



THE FOREST HILL NEWS

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Forest Hill Church of Christ

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Gregory D. Mangrum
Harold D. Mangrum
Keith B. McAlister

Ministers:

Barry M. Grider,
Pulpit Evangelist
Matthew Jones,
Personal Evangelist
Garrett Olney, Youth

Sunday:

Bible Study..... 9:30 A.M.
Morning Worship.... 10:30 A.M.
Afternoon Worship.....1:30 P.M.

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 P.M.

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“Take Up The Cross”

Nathan Franson

One of the most compelling expressions spoken by Christ regarding discipleship was to take up the cross. Mark and Luke record an account in which a ruler asks the Savior what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus answers, “Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.” (Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20) Confident in himself, the ruler responds, “... all these have I observed from my youth.” (Mark 10:20) However, with a sobering lesson to be learned Jesus replies, “...One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, **take up the cross** [emph., NF], and follow me.” (Mark 10:21) At another time Jesus tells His disciples, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” (Matt. 16:24) In order to fully appreciate and understand the profound context of the allegorical sacrifice that is being communicated, it becomes appropriate to comprehend the details surrounding the literal cross.

HISTORY OF THE CROSS

It is worth mentioning Jesus was not the first to be crucified, nor were the Romans the first to use the sadistic form of execution. Originally the punishment was intended for political or religious agitators, pirates, slaves, or those having no civil rights. It was often done to terrorize and dissuade those who witnessed it. Victims were left on display after death to warn others that might try to disagree with authority. The crucifixion was a death that was meant to be slow and painful and gruesome, and to humiliate the recipient. There were various ways one was hung on the cross, including being attached by rope. However, according to Josephus nails were common. He writes, “Out of rage and hatred, the [Roman] soldiers nailed their prisoners in different postures, and so great was their number that space could not be found for the crosses.” (Josephus, the Essential Writings 347)

Prior to Christ, Alexander the Great frequently used crucifixion. After his siege of Tyre, approximately two thousand people were hung fixed to crosses over a stretch of shore. (ISBE 79) Persians, Carthaginians, and Macedonians all used crucifixion to hasten death. According to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, in 519 B.C. Darius I crucified 3000 political foes in Babylon. In 88 B.C., Alexander Jannaeus, the Judaeen King and High Priest, crucified 800 Parisaic enemies.

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Titus Livius Patavinus (aka Livy) wrote about Spartacus and his slave revolt, and how six thousand gladiators were captured alive. "They were crucified along the Via Appia, the road between Rome and Capua. For years, travelers were forced to see the crosses: every thirty, forty meters, they saw how a body of a former slave was rotting away, a prey for the vultures and dogs." (Lendering)

Josephus offers ample information about the practice of crucifixion in Palestine. In one account he records that when King Antiochus took possession of Jerusalem,

...the best men, and those of the noblest souls, did not regard him, but did pay a greater respect to the customs of their country than concern as to the punishment which he threatened to the disobedient; on which account they every day underwent great miseries and bitter torments; for they were whipped with rods, and their bodies were torn to pieces, and were crucified, while they were still alive, and breathed: they also strangled those women and their sons whom they had circumcised, as the king had appointed, hanging their sons about their necks as they were upon the crosses. (Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews 257)

Josephus also mentions the crucifixion of Christ and is accepted as authentic by most scholars.

The Roman Republic used the cross as a common and humiliating form of capital punishment. It was typically reserved for rebellious slaves and common thieves. Eventually it became the method for military and political crimes like desertion, spying, rebellion, and treason. Like their predecessors, it was used to strike fear into everyone who stood opposed to Rome and Roman laws.

WHAT IT MEANS TO TAKE UP THE CROSS

Crucifixion was one of the most brutal assaults on any man. Because it was a conventional death sentence in Rome, Christ as well as the Jews would have been familiar with its merciless function. After being fastened to the crossbeam, the victim was hoisted up off the ground. Suffocation or exhaustion followed after a long period of agonizing

pain. When Jesus said one must take up the cross, those who became disciples clearly understood the significance behind the idiom. The Bible describes how Jewish authorities planned His death, but because they did not have the power to have a condemned criminal put to death they turned it over to the Romans. It was Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, who made the decision to have Jesus hung in front of the people. Upon having the thick nails driven through His hands and feet, a tablet was mounted above His head as was custom announcing the crime. In the Savior's case, it was proclaiming that He was "King of the Jews." Consider everything leading up to this point.

This was the One with whom all things were made (John 1:3). This was the One who "...was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." (John 1:14) This was the One who experienced the joy of connecting with people; who experienced rejection; who wanted the unwanted; who weathered the critics; who experienced the temptation of Satan; who experienced the anguish of losing someone close; who experienced discouragement and disappointment of His closest allies the night before His death. This was the One who made sense to so many, yet bore their sins in a most excruciating way. How dreadful it was to spend His remaining hours on earth bound by nails to wooden stakes as His creation sneered at Him with such contempt.

