

# i witness



**Fifth  
Station**

## Recap

"Regardless of what anyone may personally think or believe about him, Jesus of Nazareth has been the **dominant figure in the history** of Western culture for almost twenty centuries." Jaroslav Pelikan, historian

## Recap

How does a rich, spoiled, power hungry man become the disciple of love?

## Recap

Peter and the other disciple started out for the tomb. They were both running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He stooped and looked in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he didn't go in. Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings. Then the disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed— for until then they still hadn't understood the Scriptures that said Jesus must rise from the dead. John 20:3-9

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## The Cost of Discipleship, Dietrich Bonhoeffer

The grace of Jesus is evident in his preparing his disciples for this word by speaking first of **self-denial**. Only when we have really **forgotten ourselves completely**, when we really no longer know ourselves, only then are we ready to take up the cross for his sake. When we know only him, then we also no longer know the pain of our own cross. Then we see only him. If Jesus had not been so gracious in preparing us for this word, then we could not bear it. But this way he has made us capable of hearing this hard word as grace. It meets us in the joy of discipleship, and confirms us in it.

## The Cost of Discipleship, Dietrich Bonhoeffer

The cross is neither misfortune nor harsh fate. Instead, it is that suffering which comes from our allegiance to Jesus Christ alone. **The cross is not random suffering, but necessary suffering.** The cross is not suffering that stems from natural existence; it is suffering that comes from being Christian.

Since the beginning of Christianity, the **cross** has been closely identified with it

It was also central to Jesus teaching in **abstract** before it became a **reality**

If you refuse to **take up your cross** and follow me, you are not worthy of being mine. **Matthew 10:38**

Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, **take up your cross**, and follow me." **Mark 8:34**

Then he said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, **take up your cross daily**, and follow me." **Luke 9:23**

The word "cross" was offensive to Romans. One Roman insulted another by using it on a graffito discovered in the Stabian baths of Pompeii: "May you be nailed to the cross!" Classical texts similarly use the term "cross" in curses. The Roman writer Plautus, for instance, uses the phrase "go to an evil cross" as slang for "go to hell" (e.g., *Pseudolus* 331)

Scholars believe that the first surviving public image of Jesus's crucifixion was on the **fifth-century** wooden doors of the Basilica of Santa Sabina, which is located on the Aventine Hill in Rome. **Since it took approximately 400 years for Jesus's crucifixion to become an acceptable public image,** scholars have traditionally believed that this means the cross did not originally function as a symbol for Christians.

The **Stations of the Cross** are a 14-step Catholic devotion that commemorates Jesus Christ's last day on Earth as a man. The 14 devotions, or stations, focus on specific events of His last day, beginning with His condemnation. **The stations are commonly used as a mini pilgrimage as the individual moves from station to station.** At each station, the individual recalls and meditates on a specific event from Christ's last day. Specific prayers are recited, then the individual moves to the next station until all 14 are complete.

When they were finally tired of mocking him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him again. **Then they led him away to be crucified.** Matthew 27:31

Along the way, they came across a man named **Simon, who was from Cyrene**, and the soldiers forced him to carry Jesus' cross. And they went out to a place called Golgotha (which means "Place of the Skull").

**Matthew 27:32-33**

As they led Jesus away, a man named **Simon, who was from Cyrene**, happened to be coming in from the countryside. The soldiers seized him and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. **Luke 23:26**

A passerby named **Simon, who was from Cyrene**, was coming in from the countryside just then, and the soldiers forced him to carry Jesus' cross. (Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus.) And they brought Jesus to a place called Golgotha (which means "Place of the Skull"). **Mark 15:21-22**

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There was a large Jewish community in **Cyrene**, so it is just as likely that he was Jewish. It is about 1,200 miles from Cyrene to Jerusalem (northern Africa), so it was a major journey in the Ancient world. He must have been in Jerusalem for some significant purpose.

Simon was the first person who "literally"  
carried the cross and followed Jesus

The reason Simon is part of the Catholic  
meditative journey is because he is the  
metaphor made real, and something else...

Why was Simon named?

Mark gives us a tantalizing clue as to why Simon is included in the narrative. He was the father of **Alexander and Rufus**, who were known to the Roman congregation to whom Mark wrote. It is as if Mark was saying to the congregation, "Rufus and Alexander can verify this narrative. Their father was present for the event." So, Simon the Cyrene was an eyewitness to the events Peter had proclaimed to them and which Mark had just narrated to them in his gospel.

A passerby named Simon, who was from Cyrene, was coming in from the countryside just then, and the soldiers forced him to carry Jesus' cross. (**Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus.**)

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how we suffer speaks to what we  
believe

It is commonly believed that Simon's "chance"  
encounter with the **suffering Messiah** forever  
changed his life and the life of his children

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So when we preach that Christ was crucified,  
the Jews are **offended** and the Gentiles say  
it's all **nonsense**. **1 Corinthians 1:23**

ever been embarrassed by something  
about Christianity, it's been  
happening since the beginning

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## The Scandal of the Cross, G. Miller

People of today like Jesus the good teacher, the wise sage, but not Jesus the saving-sacrifice for sin. **They like Jesus the nice guy, but not the bleeding lamb.** They want a Christ without a bloody cross. It's too ego-shattering to admit the need for the cross. Even in the church, the stress is often placed more on the development of self-esteem than on deliverance from selfishness and sin.

Jesus of the cross offends our  
sanitized western ethic

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## The Scandal of the Cross, G. Miller

The people of Jesus day wanted a conquering Saviour, a champion who would destroy their enemies. **When great miracles brought the crowds, they wanted to make him king. But when he talked about dying they wanted no part of him.** When he was crucified like a common criminal, they fled. They didn't want a Saviour like that. He didn't die like a hero.

## The Necessity of the Cross

There is no greater antidote for our egos  
"the cross is foolishness..."

You can't love your enemies  
without first embracing the cross

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"

self denial of pleasure and power becomes easier  
"let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me"

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You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. **In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities.** He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross. **Colossians 2:13-15**