Rock Valley Bible Church (www.rvbc.cc)

2004-016

April 18, 2004 by Steve Brandon

You Must Take Up Your Cross

Matthew 16:24-27

1. Requirements of coming after Jesus (verse 24)
2. Reasons for coming after Jesus (verses 25-27)

We are continuing in our exposition of Matthew with one last look at chapter 16. So let's look at verses 24-27.

> Matthew 16:24-27
> Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it. For what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and will then recompense every man according to his deeds."

In our text, we see Jesus gathering His disciples around Him. The disciples here may be a reference to the twelve disciples closest to Jesus. But, the parallel passage in Mark 8:34 indicates that Jesus addressed the crowds along with His twelve disciples. These words are certainly applicable to everyone who hears them, including you or me. Jesus was very inclusive in His language. He says, "if *anyone* wishes to come after Me." You might translate this, "if *someone* wishes to come after Me." The idea is that it is a general statement, which is true of all who desire to follows Jesus Christ. This is the very thing that is great about this text: what Jesus spoke 2,000 years ago is directly applicable to us this morning. Jesus begins to lay upon His disciples what will be required of them to come after Him. Jesus gives three requirements in verse 24: First, he must deny himself. Second, he must take up his cross. Third, he must follow Me. They all basically say the same thing: You must be done with yourself and your ways. You must be full of Jesus and His ways.

In verses 25, 26, and 27, Jesus gives three reasons why following Jesus will be worth it. Most translations follow the Greek text and begin each of these verses with the word, "for," which means "because." Verse 25, "*For* whoever wishes to save his life, ..." Verse 26, "*For* what will a man be profited, ..." Verse 27, "*For* the Son of Man is going to come, ..." And each of these verses are pointing back to give reasons why it is worth it to come after Jesus.

As is our custom, we will allow the text to dictate our outline this morning. We'll first look at the requirements of coming after Jesus (verse 24). And then we'll look at the reasons for coming after Jesus (verses 25-27). Jesus had just told His disciples how He was going to Jerusalem to suffer, be killed, and be raised up. What was true of the teacher is true of the disciple. If the teacher was going to suffer and die, so must the disciple suffer and die. It's pretty difficult to play "follow the leader," if you don't follow where the leader leads. Christianity is a game of "follow the leader." Christ is the leader. His disciples are the followers. Christ blazed the trail by suffering in Jerusalem. His disciples are called to a similar life.

Let's turn our attention this morning upon the ...
1. Requirements of coming after Jesus (verse 24)

The requirements that are given here are simple and straightforward. There are three of them.

a) You must deny yourself.
The idea here is that you are done with yourself. You are done with your ways. You are done with your what pleases you. Your thoughts, your ambitions, and your desires all take second place to Jesus. You have surrendered your will to Jesus. What matters now is not yourself, because you have denied yourself. What matters now is the One whom you follow. To deny yourself is to pray the prayer that Jesus prayed in the garden, "not My will, but Thine be done" (Luke 22:42). To deny yourself is to look to the interests of others, rather than your own personal interests (Phil. 2:4). To deny yourself is to have as your ambition "to be pleasing to Him" (2 Cor. 5:9). The kingdom of heaven is no place for self-centered, self-willed people. The kingdom of heaven is no place for those who think highly of themselves. The kingdom of heaven is no place for the proud, arrogant, self-seeking, or self-trusting person.

Enlisting in the military is a great picture of this. When you sign on the dotted line to enlist, you have made a commitment to deny yourself. Your first stop will be boot camp, where you learn that you no longer matter. They tell you when you will rise. They tell you when you will eat. They tell you what you will eat. They tell you when you will shower and shave. They tell you what you will you will do today. They tell you when you are doing it. They tell you how long you will be doing it. They tell you when to stop. They will tell you when to lie on your bed for rest. After boot camp, you will go where they tell you to go. If they tell you to serve in the mainland, it is there that you will stay. If they tell you to go to war in Iraq, it is there that you will go. You no longer matter. What matters is the United States of America. And when you come after Christ, it isn't much different. A decision is made to enroll. You submit your life to the leadership of Jesus. The implications of these things are huge! You will spend the rest of your life working it out.

