

# Crown or Crucify

#0080

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—November 17, 1972

Jesus is on trial. It's early Friday morning, and Pilate, the Roman governor, is on the judgment seat.

“When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out, Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar” John 19:13–15.

All of us are invited to join in the coronation of Jesus as King. But unless we crown Him, we crucify Him. This was the choice that Friday morning in Jerusalem. This is the choice tonight. There's no third choice. We either join in the coronation of Jesus or else we join in His crucifixion. It is something to think about tonight that every man and woman and boy and girl here, each individual, either crowns Jesus or crucifies Him. This drama that we've just read from the Scriptures is reenacted in every life. In every heart, there is a throne and a cross. And if self is on the throne, Jesus is on the cross. If you want Jesus to be the ruler of your life, and if you want to crown Him Lord of all, then your sinful human nature must go on the cross. There is no third choice. It's either self on the throne and Jesus on the cross, or it's *Jesus* on the throne and *you* on the cross.

The great enemy desires to make this whole thing foggy and fuzzy. He wants human beings to think that there's some way to have your own way and still not hurt Jesus too bad. But it is written:

“But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all” Isaiah 53:6.

In other words, having our own way is an expensive business. Every man who runs his own life the way he wants to, the way he *thinks* he wants to, consults his selfish desires. By that act and in that way, he is putting Jesus on the cross. If Jesus is to rule, self must die.

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me” Galatians 2:20.

Who’s crucified? I am. This *self* that has been sitting in the throne that has been directing things, now it must be crucified. The cross becomes to the Christian not merely the place where Jesus died for us, but where we die with Him.

Who’s living in the Christian? Not I, but *Christ*. Christ is on the throne, and the *old* self is on the cross.

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” Romans 6:6.

What is to happen to our old nature? It’s to be crucified. What for? So that it might be destroyed. Isn’t that the purpose of crucifixion? Isn’t that what the Romans and the Jews intended when they had Jesus nailed there to the cross? They intended that He die. No one was ever crucified with any other intention on the part of those that crucify him.

There is something about crucifixion. It’s quite different from being beheaded with a sword, or being shot. What is the difference? It’s a long, lingering death. Have you found that true in your experience? Have you found that when you put self on the cross that it doesn’t die right away?

Those thieves who were crucified with Jesus, one on either side, they wanted Him to get them down off the cross. They heard the rabble talking to Jesus and telling Him that if He was the Christ to save Himself and come down from the cross. So they joined and said, “If you’re the Christ, save Yourself and us.” Self does not want to go to the cross, and self does not want to remain on the cross. And after it’s been there for a while, it still doesn’t want to. As long as there is life, as long as there is breath, self will clamor, threaten, bribe, urge, plead, beg, whine, whimper, and do *anything* to get attention and try to get down off the cross.

If in my heart, as we’ve seen, there’s a throne and there’s a cross, who is it that decides whether *Jesus* is on the throne and self is crucified or whether *self* is on the throne and Jesus is crucified? Who decides it in *your* life? The Devil would like to decide it, but God won’t let him. God could force us, but He won’t do it. There may be human beings that would like to settle it for us, but they’re not permitted to. Every one of the fifty million martyrs who died proved that nobody can force a man to crucify Jesus.

Peter would rather be crucified himself than deny his Lord again. Paul would rather have his head taken off. And all those millions of martyrs in the Dark Ages who died demonstrated the fact that there is no man in this world or no devil in hell that can make this decision for you.

You *can* make it. You *must* make it. You *will* make it. You *do* make it. And you make it afresh every day.

The apostle Paul wrote three significant words:

“I die daily” 1 Corinthians 15:31.

Oh, but I don't want to die.

I tell you friends, it's a wonderful thing to love Jesus so much that we would rather the old self would go to the cross and let Jesus sit on the throne. That's what's involved in this.

