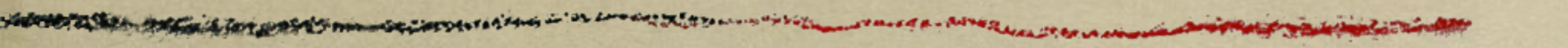




Part one: the cross and our identity crisis

questions often plague the young christian

- *most of the time i feel like god is displeased with me*
- *i know god loves me but my walk is filled with so many more problems than blessings*
- *i've had some good moments with god but usually find i am up and down like a yo-yo*

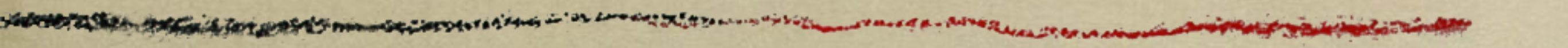


*Behind our questions
there is a mystery at
work deep in our lives*

*"After being defeated is when I
often feel closest to God"*

*something's always
saying 'No' and also
saying 'Yes'*

*"But when I should be happy
there's often too much guilt to
enjoy his love"*



What is going on here?

- There is a key that
unlocks the riddle but it
only unlocks it to a
seeking heart*

the riddle of the cross

- 1. you can come unto him by embracing his
but can only come after him by embracing yours*
- 2. you cannot bear it by yourself
another bearer waits to help*
- 3. it seems to be heavy but lightens with walking
yet without its weight you're too heavy to walk*
- 4. once taken you are never free of it
but only free under it*
- 5. its shadow so totally eclipses you
but others see son light reflecting in you*

the riddle of the cross

*The question of whether
it's gain or it's loss
can only be answered
by taking the cross*

Some questions while you think about the riddle

1. *Have you taken up the cross?*

His or yours?

2. *What did it cost? What did you lose?*

3. *What did you find? What did you gain?*

4. *Does a christian have a choice?*

*First let's talk about the
“work of the cross”
in general*

- The cross's work is
both objective
and subjective*

The objective work

- *When Jesus died on the cross:*
 - 1. *You were forgiven of sins*
 - 2. *You were made holy by his blood*
 - 3. *You were all made glorious sons*
- *It was finished by his perfect death "for you" on the cross*
- *The "end" is guaranteed*

The subjective work

- *When you believed in Jesus:*
- *The Holy Spirit began to make the cross' work effective in your life*
 - 1. *Changes take place within your life by the Spirit's power*
 - 2. *He cleanses, separates, renews, strengthens, deepens, lovens*
- *He takes the perfect objective work and perfectly works it out*

*So when we say the
cross' work we mean the
Holy Spirit working in
you the salvation won
on Calvary's cross*

*so let's see the
difference
between his cross
and yours*

Three things in common between the two crosses

- *Both are preceded by denial of self*
- *Both are endured with suffering and death*
- *Both result in a victorious life gained*

Two crosses are eternally different

HIS

1. *Historic, objective,
real wood*

2. *He chose bc/ he
loves us*

3. *Physically suffered
brutal anguish*

4. *Cross was taken
once for all time*

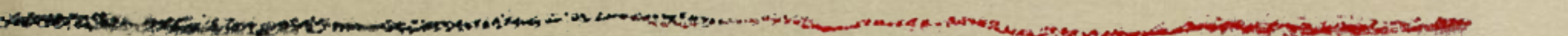
OURS

1. *Subjective, spiritual*

2. *We chose bc/ we
love him*

3. *Suffering meted and
measured by his
loving Hand*

4. *Cross is taken daily*



*when an unbeliever
approaches the Lord
he hits the
'wall of the cross'*

- 1Cor. 1.18 ¶ *For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*

When people came to Jesus they 'hit the wall' of the cross

- *Nicodemus came with a religious question but hit the 'born of the Spirit' wall*
- *The woman at the well asked for water and hit the wall of her 'guilty conscience'*
- *The bedridden man asked for healing and hit the wall of his 'unbelief'*
- *People flocked to hear Jesus' parables of the kingdom but hit a wall of 'mysteries'*

*Why would Jesus block
those who try to come?*

- Because until they come
by way of the cross the
kingdom door can't be
opened*

*Now when you first
come to the Lord:*

- *There is a very big change - much bigger than we think 2Cor. 5.17*
- *So the cross starts dealing with some outward issues that need changing*

*For example, our attitude
about things must change*

- *Whenever we heard a 'command' we automatically wanted to disobey*
- *Whenever we saw authority we automatically wanted to rebel*
- *Whenever we saw a 'pure, religious' person we didn't really like them*

That's because

we used to be 'sons of disobedience'

- Eph. 2.1-2 ¶ And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the *sons of disobedience*.