And so I ask you, "Have you denied yourself? Have you submitted yourself to Jesus Christ?" If you haven't, you aren't a disciple of Christ! I'm not asking you what kind of prayers you have prayed. I'm not asking you what kind of theology you hold. I'm not asking you how consistent your church attendance is. I'm asking you, Have you have reached an end of yourself? Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3). To be "poor in spirit" means that you have acknowledged your own spiritual bankruptcy. You have no spiritual resources within yourself. It was the sin-confessing, breast-beating, mercy-pleading, tax gatherer who Jesus said was justified (Luke 18:13). It was the self-sufficient Pharisee who wasn't justified. Here, Jesus gives the first requirement of coming after Him: self-denial. Can it be any more plain than this? "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself" (verse 24). Those who are coming after Jesus are those who have denied themselves. Those who still are clinging to their own agenda for life aren't following Jesus.

Let's look at the second requirement that Jesus gives for coming after Him...

b) You must take up your cross.

This doesn't mean much to us today. But, it is certain that the disciples would have understood what this meant. The cross was an instrument of torture and execution. The victim eventually suffocates as he becomes too exhausted to painfully lift himself up on the nails to breathe. *Its like drowning slowly.* Crucifixion was used extensively during the times of Jesus. When Jesus was crucified, it wasn't some strange and unusual punishment that was inflicted upon

Him. It was the common form of execution in those days. All Pilate had to do was to pronounce the sentence that Jesus be crucified, and Jesus would be crucified (Luke 23:24). There was no explaining to be done. At the time of Jesus, thousands of Jews had been crucified in resisting the Romans.

Certainly, every disciple had witnessed a crucifixion before. Remember when Jesus was crucified? There was a great multitude of people following Him (Luke 23:27). I don't believe that this is so unusual. There were often people who watched the criminal carry his cross from the Roman jail to the site of the crucifixion. Many times, this criminal was verbally abused and assaulted along the way.

There was no doubt in the minds of His disciples what Jesus was saying. "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him, ... take up his cross" (verse 24). Jesus was telling His disciples to, "be ready and willing to die for Me." But, the picture of the cross is more than dying. In our society today, we are so soft. We execute people in our land by lethal injection, to make sure that the victim feels little pain. The picture would be totally messed up if we simply say, "take your lethal injection," because there is no suffering in that. But when Jesus used the picture of taking up the cross, many images passed through their minds. Suffering was included. Pain was included. Difficulty was included. Hardship was included. Ridicule was included. Abuse was included. This is a picture of the Christian life. It is a life of suffering and ridicule. Jesus said, "you will be hated by all on account of My name" (Matt. 10:22). The physical sufferings of Jesus is the example for us to follow: "Christ ... suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps" (1 Pet. 2:21). Paul encouraged the churches to continue in the faith, saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14: 22). These sufferings may come to the point of death.

But, let me ask you, "In Jesus' day, when a criminal carried his cross to the place of execution, was he surprised when he died?" Of course not. He knew what was going to take place. He knew that he would carry the burden of the wooden beam upon his back until he arrived at his destination. He knew he'd feel the pain of being nailed to that beam, of being hoisted up to suffocate to death. Death didn't take him by surprise. And neither should suffering and death cause a Christian to be surprised. One of the requirement of following Jesus is a willingness and readiness to suffer and to die. So when the suffering comes, you ought not to be surprised.

I remember when I was in high school, I spent a few summers working in the fields, detasseling corn. When I signed up to work in the fields, I knew that it would be hot. I knew that it would be hard work. I knew that it would be dirty. When the hot, August sun came beating down upon the back of my neck, was I surprised? When my legs ached from walking in the fields all day, was I surprised? When I was covered from head to foot with dirt, was I surprised? Not at all. It is what I signed up for -- hot, hard, dirty work! And when difficulty and tribulation comes as a result of following Christ, will you be surprised? You might be if you think that coming after Christ means that everything is going to be grand, easy, fun, and entertaining. Perhaps someone even told you it would be this way. But, if you listen to the words of Jesus, you will quickly realize that he calls you to a life of difficulty. He calls you to take up your cross and be willing to die.

