

SIMON OF CYRENE

Making the Bible Come Alive

The carrier

WHO WAS THIS PERSON?

- He was from Cyrene in Africa (Matthew 27:32).
- He was the father of Alexander and Rufus (Mark 15:21).
- He was the man charged by the Roman soldiers to carry the cross of Jesus out of Jerusalem.



WHAT IS THIS PERSON KNOWN FOR?

- Simon of Cyrene is mentioned in the books of Matthew (Matthew 27:32), Mark and Luke.
- He was returning from the field (Luke 23:26).
- The soldiers forced him to carry the cross of Jesus, so that he would carry it behind Jesus (Mark 15:21).

WHY DO YOU THINK THIS PERSON HAS BEEN INCLUDED IN GOD'S STORY?

- **God can use people of any nationality.** Since Simon is described as being from Cyrene, we do not know if he was visiting or living in Jerusalem, but what we do know is that the gospels draw attention to the fact that this man had a foreign origin. He was an African. He was useful in helping Jesus carry his cross. He did not choose but was chosen, in the same way, when we become followers of Christ, we are to follow where God leads us and simply obey and serve others.
- **God wants us to take up our cross.** Luke is the only one of the gospels that says that Simon carried the cross behind Jesus. All the other gospels that mention him simply say that he was carrying it. As Jesus said, (Luke 9:23), "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me." We can see a physical example in Simon of Cyrene. He is a picture of what it is to be a disciple, we are to do the tasks that God asks of us and simply follow him even though sometimes it is difficult.





• **God's time may not be my time.** The fact that Simon was so suddenly and unexpectedly chosen for this weighty task teaches us that we do not always choose the time or the task. Simon was a real historical figure, and he was there at a real historical moment. We don't always choose the moment when God gives us a task. Sometimes they come unexpectedly, frighteningly, heavily, painfully, or perhaps at a good time. Simon was chosen seemingly at random, for he had just returned from the fields. This is a lesson for us: at every moment of our life, we must be ready to accomplish the task that God asks of us as Paul wrote: "God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work." (2 Timothy 3:17).

LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

Pose the following two questions to your children, one at a time. Allow for interaction and discussion, letting them share their thoughts while you guide the conversation.

- What life lessons can I learn from this Bible character about how I should and should not live?
- Based on what I have learned from this Bible character, how can I live in a way that is pleasing to God.

MORE IN GOD'S WORD

Challenge yourself to find five minutes each day for a week, to quiet your spirit, finding a spot where you are not distracted, and practice just listening to God and being in tune with Him. Take your Bible to that quiet place. Use some of that time to pray, and some time to just meditate on His Word. Keep your ears and your heart open to what God is wanting to say to you. It's not a matter if IF He wants to talk to you. He does want to speak. But, He also wants you to be ready and positioned for listening, so you can actually hear in your heart what He is saying. Then, respond in obedience with a heart that is open to what God would have you to do. God called Samuel three times. How many times is He calling you? The more you spend time in His presence, the less He will have to try calling you over and over again. Maybe you will hear His voice the very first time He calls!