That's because

we used to be 'rebels' like Satan

John 8.44 “You are of your father the **devil**, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him.

we used to hate anything godly

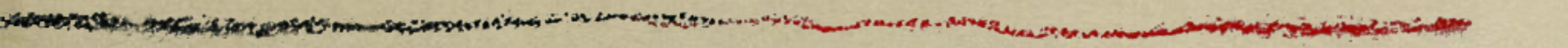
Matt. 10.22 “And you will be **hated** by all on account of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.

Obedience to God feels like a cross because it is a new identity

- 1Pet. 1.22 ¶ Since you have in **obedience** to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart
- 1John 2.3 And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we **keep His** commandments.
- John 15.14 “You are My friends, if you do what I command you.

*Why does the cross seem
to put pressure on a
christians' life?*

- Because until they take
up their cross they
maintain their identity
with the world*



*you can come unto him
by embracing his
but can only come after him
by embracing yours*

◦ *The cross brings us to an identity crisis*

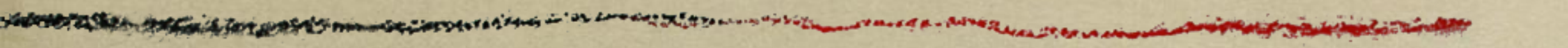
Luke 9.23 # And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

The issue of identity

*Whom do you belong to,
the world or the Lord?*

We still believe lies from unrenewed thinking

- *God says I'm a new creation but I feel like I'm unchanged in desires and action*
- *the Word says I live in Christ but I am much more at home in the world*
- *if I'm smart I can walk in a way that's neither too religious nor too worldly*



*Only the cross can
break us through
our identity crisis*

The first identity breakthrough: baptism

- **Rom. 6.3-4 Or do you not know that all of us who have been *baptized* into Christ Jesus have been *baptized* into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through *baptism* into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.**

Baptism: I belong to God



*As simple as it
is, baptism is a
denying of
ambivalence
resulting in a
'heavenly yes'-
"this is my
beloved son..."*