And so I ask you, "Have you taken up your cross?" Luke tells us that this is a daily thing we need to do to come after Christ (Luke 9:23). When you wake in the morning and you are putting on your clothes, there is one more thing that you put on before you go out the door. You put that cross over your shoulder and you say to yourself, "I'm on my way to suffer and die for Jesus today."

If you wish to be a follower of Jesus, you must deny yourself, take up your cross, and, ...

c) You must follow Jesus.

This is talking about the path of obedience. To come after Jesus, you need to follow Him. You need to obey Him. Its pretty simple, isn't it? If Jesus is your leader, you will do what He says. There was a time in the ministry of Jesus when He spoke to those who were attempting to have a Lord whom they didn't follow. Jesus asked them, "why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46). You cannot have a Lord that you do not obey. It doesn't work. It is like having a dessert that is not fattening. It is like swimming without getting wet. It is like living without breathing. It is impossible. To have a "Lord" means that you have a master whom you will obey.

God's call down through the ages has always been the same: He desires an obedient people. At the creation, God told Adam that he could eat of the fruit of all of the trees, except the one in the middle. God wanted he and Eve to obey. After the ten commandments were initially read to the people of Israel, the people pledged, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!" (Exodus 24:7). This was God's intention in giving them the commandments. When

their obedience proved to be words only, the LORD let them die in the wilderness, because of His displeasure with them. Our family just finished reading through Judges this week (according to our church Bible reading schedule). The entire book is about the disobedience of Israel, which displeased the LORD. Even in His graciousness to deliver them from their afflictions, the people still disobeyed the LORD"everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). The prophets always called the people of Israel to come back and follow the LORD in obedience. Isaiah says it well,

> "Come now, and let us reason together," says the LORD,
> "Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow;
> Though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool.
> If you consent and obey, you will eat the best of the land;
> But if you refuse and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword."
> Truly, the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

What was true of the Old Testament was true of Jesus as well. Time and time again, Jesus called the people of Israel back to obey the LORD. Since Israel didn't obey, Jesus said, "the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it" (Matt. 21:43). The kingdom will be given to those who obey. Do you remember what Jesus told His disciples in the great commission? He said,

> "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you" (Matt. 28:19-20).

"To observe all that I commanded you" doesn't mean that we should teach people to look at and behold the commands of Christ as if they were some artifact in a museum someplace. It means that we are to teach obedience to Jesus. This has always been God's heart.

And so I ask you, Are you following Jesus? Do you follow where Jesus leads? When you hear the words of Jesus, do you believe them? When you hear the words of Jesus, do you obey them? Or, are you trying to sit on the fence. You like the benefits that Jesus brings, yet you're not willing to obey the command, "Follow me!" You can't sit on the fence. You can't follow Jesus half-heartedly. Jesus said, "He who is not with Me is against Me" (Luke 11:23).

Just imagine that I invited you over to my house after the service this morning. Suppose that you don't know where I live. Suppose that I say, "Just follow me." Suppose that you don't follow my every turn. "Steve's going straight. I don't want to go that way. I'll just take a left turn here." Where will you end up? You won't end up at my house. You can't follow Jesus half-heartedly. "Are you following Jesus?"

Further comments on verse 24

If you wish to come after Jesus, you must deny yourself. You must take up your cross. You must follow Jesus.

