

Lilias Trotter's *Parables of the Cross*

Study Guide



Introduction

You have taken the challenge of reading and absorbing *Parables of the Cross* by Lilias Trotter. LT has penned and illustrated a book to be read and reread, discussed and mulled over. *Parables* is a book about dying. Why read a book about death? Our culture preaches *live your life your way*. Why reprint a book written so long ago about death and death to self? LT challenges our cultural mores by proposing the way to live fully and joyfully through dying to self. She painted exquisite illustrations from nature to clarify her text. *Parables* is an accounting to consider prayerfully and use as a pointer to ways God might work with and through you.

The first words of Lilias's book are *death is the gate of life*. What did this mean for Jesus? What does it mean for us now—before we are gasping for our last breath? On our journey, we are asked to let go, to surrender ourselves to God in small ways. The death God asks of one of His children is not the death required of each. One may be required to leave for a far land; another to die to travel, remaining in place. One may be required to die to a dear relationship; another to die to other relationships to protect a specific one. A believer may be required to leave the known for unknown adventure; another asked to remain faithful in ordinary life. Children of a loving Father rest as He chooses the path they walk. Each must trust the One who is the Resurrection and the Life to pour out His grace for the life He gives. Care must be taken not to place one life as exemplary and another as "second best."

For LT, death is freeing us to live under the Holy Spirit's control, filled with the love of God our Father. Death to self is ultimately about a heart free to worship Him. Who or what is first in my heart? That determines what I will worship and what will have control. LT challenges us as believers to recognize, by the work of the Spirit, loves at the center of our hearts; to observe so that we can die to those loves and their control. We are then set free to worship God, the Father whose perfect love fills our hearts.

Two more thoughts to consider: (1) The believer may find that a "dying" is not a one-time event. Something may have to be faced more than once. Also, the required sacrifice could be eventually returned to the believer to hold as if in a trust—in a new and freer way. Elisabeth Elliot has described this dying as holding a gift with an "open hand" to be taken or allowed to remain. (2) Perhaps in every life there will be a death of some kind. God led LT to die to her country, her family and friends, her art, and the life she knew. But had she remained in England, she would have died to a vocation of international service, adventure, many new people to love, and a deep walk with her Savior. Finally, in her adopted country, her loving Father freed her to develop her art.

This study guide provides the reader a short summary of the *Parables of the Cross* book text, Scripture verses to read along with questions, page numbers of *Parables* for referencing, and further questions to expand consideration of the text. We encourage readers not to skip what might be familiar Scripture verses. Reading and considering them again will seal them in your heart.

Note that the text of the Bible was so familiar to LT that she did not include references to the verses that seem to flow into her writing. A list of verses, noted with page numbers, is included at the end of the study.

Lesson 1: Death Is the Gate of Life

(*Parables of the Cross*, pages 5–10)



Section summary: Growing in knowledge of the blessing of God brings us to a crossroad. Life lived on its own brings us to despair. Death is the “gate of life.” It is seen in the floral world of nature. It is evidenced and personalized in the death and resurrection of Christ. “He loved me and gave Himself for me,” a sinner. As we begin to understand this redemptive work on our behalf, we grasp the importance of death for life.

Scripture reading: Genesis 3:1–15; Romans 5:5–8; Hebrews 2:14–18; Galatians 2:20

What does Genesis 3 tell us went wrong in God’s perfect world? Consider Genesis 2:17 and 3:4 (“You will not surely die” NIV). What kind of death came because of Adam and Eve’s sin? To what death does Genesis 3:15 point?

What did Jesus accomplish by His death? Why did He die (Rom. 5:5–8)?

Read Hebrews 2:14–18. Consider the reason Jesus had to die as fully human and fully God.

Galatians 2:20 says that we are crucified with Christ. From that verse note the contrast between death and life. How can we be crucified and yet live?

What does life in Christ look like for you personally? (Write this down so you can compare it to your responses later in the study.)

Parables of the Cross: Read pages 5–10 and consider the following:

- LT reminds us that death brings the thought of decay and dissolution and doom because of “the curse.” What happened in Genesis 3 that brought a curse on humanity?
- Is there any release or freedom from that curse? What answer does LT provide as our only hope?
- LT states that the death of Christ is “death’s triumph hour” (p. 5). What did Christ win for us? How can His death lead us to triumphal deaths in our lives? (Remember that death is not a good thing in itself but a “gate” to blessing.)
- LT notes that we come to the gate again and again, and that it is a deeper dying each time. What is this gate of dying? To what does it lead (p. 6)?
- Paraphrase LT’s example of the chestnut. What does this metaphor say to you personally?
- LT says, “Death is the only way out of the world of condemnation wherein we lie” (p. 9). How do Galatians 2:20 and Romans 5:5–8 express the hope that lies beyond condemnation? What has God poured out (Rom. 5:5) to lead us from death to life?
- As you begin this study of *Parables of the Cross*, take time to walk, sit outside, or enjoy a house plant. Ask God to help you notice aspects of nature that illustrate the dying, living, and fruitfulness that LT describes. Her delight in God’s creation led her to delight in God Himself.