Pilate said, “Shall I crucify your King?” They disowned Him. And when we crucify Him afresh, we disown Him. That's what sin does.

“If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame”  
Hebrews 6:6.

There is no such thing as neutrality in this matter. I repeat, we join in His coronation or in His crucifixion. We crown Him, or we crucify Him. We accept Him as Lord, or we disown Him. We deny Him, and eventually, we seek to murder Him. This is the nature of sin and selfishness.

Along with getting a view of Jesus when we come to Calvary, we get a view of the hideousness of sin that enables us to sincerely desire that self shall be crucified. In other words, the crucifixion of self is not merely so that Christ can have a seat as ruler. The crucifixion of self is that the body of sin might be destroyed.

If there was a rattlesnake around your house, what would you do with it? You would kill it. Why? Because it's dangerous. But friends, there is something far more dangerous than a rattlesnake in your house.

Do you know what it is? It's you.

I mean that. Did you ever make trouble for yourself? Did you ever disappoint yourself? Did you ever disgrace yourself? And all these things that we do will sometimes surprise us. All these sins we commit that bring disgrace upon ourselves and our family, and upon Jesus, are merely the fruit of what we are. The worse thing about me is not what I do; it's what I *am*. What I do may reveal what I am, but what I am is worse than any of what appears. Jesus said:

“For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies” Matthew 15:19.

All these things come from within and defile the man.

It's a wonderful thing when I reach the place where I am so disappointed in myself and so disgusted with myself, that I abhor myself and loathe myself and say, "Lord, indeed I am glad that self can be put there on the cross, that those hands can be nailed to the bars and those feet spiked to the tree, and that wicked, sinful self no longer rules in my life."

Is there anybody here that *needs* to be crucified? Ah, looking at God's law, the apostle Paul, who was a model of deportment as far as the religious circle in which he moved was concerned, said:

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not" Romans 7:18.

You come down through the commandments. The first one that calls for a fully complete, 100 percent worship of God. The second says that no material object is to stand between you and your God. The third warns you to honor His name and reverence Him. The fourth deals with the binding obligation of the Sabbath. The fifth tells every child, young or old, to honor his parents. And those other commandments that deal with our duty to the people around us tell us not to hate. The sixth that says, don't murder and don't hate. The seventh that says don't commit adultery, and be true and pure in mind and thought as well in outward act. The eighth that says, don't steal either from God or men. The ninth that forbids lying and the tenth that forbids coveting. Any human being that will look at that law as the Holy Spirit applies it to the heart will say with Paul:

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Romans 7:24.

And friends, God's way of deliverance is to say, "Very well. If your sinful self is like that, and you want that to quit ruling your life, then come with Me and let us nail that old self to the cross."

What does that mean in practical life? It means what is found in Galatians:

"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" Galatians 5:24.

Notice that the subject of this text is they that are Christ's. They that have made Jesus their ruler and Lord. They have crucified the flesh. This text supports that if Christ is on the throne, self must be on the cross. They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

What are the affections? Oh, that's what I love.

Somebody says, "Shouldn't I love?"

It makes a world of difference whether the love I am using is God's love or this selfish love. If I have the love of God, I will be loving to the ones He has asked me to love, that He's assigned me to love. But if my poor, selfish heart is running things, I

may be loving things and loving people that I have no business to love at all. This is what leads to fornication and adultery. This is what leads to loving all manner of things. You hear people say, "Oh, I just love ice cream." And some people do. But it's a wonderful thing when we have put on the cross all our natural cravings and desires as far as dominating is concerned, and we've accepted Jesus as our ruler.

This solves the eating between meals problem. This solves the cigarette problem. This solves the liquor problem. This solves *every* problem where we need the power to do the right thing and to resist the wrong thing. They that are Christ's, they that have put Him Lord and put Him on the throne, have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts, their desires, their cravings, and their impulses. I'm so glad that a Christian doesn't have to be run by his impulses, aren't you?