It is sad that much of the American church is sending the exact opposite message to the world today. We are influenced a great deal by the consumer mentality where the customer is king. This type of thinking flips our Christianity on its head. We've got it totally backwards. When people today are looking for a church, what are they looking for? There are many people today who search for churches, looking for the place that will meet their needs. They want a place where there are programs to meet the needs of their children. They want a place where music meets their tastes. They want to hear messages that leave them with a good feeling. If a church meets all of their criteria, they will stay. If a church doesn't, they will look for another one that will. They are consumers, looking to be satisfied. Churches understand this. They put much time and effort into trying to figure out exactly what the people on the street want, so that they can provide it for them. If people want programs for their children, then they provide programs for children. Music is chosen to be consistent with the culture of the day. The preaching is planned not to be too offensive. Churches today want to provide an environment of entertainment that satisfies those coming into their services, so that people will come and stay. After all, isn't the most important thing in church the growth of the church. If a church is big and flourishing, they are considered a success. If a church is small and floundering, they are considered a failure. Because the bottom line in most churches is numbers, Churches want to be filled with lots of people. So, they make great efforts to attract people, by providing for them what they want.

And so, I ask you, Is this consumer mentality consistent with the words of Jesus? Is it consistent with denying yourself, taking up your cross, and following Jesus? Christianity isn't about getting. Christianity isn't about others meeting your needs. Rather, it is about you realizing that the universe doesn't revolve around

you; it revolves around God. It means realizing that your only hope is in Jesus. He alone can redeem you from your sins. He alone is worthy of our worship. He alone is worthy of our obedience.

Christianity is experiencing a Copernican revolution in your heart. An early Greek philosopher, Ptolomy taught that the earth was the center of the solar system. Everything revolves around the earth. But, Copernicus came along and said that the sun was in the center of the universe. This is they type of revolution that you need to have in your heart. We are all born thinking that the universe revolves around us. But, we need to come to the point where we understand and embrace the fact that the universe doesn't revolve around us. Rather, we revolve around the Son. Christ is calling us to a self-denying, God-centered life.

So, you ask, how should you choose a church? First, you should choose a church where God's Word is upheld and taught. If a church is playing games with the Bible, don't go there. Paul said that there were many in his day who were "peddling the word of God" (2 Cor. 2:17). The Word was viewed as a commodity to be manipulated and sold deceitfully. They were many in his day doing this. If a church is anything but straightforward with the truth, don't go there. Paul said, "But as from sincerity, as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God" (2 Cor. 2:17). This is what I am doing this morning. These are the words of Jesus: deny, take up the cross, and follow Me.

Second, you should also choose a church that is growing in their love for God and their love for others. This is the summing up of the Christian life: loving God and loving others. If these traits are evident in the lives of those in the church, then you can be assured that God is working in that church. Please don't get me wrong, I'm all for programs for the children and for worshipful music and for doing what we can to help those coming to our church. But, the message of the gospel must reign supreme. And when it does, it will make an impact on those in the church.

At this point, you might be wondering, "Steve, where’s the grace in this? It seems as if you have presented this morning a works salvation." To this, I simply ask whether my teaching has been consistent with the words of Jesus. They have, I am sure. But, there are many who have embraced the correct, biblical understanding of salvation by grace, through faith, not as a result of works (Eph. 2:8-9) and have attempted to struggle with the meaning of Jesus' words here. So, what they have done is create a distinction between a "disciple" and a "believer." They claim that Jesus wasn't calling people here to faith. They claim that Jesus was calling "believers" to a higher form of commitment, called, "discipleship." They think that

by creating this distinction between salvation and discipleship, they can save the integrity of the gospel of the grace of God.

But, such a view fails to understand what true conversion is. You can't make a distinction between a "believer" and a "disciple." They are one and the same. The only reason why people make this distinction is to protect salvation through faith alone. But, in the process, they have failed to see that grace is all over these words! If you are anything like me (and I know that you are), you are self-centered to the core. And, the only way that you will ever be able to "deny yourself" is by God's grace. None of us want to die. None of us want to suffer. The only way that you will ever desire to "take up your cross" is if God works in you to see that life in Him is more precious than living for yourself. And "following Jesus" isn't perfection. It isn't as if we need to follow Jesus perfectly, or we are doomed. It is making a pledge to follow Him. It is pleading for His grace to help us to follow Him. It is repenting when we fail to follow Him. It is trusting in His grace to actually follow Him.