Baptism: I belong to God

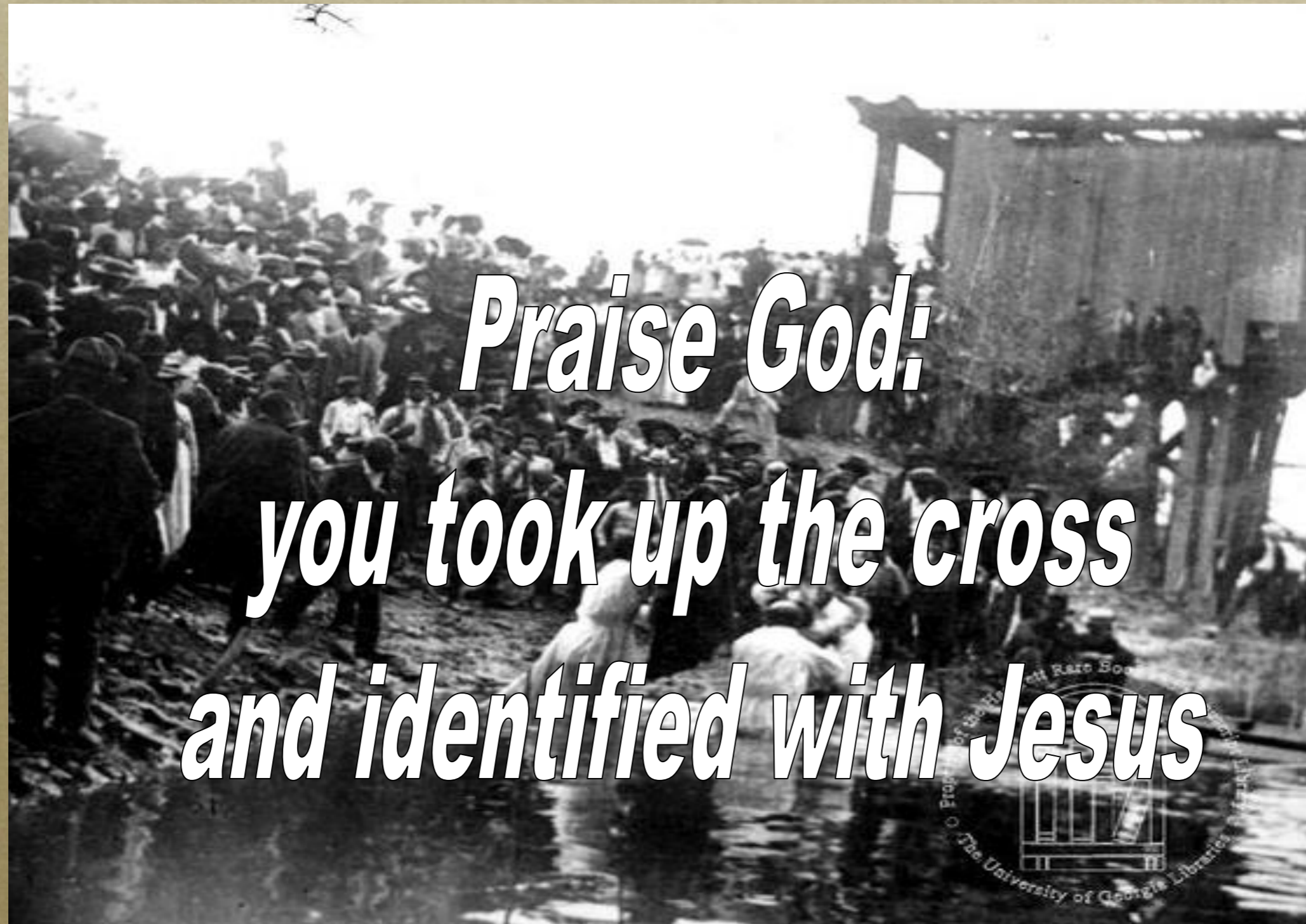


*Baptism is a
direct
obedience*

*Baptism is a
public
confession*

*Baptism is a
testimony of
the king's
capture*

Baptism: I belong to God



***Praise God:
you took up the cross
and identified with Jesus***

Identity remedy #2

*After baptism there is a
second breakthrough of
the cross that
really catapults our
spiritual progress*

#2: *Active witnessing*

- Matt. 5.16 “*Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*”



Active witnessing

1Pet. 2.9 ¶ But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

On the streets in Romania



Indisputable witnessing facts

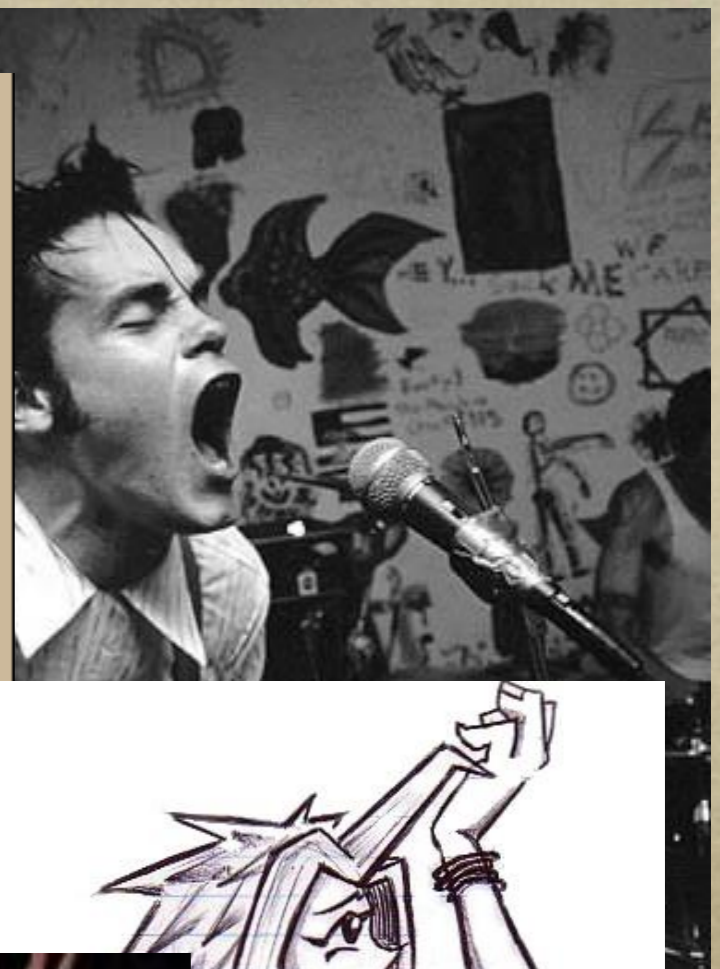
1. *you “are” a witness*
 - *Whether faithful or poor*
2. *The best time for evangelism is when people are young*
3. *In school one has easy contact with more peers than at any other time in their life*