But someone says, "I don't feel like it."

Tell me, friend: When did feeling become the ruler in a Christian's life? If feeling is running us, believe me, self is on the throne, and Jesus is on the cross. But if we simply say, "All right. No more running of me by those feelings. How I feel is not going to run my life. I'm going to live for Jesus. I'm going to let Him rule my life. And if I enjoy it, all right. But if I don't, I am going to do it anyway for His dear sake."

And the paradox of this, friends, is that when we do that, quite soon we come to find that Jesus' way is a good way, and His yoke is an easy way. Believe me, Christ is not out trying to make things hard for us. But He is seeking to save us from the rulership of self, which can only end in sorrow and death.

"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" Proverbs 16:25.

So they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lust. Let me read an interesting comment on some of these verses we have read tonight:

"On another occasion I spoke in reference to genuine sanctification, which is nothing less than a daily dying to self and daily conformity to the will of God... Paul's sanctification was a constant conflict with self. Said he: 'I died daily.' His will and his desires every day conflicted with duty and the will of God. Instead of following inclination, he did the will of God, however unpleasant and crucifying to his nature" *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 4*, page 299.

Some people have the idea that if they can only come to Jesus and pray to Him, that from then on, they ought to like everything that's good and hate everything that's bad, and not have any problem of conflict. It'd be nice if it worked that way, but I'm not sure we'd get very much development of character. Wouldn't it be too bad if two people who love each other enough to marry and pledge to each other their heart's love for as long as they both shall live, isn't it too bad if about the second day or the second week one should say, "I just don't feel like getting up today. I

don't feel like cooking breakfast or getting wood or going to work." Love makes burdens light. And when we come to Jesus and enthrone Him in our lives, then we are glad to crucify every selfish desire that would interfere with our duties to Him.

"Christ, enthroned in the soul-temple, will efface that fretful, peevish, unhappy look...

"The natural man must die, and the new man, Christ Jesus, take possession of the soul, so that the follower of Jesus may say in verity and truth: 'I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me'" *Ibid.*, page 348.

Every man can make this choice. Every man *must* make this choice. Every man *does* make this choice. Someone has put it in these words:

"I stood alone at the bar of God,  
And the hush of the twilight dim;  
And faced the question that pierced my heart,  
What will you do with Him?  
Crowned or crucified, which shall it be?  
No other choice was offered to me.

I looked on the face so marred with tears  
That were shed in His agony;  
The look in His kind eyes broke my heart,  
It was full of love for me;  
The crown or the cross, it seemed to say,  
For or against me, choose today.

He held out His loving arms to me  
While He pleadingly said, Obey;  
Make Me thy choice, for I love thee so,  
And I could not say Him, Nay;  
Crowned, not crucified, thus must it be  
No other way was opened to me.

I shed tears at the feet of Christ,  
In the hush of the twilight dim;  
And all that I was or hoped or thought,  
Surrendered unto Him;  
Crowned, not crucified, my heart shall know  
No King but Christ who loveth me so."

I do pray that God will bless us tonight with that response. May the Holy Spirit speak to our hearts. If there's some lust, some impulse, some affection, some craving, something that has been ruling in our lives and putting Jesus on the cross, oh, let us thank God that we can put Him on the throne with self on the cross.

Does it really hurt Jesus when I sin? Oh, yes. The cross is a revelation to our dull senses of the pain that began when sin began and can never end until sin ends.

And I'm so glad that I can settle it that as far as I am concerned, He will be on the throne instead of the cross. What do you say? How He appreciates it when we send Him that word.

Copyright 2021. All rights reserved.

W. D. Frazee Sermons  
435 Lifestyle Lane, Wildwood, GA 30757  
1-800-WDF-1840 / 706-820-9755  
[www.WDFsermons.org](http://www.WDFsermons.org)  
[support@WDFsermons.org](mailto:support@WDFsermons.org)