

Consider-ables w/Max Lucado

Take Up Your Cross

by Max Lucado

The phrase “take up your cross” has not fared well through the generations. Ask for a definition, and you’ll hear answers like, “My cross is my mother-in-law, my job, my bad marriage, my cranky boss, or the dull preacher.” The cross, we assume, is any besetting affliction or personal hassle. My thesaurus agrees. It lists the following synonyms for cross: *frustration, trying situation, snag, hitch, and drawback.*

The cross means so much more. It is God’s tool of redemption, instrument of salvation—proof of his love for people. To take up the cross, then, is to take up Christ’s burden for the people of the world.

Though our crosses are similar, none are identical. “*If any of you want to be my followers, you must forget about yourself. You must take up your cross each day and follow me*” (Luke 9:23 CEV, emphasis mine).

We each have our own cross to carry—our individual calling. Discover your God-designed task. It fits. It matches your passions and enlists your gifts and talents. Want to blow the cloud cover off your gray day? Accept God’s direction.

“*The Lord has assigned to each his task*” (1 Corinthians 3:5 NIV). What is yours? What is your unique call, assignment, mission? A trio of questions might help.

In what directions has God taken you?

What needs has God revealed to you?

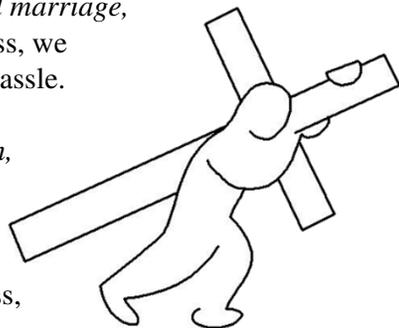
What abilities has God given to you?

Direction. Need. Ability. Your spiritual DNA. You at your best. You and your cross.

While none of us is called to carry the sin of the world (Jesus did that), all of us can carry a burden for the world.

Check your vital signs. Something stirs you. Some call brings energy to your voice, conviction to your face, and direction to your step. Isolate and embrace it. Nothing gives a day a greater chance than a good wallop of passion.

From *Great Day Every Day: Navigating Life’s Challenges with Promise and Purpose* -- Copyright (Thomas Nelson, 2012) Max Lucado



Responsive Reading: Deuteronomy 20:15-20a

LDR: I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil.

ALL: **If we obey the commandments of the LORD our God...**

PC: by loving the LORD...

PC: by walking in his ways...

PC: by keeping his commandments...

PC: by obeying his statutes...

PC: by following his ordinances.

ALL: **Then we shall live and multiply, the LORD our God will bless us.**

LDR: I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse.

ALL: **We choose life.**

PC: We and our descendants will live.

PC: We will love the LORD our God.

PC: We will obey his voice.

PC: We will cling to him.

PC: We will follow him.

ALL: **We, therefore, shall have life and length of days.**

LDR: You shall live!

Lesson: Isaiah 6:1-8

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another and said: “*Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.*”

The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. And I said: “*Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!*”

Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. ...



Lesson... (cont'd)

The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: "Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out."

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!"

Gospel: Luke 5:1-11

Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink.

But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who are partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people."

When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.



Church Council Membership – New/Returning Members -

Deb Stenberg, Shirley Gillard, and Vicki Bengtson are newly-elected to the council while Jerry & Diane Youngquist were re-elected. Thanks to all for your service! And **special thanks** to Karen Almendinger (stepping down) for her terrific service as council secretary!

Women’s Pregnancy Support – We will once again support pregnant women through the Baby Bottle Campaign. Proceeds raised from now through the end of February will go to Options For Women (a pregnancy resource center in North Branch). Please consider putting a donation (loose change, bills, checks) into the large baby bottles on the table in the entryway.

Men’s Bible Study – a men's group will start meeting on the 2nd Saturdays of each month from 8:30 to 9:30 for a discussion/book study on living passionately for God. Brunch-like food will be served. Please express your interest to either Pr. Rob or to Hans, who will be facilitating it.

Women’s Bible Study Group – Pr. Ellen has begun a new session of her growing-more-popular study group to discuss “holy relationships.” These sessions are informal and interesting and you won’t be disappointed in the outcome. There is one session left before Lent – Feb. 20th

Lutheran-ables...From “The Lutheran Handbook II”

Telling the difference between “Vocation” & “Vacation

Martin Luther’s doctrine of vocation is radical because Luther says that a holy “calling” (which is what the word vocation means) is not limited to people who are pastors or missionaries. Rather, any job or career is holy when a Christian performs it as part of her or his baptismal call from God to serve others.

- I. **Consider the role of money in the context of the activity** – If someone is paying you (however little) rather than making you pay for the opportunity to do the activity, you may be living a vocation, rather than being on vacation.
- II. **Assess the measure and type of fatigue that result from the activity** – If you are working very hard and getting very tired, but you are not exhausted or downcast, you may be living a vocation rather than a vacation . This is a point where vocation and vacation may overlap; discern carefully. ___(cont’d next week)



Grin-able(s)...

Kiss the frog...

Two old guys are playing tennis. At one point, the ball rolls into some bushes and, when one of the players goes to retrieve it, he is confronted by a frog claiming to be a beautiful princess who has been turned into a frog by a mischievous wizard. If the player will kiss her, the frog assures him, she will revert to her natural princess state and marry him, and they'll both live happily ever after. The player pockets the frog and returns to the game. After a bit, the frog, inside the player's pocket croaks, "Sir, did you forget about me? I'm this beautiful princess, turned into a frog, if you kiss me . . ." and so forth, to which she receives the reply, "Dear lady frog, I will be completely honest with you. I have reached the age at which I would rather have a talking frog than a new wife."

