



**I***F any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.<sup>24</sup> For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.<sup>25</sup> For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?<sup>23</sup> And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.<sup>24</sup> For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.<sup>25</sup> For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?* (Luke 9:23-25)

I have experienced a close brush with death more than once over my many years on God's green earth; but to my comfort, the Lord has blessed me with a peace of mind that has always sheltered me from worry or fear during those moments. He does the same for all who place their trust in Him to always do the right and good thing.

This dear old hymn for today was not deemed sufficiently sophisticated enough for the 1940 Hymnal; yet it bears the strong biblical testimony of truth to the life of the Christian. It was sung at least every third Sunday in the country church I attended long ago. The hymn first appeared in a poem by Thomas Shepherd in 1693 and the musical score composed by George Nelson Allen in 1835. The hymn has undergone several alterations over the years but appears in most modern hymnals in the present form below.

### **Must Jesus Bear the Cross Alone?**

Must Jesus bear the cross alone  
And all the world go free?  
No, there's a cross for ev'ry one,  
And there's a cross for me.

The consecrated cross I'll bear  
Till death shall set me free,  
And then go home my crown to wear,  
For there's a crown for me.

Upon the crystal pavement, down  
At Jesus' pierced feet,  
Joyful, I'll cast my golden crown  
And his dear name repeat.

O precious cross! O glorious crown!  
O resurrection day!  
Ye angels, from the stars come down  
And bear my soul away.

*Must Jesus bear the cross alone And all the world go free? No, there's a cross for ev'ry one, And there's a cross for me.* There is a cross reserved for you with your name clearly printed thereon. If you have walked past that cross and left it by the wayside, you have walked from the Way, the Truth, and the Life in our Lord Jesus Christ! Jesus was our Pioneer of Life. He bore the cross throughout His ministry, and He expects us, as well, to place our life in Him above the fear of death in the world. Bearing the cross inevitably takes us to Calvary, but along the way are wonderful scenes of beauty and wonder. If we bear it to Calvary, as countless missionaries and martyrs of the past have done, the beauty is multiplied to an infinite power.

There was a cross for a certain man named Simon of Cyrene, you will recall. What made that cross special – and the cross of any we bear – was the fact that the cross borne by Simon was also that which belonged to the Lord.

Salvation is too often proclaimed to be free, but that is only half true. Salvation cost God the Father the grief of witnessing His only Begotten Son perish on a cruel cross; and the Son Himself experienced excruciating pain in the purchase of our redemption. In fact, the word 'excruciating' comes from the Latin meaning "from" (ex) "crucic" (the cross, or pain as from the cross.) The world does not go free but either bears, in faith, the cross of Christ, or else eternal bondage in the abode of the sinner.

*The consecrated cross I'll bear Till death shall set me free, And then go home my crown to wear, For there's a crown for me.* My father often said, "If we bear no cross, we shall never bear a crown" (of life). It is true. A 'consecrated cross' is one that has been blessed and made sacred by our Lord. All crosses are not consecrated. The cross of the unrepentant thief was by no means consecrated. To bear the cross of our Lord in holiness makes the cross consecrated in service to Him. The cross-bearer is free, indeed, in spirit long before the curtain of death falls before his dimming eyes. But he is made free in both body and spirit at the moment of passing over Jordan Banks. Just as we have a cross to bear in this world, we also have a crown to wear beyond the Gates of Splendor. Please remember, however, that we do not serve the Lord for reward, but for love.

*Upon the crystal pavement, down At Jesus' pierced feet, Joyful, I'll cast my golden crown And his dear name repeat.* There was an amazing display of courage at the foot of the cross of our Lord. Most of the disciples, including Peter, had fled for cover during the crucifixion in fear of the wrath of the Jewish and Roman rulers. They watched from afar behind rocks and bushes. But there were also amazing women of great courage who remained at the foot of the cross including the mother of Jesus and Mary Magdalene. And there was also one for whom our Lord bore a special affection – John – who braved the danger and remained at the cross until it was "*finished.*" The overflowing measure of love of these few who remained to the last was compelled by one great power – the power of enduring LOVE. Love imparts courage beyond any imaginable in the common ground. The Christian will not be fearful of proclaiming the name of the crucified (and risen) Lord on any occasion.

*O precious cross! O glorious crown! O resurrection day! Ye angels, from the stars come down And bear my soul away.* To the world, the cross is the symbol of death; but to the believer, the cross is the very symbol of, not only life, but life eternal. We do not know in what sense the crown will appear at the Last Day; but we can know

that whatever the crown represents, it will, above all else, represent a glorious joy to us. There can be no tears or sorrow in the presence of the risen Lord. Not only will we close our eyes at last to a world of growing darkness and sorrow, but we shall open them in the presence of an angelic escort as we are wafted upon the wings the angels to the bosom of Abraham as was the beggar, Lazarus. There the soul shall await the reunion of the soul to the glorified body risen when all graves are opened at the last.

Bearing our cross daily is more than a personal burden – it must be the cross of Christ that we bear daily as did Simon.