

## SERMON

### Take Up Your Cross 🕯️🏴 Luke 9:21-26

Even when people heard that Jesus was "*the Messiah of God*" (v. 20), they would not understand what this really meant. Knowing that no one but His disciples would accept Him, Jesus "*strictly warned them not to tell anyone*" (v. 21). It was foretold in Isaiah 53 that the Messiah would suffer. Jesus openly declared to all, including His disciples, that He would be put to death but would rise again. He then gave three commands: "*deny yourself*", "*take up your cross*" and "*follow me*" (v. 23). These have the same essential meaning - living in a way that Jesus becomes one's ideal.

This does not necessarily mean literal martyrdom, for believers are not the Messiah. Rather, Jesus commands His followers to practise His teachings daily, to apply them consistently in ordinary life. To "*take up your cross*" means to acknowledge the sinful inclinations of one's heart and to belong to Jesus, who made the atonement through His death.

When Jesus says, "*Whoever wants to save their life will lose it*" (v. 24), He refers to those who prioritise self-centred living. Some suggest this was akin to words of encouragement given to soldiers before battle (*where those who flee are the first to die*). The phrase "*gain the whole world*" (v. 25) represents an ideal rooted in materialism. Jesus teaches that wealth and security while necessary, do not ultimately satisfy life's deepest needs.

Carrying one's cross will inevitably involve some burdens. It may require giving up some pleasures. But the life of discipleship - of belonging to Jesus—brings immense blessing and joy. Let us walk each day with a clear purpose: to glorify God and live in the fullness of His eternal life.