



Worship and the Cross

by Pastor Steve

These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever he goes...

Revelation 14:4

It was established in the earlier chapters of John's revelation that Jesus is the Lamb standing in the midst of the throne of God. To find the 144,000 standing with Jesus in the place of worship (Mt. Zion) is fitting of their character. For all those who desire to be true worshipers will always be in the place of worship, in the presence of the Lamb. However, there is a requirement for one to be in that place of worship. There is a requirement if one is to follow the Lamb wherever he goes.

Jesus made it plain what is required of those who desire to follow him. He said, *If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.* (Matthew 16:24) *And he who does not take his cross and follow after me is not worthy of Me.* (Matthew 10:38) The requirement of a follower is to take up his cross. What does it mean to take up your cross? The answer is most likely found as we explore what the cross meant in the life and death of Jesus.

I believe one meaning of the cross in the life of Jesus was the total abandonment of self to the obedience of the Father's will. Jesus' life was centered in the Father's will. He always did what he saw the Father doing. He always said what he heard from the Father. His teaching focused on the heart of the Father. Jesus came to show the world what the Father is like, and he did it all the way to the cross where he was obedient to death. His love for the Father compelled him to be obedient. That love became the perfect sacrifice for sin.

Jesus not only endured the cross out of love for the Father, he also took the sins of the world upon himself. The shedding of his blood was the sacrifice for sin. The cross meant death for sin and death to sin. Isaiah wrote, *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed.* (Isaiah 53:5)

True worshipers have a deep desire to do the will of the Father. The desire to do the Father's will is a motivating force in their lives. Their lives are centered in the Father's will. All of their hopes and dreams have been placed in the Father's hands and their lives given to his service. They go where he says to go and say what he commands them to say. They love what he loves and hate what he hates. True worshipers know the Father's will because they have his heart. They have a willingness to lay down their lives in obedience to the Father which means death to self and sin.

Paul wrote to the Galatians, *But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.* (Galatians 6:14) Those who would follow the Lamb have died to the passing pleasures of sin. They are not enslaved to the world's system. They have been nailed to the cross with Jesus where, *knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.* (Romans 6:6) *And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.* (Galatians 5:24) The lamb followers have this testimony, *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life that I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.* (Galatians 2:20)

The 144,000 have this testimony, *...they follow the Lamb wherever he goes.* To follow the Lamb one must first go where to Lamb went. *He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.* (Isaiah 53:7) The Lamb went to the slaughter. Those people who stand with Jesus in the place of worship deny themselves and take up their cross daily. They have crucified the flesh and walk in obedience to the Spirit of God. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These are the true worshipers.