For further consideration:

John Piper, concerning Galatians 2:20:

What Paul means is that there was an “I” who died, and there is a different “I” who lives. That is what it means to become a Christian . . .

. . . The new self is Christ living in me . . . I take this to mean the new self is defined by Christ’s presence and help at all times. —*Fifty Reasons Why Jesus Came to Die*

George MacDonald:

The first thing in all progress is to leave something behind; to follow Him is to leave one’s self behind. —“Self-Denial” in *Unspoken Sermons*

C. S. Lewis, in the essay “The Weight of Glory”:

We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased. —*The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*

John Piper:

Paul's point is that life and death, for a Christian, are acts of worship—they exalt Christ and magnify Him and reveal and express His greatness—when they come from an inner experience of treasuring Christ as gain. Christ is praised in death by being prized above life. And Christ is most glorified in life when we are most satisfied in Him even before death. —*The Dangerous Duty of Delight*

Hymn reflection:

In the Cross of Christ I Glory

John Bowring

In the cross of Christ I glory,
towering o'er the wrecks of time;
all the light of sacred story
gathers round its head sublime.

When the woes of life o'ertake me,
hopes deceive and fears annoy,
never shall the cross forsake me:
Lo, it glows with peace and joy.

Lesson 2: Death to Sin's Penalty Is the Gate to a Life of Justification

(*Parables of the Cross*, pages 10–15)



Section summary: It is impossible for anyone to grow in the spiritual life apart from the cross of Jesus Christ. God's final goal for the believer is not mere safety, but holy living. If a believer relies on personal striving, there will be a constant struggling with sin. There must be a barrier "between ourselves and the old nature" (p. 15). That barrier is found at the cross.

Scripture reading: 1 Peter 3:18; Romans 3:23–26; Romans 6:1–14

What did the death of Christ accomplish for the Christian?

According to Romans 3:23–26, how is the believer justified? To clarify your thoughts, write a statement defining justification as you understand it.

How was our justification or freedom from the penalty of sin accomplished and by whom (Rom. 3:23–26)?

Where do you struggle with recurring sin? What are some truths that we can access in our frustration with our sin? Begin listing those truths from Romans 6. Add to the list as you discover others.

Parables of the Cross: Read pages 10–15 and consider the following:

- How does LT define justification? What does she say about any other way to find peace with God?
- As you read through the book, consider LT’s definition of holiness (p. 11). Is it similar or different from your own? What does Romans 8:28–30 describe as God’s goal for us?
- Have you at times sensed a dwindling or weakening in your life? What might be the cause? LT reminds us of the struggle from Romans 7:24: “Oh, wretched man that I am . . .”
- On page 12, how does LT bring the reader from the struggle of Romans 7 to the freedom of Romans 8:1?
- How does the example of leaves on a plant expand her idea of “back to the Cross again”?
- Begin a personal spiritual timeline that shows deaths to self in your life journey. Add signs of Christ’s new life growing in your life.

For further consideration:

Timothy Keller, on Romans 3:26:

A wrathful God without grace will never give you the motivation to live a decent life. You will feel crushed and despairing, or angry and defiant, and always be unloving, because fear can’t produce love. If you have a God only made of standards and judgment, you will be a driven person, never able to live up to his standards, always fleeing from him.

The wonder of the cross is that in the very same stroke it satisfies both the love of God and the justice of God. At the very same moment it shows us that God is *both* the Judge, who cares enough about his world to set standards and hold us accountable to them; *and* the Justifier, who has done everything necessary to forgive and restore us. He is a Father worth having, and he is a Father we can have. —*Romans 1–7 for You*

Rankin Wilbourne and Brian Gregor:

The Gospel says that in Christ you have been completely and definitely accepted. You want to be holy—not so you can be accepted but because you have already been. You want to be holy so you can experience more and more communion with God (1 John 2:6). You want to be holy—not so you will be loved but because you want to experience the love of God more and more. You want to experience God’s loving embrace. You want to know God more each day through obeying him more each day.

When the beauty of holiness and the joy of communion come together in your desire, the call to cruciform living becomes a call to holiness and happiness . . . Communion with God is the joy set before us and our very great reward. —*The Cross before Us*

Hymn reflection:

What Wondrous Love Is This

American Folk Hymn

What wondrous love is this,
 O my soul, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this
 that caused the Lord of bliss
to lay aside His crown for my soul, for my soul,
 to lay aside His crown for my soul.

To God and to the Lamb,
 I will sing, I will sing.
To God and to the Lamb, I will sing.
To God and to the Lamb who is the great I AM,
 while millions join the theme,
I will sing, I will sing.
 While millions join the theme I will sing.

Lesson 3: Death to Sin Is the Gate to a Life of Holiness

(*Parables of the Cross*, pages 15–31)



Section summary: To grow in one's life with Christ, sin must be shut off. This process depends on the decisions of the believer and the ongoing work of God through His Spirit, reaching toward maturity through the process of sanctification. God can triumph even in the most difficult seasons of life. Becoming more like Christ through His death and resurrection is not solely for one's personal benefit. A believer is called to spread the Good News among others. A self-centered focus results in barrenness. But a surrendered life brings "God-blessed treasure," as in the life of Christ (see p. 31).

