

Day 29 ~ FOLLOWERS OF THE CROSS

*"Hereby know we love, because He laid down His life for us:
and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."
1 John 3:16*

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend." Here our Lord reveals to us the inconceivable love that moved Him to die for us. And now under the influence and in the power of that love dwelling in us, comes the message: **"WE OUGHT TO LAY DOWN OUR LIVES FOR THE BRETHREN."** Nothing less is expected of us than a Christ-like life and a Christ-like love, proving itself in all our dealings with our brethren.

The cross of Christ is the measure by which we know how much Christ loves us. That cross is the measure too of the love which we owe to the brethren around us. It is only as the love of Christ on the cross possesses our hearts, and daily animates our whole being, that we shall be able to love the brethren. Our fellowship in the cross of Christ is to manifest itself in our sacrifice of love, not only to Christ Himself, but to all who belong to Him.

The life to which John calls us here is something entirely supernatural and divine. It is only the faith of Christ Himself living in us that can enable us to accept this great command in the assurance that Christ Himself will work it out in us. It is He Himself who calls us: *"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."* Nothing less than this, a dying to our own nature, a faith that our "old man," our flesh has been crucified with Christ, so that we no longer need to sin — nothing less than this can enable us to say: *"We love His commandments; this commandment too is not grievous."*

But for such fellowship and conformity to the death of Christ, nothing will avail but the daily, unbroken abiding in Christ Jesus which He has promised us. By the Holy Spirit revealing and glorifying Christ in us, we may trust Christ Himself to live out His life in us. He who proved His love on the cross of Calvary, He Himself, He alone can enable us to say in truth: *He laid down His life for us; we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*

It is only as the great truth of the indwelling Christ obtains a place in the faith of the Church which it has not now, that the Christ-like love to the brethren will become the mark of true Christianity, by which all men shall know that we are Christ's disciples. This is what will bring the world to believe that God has loved us even as He loved Christ. ♥