Indisputable witnessing facts

4. *Witnessing 'aligns you' with the Lord and not with the world*
5. *Witnessing reveals to you the world's antagonism to our Lord*
6. *Speaking up for the Lord develops gifts within you to be used later in the church*

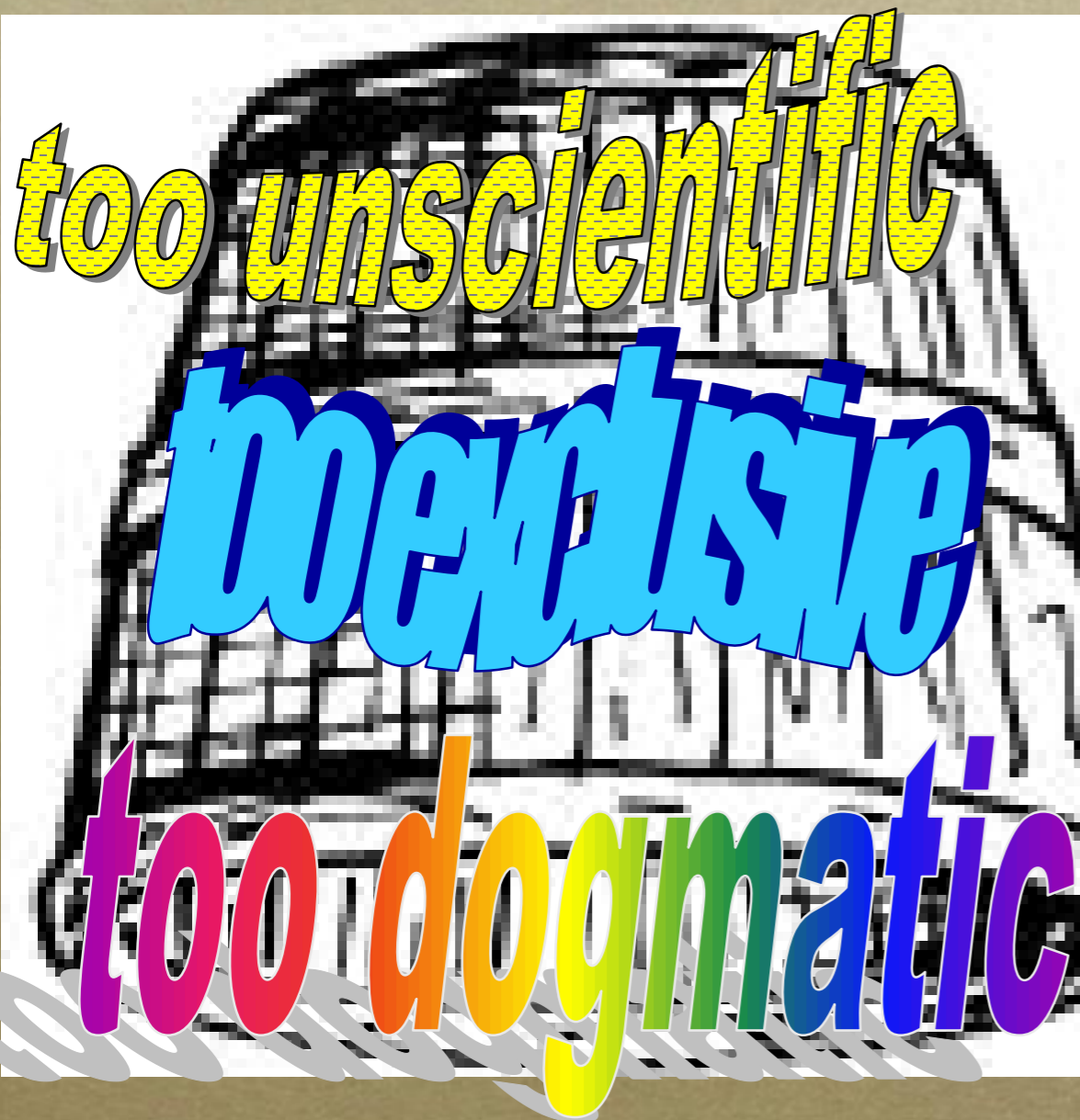


*But witnessing causes an
identity crisis until you truly
deny your worldly self image*



ready se

Some believers are ashamed of their faith



too unscientific
too expensive
too dogmatic

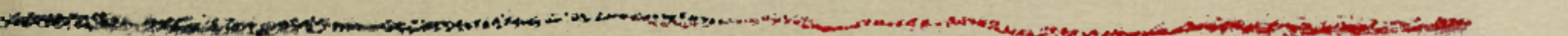
- 2Tim. 1.8 ¶ Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord ... but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God,

Some are ashamed of other christians



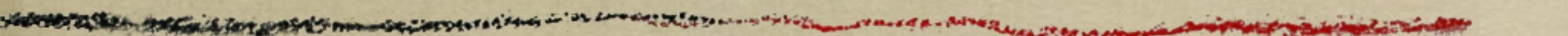
***Dad! Please
don't walk
with me in the mall!***

- 2Tim. 1.8 ¶
*Therefore do
not be
ashamed of
me His
prisoner...*



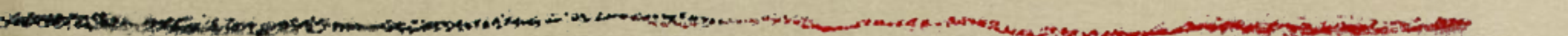
*The verdict of the cross is
clear: your identity is bound
up with the Lord
and all the saints*

- Luke 9.26 “For whoever is **ashamed** of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be **ashamed** of him when He comes in His glory....”



Our old identity is being nailed to the cross :

- *James 4.4 You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*

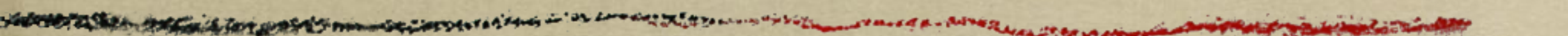


*Our old identity is being
nailed to the cross :*

1John 2.15 ¶ *Do not love the world
nor the things in the world. If
anyone loves the world, the love
of the Father is not in him.*

Our old identity is being nailed to the cross :

- *John 15.19-20 “If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.*
