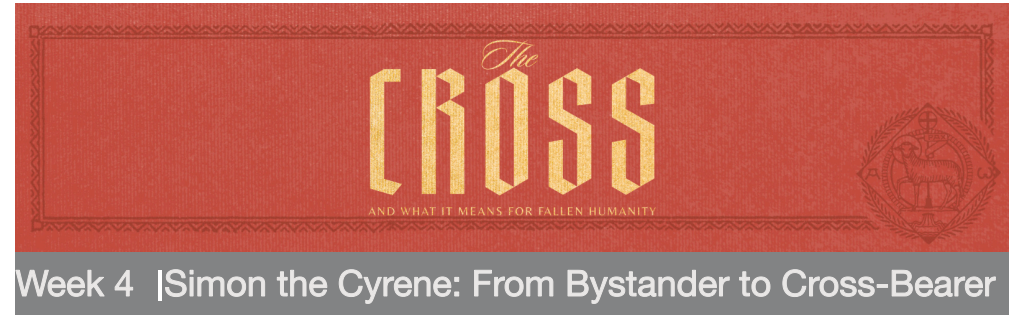


NOTES



Week 4 | Simon the Cyrene: From Bystander to Cross-Bearer

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Jesus to bear the cross for us. As we reflect on the journey of Simon of Cyrene, we ask that You would move us from being mere bystanders to active participants in carrying Your mission. Open our hearts to hear Your voice and follow You wholeheartedly. May Your Spirit guide our discussion and stir us to action. In Jesus' name, Amen.

OPENING QUESTION (OPTIONAL)

Would you rather play in a sports match or cheer from the sidelines? Why?



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WORD

"And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus."

- **Luke 23:26 (ESV)**

Simon of Cyrene's story is a powerful example of unexpected transformation. Mark 15:21 tells us that Simon was just passing by, perhaps going about his ordinary day, when he was pulled from the sidelines and thrust into the most pivotal moment in history. Simon, a man from Cyrene, a city in North Africa with a significant Jewish population, may have been in Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. His cultural and geographical background suggests he was somewhat of an outsider in the crowd, yet he was chosen to carry the cross of the Messiah. This highlights the inclusive nature of God's mission—one that brings people from all nations and walks of life into His redemptive plan.

Luke 23:26 highlights that Simon carried the cross behind Jesus, following Him quite literally. This act of following symbolizes what Jesus calls us to do in Matthew 16:24: "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." Just as Simon's perspective may have shifted from obligation to purpose, our hearts are transformed when we encounter Jesus and respond to His invitation to bear our cross. Simon's experience teaches us that even in moments of unplanned or uncomfortable service, God can reveal His purpose and use us to accomplish His mission.

Who might God be prompting us to serve or to share His love with today? Like Simon, we often step into God's mission unexpectedly. Yet, as we surrender to Jesus and carry our cross, we find purpose, courage, and the joy of walking closely with Him. Simon's story challenges us to embrace opportunities to serve others, even when they come at a cost, trusting that our obedience can lead to transformation for ourselves and those around us. May we follow Jesus not just as spectators of His work, but as active participants in His kingdom.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Can you recall a time when you were called to serve unexpectedly? How did that experience impact your faith or perspective?
- 2 How might Simon's background as a man from Cyrene have influenced his perspective on being asked to serve in this way? What might this mean for us in this day in age?
- 3 In what ways can we "take up our cross" in our daily lives? What might this look like practically?
- 4 How does Simon's example inspire you to step into God's mission, even when it's inconvenient or uncomfortable? Who in your life might God be calling you to serve?

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus,

Lord Jesus, thank You for inviting us to follow You and for showing us what it means to carry our cross. We surrender our lives to You and trust You with our whole hearts. Use us for Your mission and help us see those around us who need Your love. Strengthen us to walk closely with You, bearing the cross with faith and joy. May Your Spirit empower us to live for Your glory. In Your precious name, Amen.