

## Reigning With Christ Begins With Taking Up Your Cross

2 Tim. 2:8-13

### Introduction:

1. The kingdom of God and the reign of Christ are recurring themes throughout the text of Scripture.
2. Previously we have observed that Christ's reign began with suffering. He suffered on the cross, then was raised from the dead and seated on the throne of David at the right hand of God.
3. In the last lesson we observed from Matt. 16:21ff that we must take up our cross daily and follow Him.
  - a. This involves radical commitment to the purpose of God.
  - b. It involves denying ourselves.
  - c. And it involves submission to Jesus as King.
4. The passage we have just read says that we are to remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David.
5. Paul says that he has suffered hardship for the cause. He has taken up his cross.
6. Paul adds, "If we died with Him, we will also live with Him. If we endure, we will also reign with Him."
7. What is this "reigning with Him?" How do the people of God reign with Christ? It would seem that "suffering" and "reigning" are concepts that do not go together.

### Discussion:

- I. Christ's reign was begun by suffering.
  - A. It is ironic and quite inconceivable by the majority of Judaism and foolishness to the Gentile world that a king would voluntarily give Himself to suffering.
    1. Paul reflects on the unusualness of this in 1 Cor. 1:18-25.
    2. Jesus Christ was not what the world expected in a king.
    3. "But," Paul says, "We preach Christ crucified."
    4. To Jews a stumbling block.
    5. To Gentiles foolishness.
  - B. Christ does not reign by means of wealth. He does not reign by means of military power. He does not reign by allegiance to powerful people.
  - C. Instead He is granted kingship through the humiliation of suffering, and not just any suffering but the humiliation of crucifixion. Paul says, "Even though He was God, He emptied Himself" (Phil. 2:6-7).
  - D. Humility, humiliation, suffering, these are not generally the characteristics we expect in kings, but Christ's reign was begun by suffering.

## II. Our reign with Christ mimics His by beginning with suffering (2 Tim. 2:8-12a).

### A. Paul was suffering (8, 11-12).

1. He speaks of dying daily (1 Cor. 15:31). He was giving his life for those dead in sin. This seems to me to be what Jesus asked the disciples if they were willing to do in Matt. 20:22. "Are you able to drink the cup I am about to drink?" He was going to the cross, were they able to drink that cup?
2. Of always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus (2 Cor. 4:8-11).

### B. Paul was calling on Timothy to endure suffering (2 Tim. 2:2: "Suffer hardship with me.").

### C. In Rom. 6:3 Paul asks, "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?"

### D. Enduring suffering is a recurring theme in Scripture.

1. Heb. 10:32-12:29 presents an extensive argument.
  - a. The Hebrews had suffered in the past (10:32-39).
  - b. The ancients had suffered (11:1-39).
  - c. Continued endurance is the admonition remembering Christ as the ultimate sufferer (12:1ff).
2. 1 Pet. 2:21; 3:13-22; 1 Pet. 4:1, 12; 5:1, 6 says that we are called for this purpose and therefore we should follow the example of Christ in suffering. As we entrust our souls to a faithful Creator He will exalt us at the proper time.
3. Rev. 1:5 introduces us to Jesus, "the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth." He testifies to the point of giving His life. He is raised from the dead and now ruler.
  - a. John has joined him a partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance (1:9).
  - b. The church at Ephesus had perseverance and endurance and had not grown weary (2:3). The tree of life was promised to him who overcomes.
  - c. The church at Smyrna was not to fear what they were about to suffer, but be faithful until death (2:10). The crown of life would result.
  - d. Antipas had been killed at Pergamum but they were to hold fast (2:13).
  - e. And so with the church today. We join with His suffering and with His death and are promised the life and blessings of God. "He who overcomes, I will grant to sit down with Me on My throne" (3:21).

Summary: Christ's reign was begun by suffering. Our reign with Christ mimics His by beginning with suffering.

## III. Our reign with Christ mimics His by culminating in exaltation.

### A. This is a theme of Revelation.

1. Like Christ's kingship, Revelation reveals that the saints' reign consists of overcoming by not compromising their faithful witness in the face of trials (2:9-11, 13; 3:8; 12:11).
  2. They rule over the powers of evil and death (6:9-11).
  3. They defeat sin in their lives.
  4. Ultimately they are victorious over death (1:18; 21:4).
- B. Just as God highly exalted Jesus (Phil. 2:9), He exalts those who die with Him and who endure with Him (2 Tim. 2:11-12).

Conclusion:

1. Reigning with Christ begins with you taking up your cross.
2. Christ's reign began with suffering.
3. Our reign mimics His by beginning with suffering.
4. Our reign mimics His by culminating in exaltation.