Where is the grace? It is all over these words. The requirements to coming after Jesus are lavished with grace. If God has put in your heart a desire to follow Christ, this verse tells you how. And when you try to do these things, you will feel hopeless lost. But that's the point. It is then that you see your sin. It is then that you see what Jesus requires It is then, that you need to cry out to Jesus for mercy and help to "deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Him." This is the message of the gospel. It is self-abandonment and devotion to Jesus. If you wish to come after Jesus, you must deny yourself, take up your cross, and you must follow Jesus. These are the requirements. But, these aren't simply cold requirements coming from a tyrant. There are reasons for these requirements. Each of these reasons explain why it is good for us to forsake our life for Christ's. These reasons come in verses 25, 26, and 27.

2. Reasons for coming after Jesus (verses 25-27)

Each verse contains a reason. Let's start with verse 25.

a) Because of your life (verse 25).
Verse 25, "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it." The comparison here is between your life upon this earth and your life in eternity. If you seek to keep your life here upon the earth by living for yourself rather than dying to yourself, then, you will lose it in eternity. If you seek to lose your life here upon the earth, by denying yourself here upon the

earth, by taking up your cross here upon the earth, by following Jesus here upon the earth, then, you will find it in eternity.

Biblical examples of this abound. Remember the story of the rich man and Lazarus? The rich man lived for Himself upon the earth. "He habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, gaily living in splendor every day" (Luke 16:19). And where did it land him? It landed him in torment in Hades (Luke 16:23). Lazarus kept his life on the earth, but lost it in eternity. Contrast Lazarus with Zaccheus. Zaccheus was also a rich man. But, when Jesus came to His house, He gave half of his possessions to the poor and pledged to give back four times as much to anyone he defrauded (Luke 19:8). Zaccheus denied himself on this earth. He lost His life. Jesus said that He gained it, "today, salvation has come to this house" (Luke 19:9). Lazarus kept his life on this earth, but lost it for all eternity. Zaccheus lost his life on this earth, but kept it for all eternity.

Judas refused to take up his cross and follow Christ. Instead, He betrayed His Lord. He kept his life on this earth, by gaining thirty pieces of silver (Matt. 26:16). Yet, Judas lost his life for all eternity. Jesus even said that it would "have been good for [him] if he had not been born" (Matt. 26:24). Contrast Judas with the martyrs, who took up their cross and were killed for their faith. Revelation 7 speaks of the martyrs who come out of the great tribulation, who serve the Lord day and night before the throne of God in His temple (Rev. 7:14, 15). They took up their cross and died for Christ. They lost their life on this earth, but they will keep it for all eternity.

The rich young ruler came to Jesus, seeking eternal life. When Jesus told him that it would cost him his life and his riches to follow him, "he went away grieved" and refused to follow Jesus (Matt. 19:22). For all we know, he saved his life upon the earth, with earthly goods and treasures, but he lost it in eternity. Contrast the rich young ruler with Moses. Moses chose "to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin; considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward" (Hebrews 11:25-26). He could have been the next Pharaoh of Egypt, the most powerful man in the world, but followed Christ instead. Moses lost his life upon the earth. But, Moses gained His life. We will see next week, as we study the transfiguration, that Moses is alive and well.

Your life here upon the earth is but a vapor. It will soon be past. The life to come will last forever. If you want to save your life forever, lose it for the sake of Christ today. Be like Paul, who said, "I do not consider my life of any account as dear to

myself" (Acts 20:24). Why should you "deny yourself, and take up your cross, and follow Jesus"? Because of your life -- it's how you will live forever!

b) Because of your soul (verse 26).
Verse 26, "For what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" Just suppose that you owned the entire world. Suppose you owned some of the larger world-wide corporations: McDonalds, IBM, Microsoft, ... In fact, suppose that you owned the entire stock market, both the NASDAQ and the Dow Jones. Suppose that all of the gold in Fort Knox was yours. Suppose that the country south of the border, which we call Mexico, was entirely owned by you. In fact, suppose you owned every country in the world, the United States, Canada, Australia, China, ... Come April 15, rather than making a check out to the US Government on Tax Day, people would write out checks to you! If this were the case, you could live wherever you wanted to live; you could have whatever you wanted to have; ou could go wherever you wanted to go; you could do whatever you wanted to do. If you wanted to go deep sea fishing in Australia, you could do it. If you wanted to take a trip to outer space on the Space Shuttle, you could do it. If you wanted to live on a mansion on a beach in the Caribbean, you could do it. If you preferred to live on a house at the base of a ski resort in Colorado, you could do it. Just try to imagine it! Anything that you want is yours. Suppose you had all this, but lost your soul. In the end, what will it profit you? Jesus said that it will profit you nothing! The whole world is not enough to give in exchange for your soul!

