lay down the cross. And perhaps we'll enjoy a Coke with crushed ice and some chewing gum. Follow Christ. The enemies are many, but follow Christ at all costs.

Don't forsake the way of the cross. He called you as faithful. He'll keep you to the end. He'll give you all that you need to follow Him. Just follow Him. One day we'll be home.

Praise God. One day we'll be home. Father in heaven, thank you for this word.

[ 40 : 53 ] Thank you for these reminders. Thank you, God, that you do not preach the gospel of prosperity. You don't preach or earthly prosperity.

You don't preach a gospel of self-fulfillment. You're not here to give us our best life now. We thank you, God, that you are the God who preaches the true gospel, the one that announces that our sins are forgiven and our righteousness is in heaven.

We thank you that you have come to deliver us from the wrath that is to come so that we might never know it and only know your grace. Father, we pray that you would help us to walk.

We need help to walk. We want to walk in the fear of you and for your glory for as long as we have life.

We pray. Lord, help us, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen. You've been listening to a message given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.

[ 41 : 59 ] For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at [trinitygraceathens.com](http://trinitygraceathens.com). Pr  
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