

Picked to Carry a Cross!

Cornerstone Community Church – Pastor Jerry Ernst
March 8, 2026

Scripture: Mark 15:17-24, Mark 8:34

Being publically forced to respond requires clarity and certainty!

Question: Have you ever been chosen for something you didn't want to do?

Inconvenient circumstances...

- They make us *irritable*.
- They make us *time conscious*.
- They come at the *worst possible times*.

Crucifixion in Bible times: When a criminal faced sentencing for crucifixion (Mark 15:20), he was taken from the judgment hall and set in the middle of four Roman soldiers. The criminal carried the beam of his own cross upon his own shoulders (weighing 30-40 pounds). Then, by the longest route possible, the criminal was on display as *a warning* to those he passed by. A Roman soldier held a sign with the crime written on it - and walked ahead of the criminal's procession.

SIMON OF CYRENE: Picked to Carry a Cross! (Mark 15:17-24)

Simon of Cyrene - There are nine Simons mentioned in the Bible.

- Mark 15:21-22 mentions "*Simon of Cyrene*."
- Simon was a Jew who came back to Jerusalem to celebrate "Passover."

Cyrene: An important city in Libya, Northern Africa - modern day, *Tripoli*.

- This city had a large Jewish population.

Simon of Cyrene...

1) ...was PICKED inconveniently out of the crowd (Mark 15:21) - "(21) A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry a cross."

SIGN: A Roman soldier would take their spear – tap the flat of the blade on a person's shoulder and they were immediately "chosen" for service.

- Simon's plans were interrupted; The cross became inconvenient!

2) ...was FORCED to carry a cross not his own - "(21) ...they forced him to carry a cross."

FORCED: (Gk: *aggareuó*): "*to impress, compel*."

Luke 23:26 – Simon walked behind Jesus and carried this instrument of death.

3) ... went from spectator in the crowd, to a PARTICIPANT with Jesus - "(22) They brought Jesus to the place called *Golgotha* (which means *The Place of the Skull*). (23) Then they offered Him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. (24) And they crucified him. Divided up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get."

- Simon's experience changed his life & understanding of Jesus.

Golgotha: The very place Jesus was crucified (Calvary). Isaac was to be sacrificed by Abraham in this very same place (Genesis 22 foreshadowing).

Bible verses: Simon of Cyrene

Matthew 27:32 - "(32) Him they compelled **to bear** His cross."

Mark 15:21 - "(21) Then they compelled a certain man...**to bear** His cross."

Luke 23:26 - "(26) ...and on him they laid the cross that he might **bear it** after Jesus."

BEAR (Gk: *airó*): "to carry, lift, take up, raise, endure, uphold."

WHAT LOAD ARE YOU BEARING TODAY? If it is for Christ, He'll know you are His!

Bearing Our Cross for Jesus teaches us...

- 1) THE CROSS **PERSONALLY** COSTS US.
- 2) THE CROSS IS **EVIDENCE** FOR OUR FAITH.
- 3) THE CROSS **IDENTIFIES THE CHRISTIAN** WITH JESUS CHRIST.

Mark 8:34 "(34) ...Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and **take up his cross**, and follow Me."