To Seek and to Save #9 “Simon Carries the Cross” Luke 23:26

Intro: Tonight only 1 verse… this morning 25… Let Simon speak.

**Luke 23:26** – 10 “Simons” in NT… Simon of Cyrene = Lybia (N. Africa)

 Simon is Hellenized version of a Hebrew name.

 Men of Cyrene at Pentecost; Synagogue of Cyrenians

* A Hellenistic Jew from North Africa who was either visiting for Passover or living outside of Jerusalem.

**Matthew 27:32** – “*As they were coming out*…”

(of the praetorium of out of the city)

**John 19:17** – How to reconcile?

 Jesus began carrying His own, but failed as exited the city and moved toward Golgotha

**Mark 15:21** – Father of Alexander and Rufus (latin, red haired)

 **Romans 16:13** – Mark wrote his Gospel from Rome

 In Rome were Rufus and his mother.

 Well known and respected Christian Leaders

**t/s** – Everything we know about Simon of Cyrene…. Lessons?

**Luke is sighting his sources.**

Exp – Opens by promising eye-witness testimony; careful research.

 Interviewed Rufus and mother; stories from Simon.

**ILL** – *Were you there when they crucified they Lord?*

 Simon would say, “yes!”

Docetism (seem, appear) – Jesus not really flesh, not really Suffer

App – The Cross is not a Myth… Symbolic expression of deeper truths

 This actually Happened…

Apostles’ Creed == “***Suffered under Pontius Pilate***”

**Not ALL Jews Rejected (Killed) Jesus.**

Exp – Seasons of terrible anti-Semitism… Jews as Jesus Killers.

 Simon carried the Cross

 Simon, like many Jews, had no idea what was happening.

 The Apostles were Jews… Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea

 “Jews” = Jewish Leaders…

**The Suffering of Jesus was Very Real and Very Severe.**

Exp – In the normal order, the convicted man carried his own Cross.

 Jesus began, but broke down under its weight.

 Consider His Night: Up all night; Gethsemane; trials and beatings with Jews; with Herod; with Pilate;

 Flogged or scourged… terrible, near fatal

 These soldiers would show no mercy to Jesus.

 He was absolutely unable to carry the weight.

App – He suffered and Died… Oh how He loves you and me.

**A Picture of Christian Discipleship**

Exp – Simon literally took up the Cross of Jesus and followed Him!

 **Luke 9:23**

 Initially confused, afraid, offended… felt mistreated.

 Carrying that Cross became the Glory & Joy of His Life!

* Disciple; family served Lord; Don’t you know old Simon loved to tell this story!
* Deny self; take up the Cross and Follow Jesus.

(sacrifice, risk, rejection, pain… Glory of the Cross)

**App** – Maybe the Lord is calling you to a difficult task. (service)

 It seems like a sacrifice at the moment; a self-denial.

 One Day, taking up that Cross will be your glory!

**Conclusion**

Let’s close by singing #285 – Hymn tune titled Falls Creek

Note: Labor Day Sunday… To Falls Creek for Centennial

When God called me at Falls Creek, I thought I was giving up my life, losing all the good stuff. In my mind, I was making a tremendous sacrifice… “Wherever He Leads, I’ll Go.”

Written by BB McKinney in January 1936 in Clanton Alabama. He was leading worship at a Sunday School convention with a missionary to Brazil, Robert S. Jones. Jones had just found out he was not able to return to the field, disappointed. McKinney asked about his future plans, “I do not know, but ***wherever He leads, I’ll go***.”

McKinney was captivated by those words, “Wherever He leads I’ll go.” He went to his hotel room; wrote the words and music and sang them that night at the meeting.

Singing at Falls Creek every since, summer of 1936 (before publicized next year)

***Take up thy cross and follow Me, I heard my master say…***

Simon gives us a picture of the Jesus Way of Discipleship.