

A gospel singer once wrote, “Just as Jacob was shown long ago, the cross has become the ladder to heaven” (Hymn No. 81, verse 2). This statement echoes a profound biblical truth about the role of the cross. It refers to the time when Jacob, while resting at Bethel, saw a vision of a great ladder reaching from earth to heaven, with angels ascending and descending upon it. This ladder symbolizes the divine connection between heaven and earth, ultimately fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

#### Genesis 28:11-12 (ESV)

And he came to a certain place and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it!

This ladder, which Jacob saw, foreshadowed the ultimate connection to heaven: the cross of Jesus Christ. Through the cross, we gain access to the heavenly realm, and it is by His sacrifice that the gap between sinful humanity and holy God is

bridged. The cross, in essence, becomes the “ladder” through which we ascend to the Father.

John 14:6 (ESV)

Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Through the cross of Jesus, we are reconciled to God. It is the ultimate path to salvation. But I also want us to reflect on the cross from another perspective, as a “TOOL FOR BUILDING LIFE.” Let’s delve into a story in the Bible involving the prophet Elisha and the sons of the prophets. This will help us grasp the theological significance of the cross as a tool for constructing our lives.

2 Kings 6:1-7 (ESV)

Now the sons of the prophets said to Elisha, ‘See, the place where we dwell under your charge is too small for us. Let us

go to the Jordan and each of us get there a log, and let us make a place for us to dwell there.' And he answered, 'Go.' Then one of them said, 'Be pleased to go with your servants.' And he answered, 'I will go.' So he went with them. And when they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees. But as one was felling a log, his axe head fell into the water, and he cried out, 'Alas, my master! It was borrowed.' Then the man of God said, 'Where did it fall?' When he showed him the place, he cut off a stick and threw it in there, and made the iron float. And he said, 'Take it up.' So he reached out his hand and took it.

This story offers a beautiful and powerful metaphor. The axe head represents our tools, our knowledge, abilities, and efforts in life—things we depend on to build, to create, to achieve. But sometimes, in the course of our lives, these tools fail or are lost. This is what happens to the axe head: it falls into the water and sinks. Similarly, our efforts, if not rooted in Christ, can sink in the depths of despair, failure, and loss.

In the story, Elisha takes a stick—a seemingly insignificant tool—and throws it into the water. The axe head floats, defying all natural laws. This act is a powerful symbol of how the cross of

Jesus Christ, though it appeared to be a weak and foolish thing to the world, has the power to redeem our failures and restore what we have lost.

### The Cross: The Tool for Restoration

The stick Elisha threw into the water symbolizes the cross of Jesus. Jesus, in His humble death on the cross, took all of our brokenness, our lost tools, our broken dreams, and He made them whole again. The cross is what makes everything we have and do redeemable.

The iron (representing our efforts, our wisdom, and human strength) can only be restored by the cross. It is a reminder that no human effort—no matter how noble or skillful—is sufficient to truly build our lives without the work of Jesus Christ. Only through the cross can we recover what has been lost, and through His power, even the most impossible circumstances can be turned around.

1 Corinthians 1:18 (ESV)

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

The cross is the means by which our lives are truly built. It is through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that we are made whole. Through the cross, we are not only reconciled to God, but we are empowered to live lives that bring glory to God. The cross becomes the foundation upon which we build our homes, our families, our careers, and our futures.

### The Cross: A Call to Surrender

It is important to understand that the cross is not just a symbol of suffering but a call to surrender. Jesus invites us to take up our own cross and follow Him. This means denying our self-sufficiency and relying fully on His grace and strength.

Mark 8:34-35 (ESV)

And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself

and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.

The cross is a daily commitment—a decision to surrender all to Jesus. It's not just about salvation but about living in constant dependence on Him. When we deny ourselves and take up the cross, we are acknowledging that our efforts and plans are not enough to build our lives on their own. Only by following Jesus and embracing His work on the cross can we truly find life.

### The Cross in Our Lives Today

So, I ask you: Is the cross of Christ at the center of your life? Have you taken up your cross and followed Him, or are you trusting in your own strength, knowledge, or accomplishments? If Christ is not in your heart, no matter what you achieve in this life, you are building in vain.

Matthew 16:26 (ESV)

For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?

It's better to lose everything in this world—education, career, wealth, status—yet have Christ in your heart, than to have all those things and lose your soul. This is a truth Jesus made clear when He said, "What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world but forfeits his soul?"

The cross of Christ is the foundation upon which everything else must be built. When we understand the depth of Jesus' sacrifice and the power of His resurrection, we realize that everything we have—our skills, our gifts, our accomplishments—are only meaningful when used for His glory.

Romans 8:28 (ESV)

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

When we submit our lives to the cross of Jesus Christ, even the broken pieces of our lives are redeemed and woven together for God's good purposes.

If you haven't yet surrendered your life to the Lord Jesus, today is the day. He will help you rebuild, restore, and redeem your life. If you need help in receiving Jesus into your heart, please reach out to us. We will gladly guide you in this life-changing decision.

God bless you.

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