The physical cross left the King worn, shredded, bleeding, and tormented with levels of pain never before experienced by Him. Yet He accepted it for one reason, because the souls of the world were worth saving. Christ took those nails for me. Christ took those nails for the homosexual. Christ took those nails for the radical Muslim preparing to detonate himself in the name of a false god. Christ took those nails for the atheist who stops at nothing to discredit Him. Christ took those nails for the racist filled with scorn for one who simply looks different. Christ took those nails for the politician with whom some may or may not agree. Christ took those nails for the mother who slaughtered her baby while he or she was still in her womb.

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PRESIDE: Francis Fairley Lawayne House
ASSIST: Bob Gitter Jagger House
 Travis Island Sam Rickles
 Billy Rodgers Jack Woods

A.M. OPENING: Eddie Ray
A.M. CLOSING: Kevin Knipple
P.M. OPENING: Greg Mangrum
P.M. CLOSING: Robert Jeter

If you are unable to lead prayer or serve at the Lord's table, please contact Cedric Huff or Paul Connell.

RECORD, WEEK of September 3, 2017

BIBLE STUDY:	235
A.M. WORSHIP:	305
P.M. WORSHIP:	205
CONTRIBUTON:	\$15,905.00

OUR SICK

Dorothy Jane Roberts, mother of Barry Grider, will have foot surgery today in Chattanooga, TN.

Patty Smith, sister of Joyce Phillips, is recovering from sepsis, Methodist Germantown, Room 303 South.

Robert R. Taylor, Jr., Jackson-Madison County General Hospital, Jackson, TN.

ILL AT HOME: Joe Baxter, Ruth House, and Pearl Washington.

HOMEBOUND

Bessie Berry	Albert & Ruth House
Ann Castleman	Clarine Justice
Virginia Ditto	Ryan McCullar
Hazel Eskew	Helen Palazola
Tommy & Nell Herndon	Jerry & Betty Robbins
Anita Hopper	

REQUESTED PRAYERS: Nick Aubrey, Gerald Brown, Sr., and Garrett Olney.

HURRICANE HARVEY RELIEF FUND: Donations may be made through Forest Hill Church of Christ. Please earmark your checks for flood relief. Total amount raised is \$5,445.00.

PLEASE CHECK YOUR BOX!

HEARTS AND HANDS

TEAM "C" (DANNY BRADDOCK) will receive assignments the week of September 10.

HEARTS AND HANDS REORGANIZATION LUNCHEON following the morning service Sunday, September 17. Zones 1 and 2 are responsible for set up and clean up. Zone 6 is responsible for drink preparation.

UPCOMING EVENTS

BABY SHOWER honoring Kathleen Beard, Sunday, September 10 after morning service in the fellowship hall. She is registered at Babies "R" Us and Target. She is having a boy!

YOUNG ADULT DEVOTIONAL at the home of Jason and Leah White, Saturday, September 23. This will be the last devotional for the year.

KIRBY PINES Retirement Community worship service each fourth Sunday 8:00-8:45 a.m., conducted by Forest Hill. Our next service will be Sunday, September 24.

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Albert and Ruth House, who recently celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary.

Carolyn Hayes on the birth of a great-grandson, Benjamin Daniel Butts, born to Valerie and Dan Butts. Daniel Hayes is the great uncle.

1st and 2nd grade classes for their efforts in learning memory work during the summer quarter. Aneesa McLaurin and Aspen White learned 100%, Anna Ulrich and Cole Fredrick 99%, Stephen Ulrich 98% and Genesis Hanna 94%. Aneesa, Anna, Aspen, Genesis, and Stephen learned two extra credit memory verses. Thank you to these students for striving to hide God's word in their hearts so they will be ready to give an answer!

Last week's solution:

I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Philippians 4:12-13

CORNERSTONE

HRHX D TNQIK QG YXUFX AZ NQG KUQXBG,
 FNHLNHW NQG FUWY AH SMWH, DXK
 FNHLNHW QL AH WQBNL.

f=w Solution next week. w=r

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CONCLUSION

That is what sacrificial service as a Christian requires. It is looking at others the way Christ did, even knowing what may be the return. It is powerful when weighing the full context of what is required to *take up the cross*. A Christ follower will be humiliated. He will face opposition like he has never experienced. He will be assaulted by the world beyond any measure and pushed to the limit. That is the price to be paid to follow the Son of God. Will it seem unbearable? Yes. Will it be agonizing? Yes. Will it be distressing? Yes. And that is just a taste of what Christ meant when He uttered His most engaging words, "Follow me."

Works Cited

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Josephus, Flavius. "Antiquities of the Jews." Josephus, Flavius. Josephus Complete Works. Trans. William Whiston. Vol. XII. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1960. 257.

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Lendering, Jona. "Spartacus (2)." December 2008. Livius. 3 February 2015 <<http://www.livius.org>>.

(Nathan Franson is a 2009 graduate of the Memphis School of Preaching. He is married to Katy and they have a 7 year old son, Micah. Nathan preaches for the Mariposa Avenue Church of Christ in Sacramento, California. He manages a website, www.mormonstudy.net, and has two DVD's available entitled Is Mormonism Really From God? and Ask the Expert: Mormonism. His new book, Breaking the Chains, an autobiography on why he left Mormonism, is now available.)

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