I thought of two men who have come close to living this dream. The first is Solomon. He was a very rich man. He was a very intelligent man. Nothing ever got in the way of his pursuits. He pursued pleasure (Ecc. 2:1-2). He pursued alcohol (Ecc. 2:3). He pursued material wealth (Ecc. 2:4-8a). He pursued entertainment (Ecc. 2:8b). He pursued sexual pleasure (Ecc. 2:8c). He said, "all that my eyes desired I did not refuse them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure" (Ecc. 2:10). And in the end, He said, "All is vanity" (Ecc. 1:2). This is what Jesus is saying. The whole world is not enough to exchange for your soul.

The second example of this was the life of Saddam Hussein. He was the dictator in Iraq from 1979 until 2003. He lived in utter pleasure for 24 years. He was absolutely sovereign in Iraq. His palaces were luxury. His parties were plenty. Perhaps you recall how hours before the United States attacked Iraq, Saddam withdrew over $1 billion in cash and had the money placed on three flatbed semi trucks. He had unbelievable power and wealth. And yet, now, he is held captive by the United States in Iraq someplace. What were his 24 years of pleasure worth him

now? They are of no benefit to him now. In the end, it is not worth it. Your soul is far more valuable to you than all of the riches of the world.

I often think of those who are dying apart from Christ, especially those who have lived a life of pleasure. Perhaps they have prospered financially and they are living in the nicest of houses, wearing the finest of clothes, and eating the tastiest of foods. What was it worth? What were all of their pleasures worth? In the world, they lived a life of ease, but in the end, it cost them their soul. What could be worse?

Perhaps you might think of the passing pleasures of sin that you enjoyed this week. What are they to you now? Are you still enjoying them, or has their pleasure already faded away? Picture yourself, upon your deathbed. In that day, what will be important to you? Only one thing will be important to you in that day: your soul. Moses said, "teach us to number our days, that we may present to You a heart of wisdom" (Psalm 90:12). He said, "teach us today to realize that our life will soon be over. And the passing pleasures that we enjoy in this life are worth nothing in the end. Teach us to see beyond this life. Teach us to see eternity. Teach us to live wisely in this age. Teach us to have a long-term view of life." Why should you "deny yourself, and take up your cross, and follow Jesus"? Because of your soul -- it is worth it.

c) Because of the judgement (verse 27).
Verse 27, "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and will then recompense every man according to his deeds." There is coming a day when you will face Jesus. He will look at your life and will evaluate it. According to your deeds, He will return it to you. This is what it means to be "recompensed." It means, "to give back." If your deeds were self-centered, you will face condemnation. But, if your deeds were Christ-directed, you will receive His mercy. Are you going to forsake your life and cling to Christ? Or, are you going to make all attempts to keep your life?

In our family Bible reading this week, we read through the book of Ruth. One of my favorite verses in that book in found in chapter 1, verse 14, when Orpah attempted to leave Ruth. We read that "Ruth clung to her." She wouldn't let her go. She wanted to be with her mother-in-law. Ruth pledged that "Your people will be my people, and your God, my God." Have you done this with Jesus? You need to come to the point where we realize that our only hope is in clinging to Christ. Have you done that? Are you clinging to Jesus? If so, then your life will clearly demonstrate that you have died to yourself, taken up your cross, and are following

Jesus. The fruit of the Spirit will be manifest in your life and your deeds will be recompensed with life, rather than with death.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on April 18, 2004 by Steve Brandon.
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