- *Especially when we are persecuted we realize our identity with the Lord*

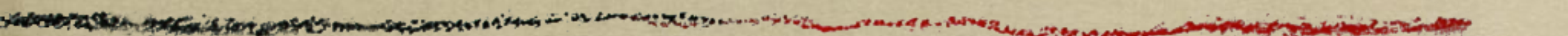


*Four summary questions
must be asked in light of
our identity crisis*

*1. Have you identified with the
Lord through baptism?*

*Four summary questions
must be asked in light of
our identity crisis*

*2. Do your school friends or work
associates know that you are a
christian?*



*Four summary questions
must be asked in light of
our identity crisis*

*3. Have you witnessed to your
school friends?*

Has it cost you anything?

*Four summary questions
must be asked in light of
our identity crisis*

*4. Does your young people's group
do any special gospel meetings?*

On a regular basis?

Do you understand the
first riddle?

**Denying your former identity
is the first step of
real discipleship**
*“you can come unto Him
by embracing His
but can only come
after Him by
embracing yours”*

*What is the 'gain'
when we take up
the 'identity' cross?*

- *Two inestimable life gifts*

*What is the 'gain'
when we take up
the 'identity' cross?*

- 1. He writes his name
upon our lives as
possessed of him*

*What is the 'gain'
when we take up
the 'identity' cross?*

*2. We gain a deeper sense
of our "chosenness"*

1Pet. 2.9 ¶ But you are A CHOSEN
RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A
HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR
God's OWN POSSESSION, so that
you may proclaim the
excellencies of Him who has
called you out of darkness into
His marvelous light;



Part two: the cross and our ability crisis