Scripture reading: Colossians 3:1–12; John 16:7–15; Romans 8:5–11, 14–17

In Colossians 3:1–10, what does Paul tell us to "seek" or "set"? And "put to death" (v. 5)? In verses 9–10, what are we to "put off" and "put on"? In verse 12a, how does remembering who we are help us in the task of dying to sin? Prayerfully envision what a life of holiness would look like for you. What specific attitudes or actions (possibly in regard to specific people) would you discard or put on?

In John 16:7–15, what does Jesus say about the work of the Holy Spirit? What will the Holy Spirit do for us to lead us to holiness?

According to Romans 8:5–17, what glorious truths will empower us to continue our growth toward Christlikeness?

Parables of the Cross: Read pages 15–31 and consider the following:

- What do you think LT means by “ego” on page 15?
- LT outlines two ways, or two parts, to dying to sin. What are they (p. 16)? What light does Romans 5:5 shed on this process?
- Is dying to sin a gradual process? Consider the LT’s comments on pages 16 and 25. Do you agree? How is her example of the flowering rush helpful (pp. 20–25)?
- Are sins of the old life the same for every believer? How do we respond when someone has given up something that we have not?
- How does LT define holiness or sanctification? What is the starting point (p. 20)? Consider LT’s comments on page 20 along with the passage from Romans 8. Who is responsible for our sanctification?
- In what way is our Christian identity shaped by the process of our sanctification? How does focusing on the glory of the Father and all He has accomplished for us help us establish that identity? “What more do we need for our souls than to have this God for our God” (p. 25)?
- LT uses the example of the gorse bush to encourage the believer when no change is visible (p. 26). She quotes Hebrews 12:11 and then says, “Take the very hardest thing in your life . . . and expect God to triumph gloriously in that very spot” (p. 29). Consider the illustration on page 27. How does it speak to you: set in pain comes “the jewel of His joy”? Journal or discuss a situation in which you can expect God to triumph gloriously.
- Perhaps you have turned from sin but do not experience the joy and peace of the Holy Spirit. Return to Romans 8:14–17. What encouragement does Paul provide?
- What is the danger of focusing on growth only for ourselves (p. 29)? Where have you seen God leading you out to service of others? Where do you see God leading you now? How does the example of the opal expand the idea (p. 30)? What does LT mean by “an utter yielding of our best” (p. 31)?

For further consideration:

Saint Augustine of Hippo, describing his dramatic conversion from a life of reckless sin and disordered loves:

How sweet all at once it was for me to be rid of those fruitless joys which I had once feared to lose? . . . You drove them from me, you who are the true, the sovereign joy. You drive them from me and took their place, you who are sweeter than all pleasure.

Rebecca Pippert:

Whatever controls us is our lord. The person who seeks power is controlled by power. The person who seeks acceptance is controlled by the people he or she wants to please. We do not control ourselves. We are controlled by the lord of our lives. —*Out of the Salt Shaker & into the World*

This prayer by Evelyn Bence relates to LT's text on page 20:

Brother Lawrence gave his life to You on a bleak winter day. With his eyes he saw an ordinary tree, wind stripped of leaves, stark, gaunt, heavy with the look of death. But in his mind he saw the same tree in summer, plush, rich with green, which clung to its branches, which hid a village of birds. If such transformation was a sample of Your work, he wanted the same for himself. You heard his prayer, Lord. With his permission, You watered him, warmed him, bathed him in Your presence until he budded into life. Now, three centuries later, my request must sound familiar to you: I see a tree in winter and I know Your power hasn't diminished. —*The Promise*

Prayer by Saint Catherine of Siena:

Clothe me, clothe me with yourself.

Hymn reflection:

I Surrender All

J. W. Van Deventer

All to Jesus I surrender,
all to Him I freely give;
I will ever love and trust Him,
in His presence daily live.

All to Jesus I surrender,
humbly at His feet I bow,
worldly pleasures all forsaken,
take me, Jesus, take me now.

All to Jesus I surrender,
Lord, I give myself to Thee;
fill me with Thy love and power,
let Thy blessing fall on me.

Lesson 4: Death to Lawful Things Is the Gate to a Life of Surrender

(*Parables of the Cross*, pages 32–43)



Section summary: God may ask us to “loosen” our grasp on people, places, or things that are good things, “lawful things.” God asks believers to die to self in varying ways, while holding everything loosely. Dying even to lawful things liberates new power in the believer. The dying will go deeper as life goes on. One result will be greater love for all people.

Scripture reading: Matthew 16:24–26; Philippians 2:1–11, 15; Philippians 3:7–11; 2 Corinthians 8:9; 2 Corinthians 4:7–12, 16–18; 1 John 3:16

In Matthew 16:24–26, Jesus brings us, as LT says, “back to the cross.” What do these verses teach about dying/living, grasping/releasing? What does the believer gain?

According to Philippians 2, what is the heart attitude we need? How is it like Christ? In verses 9–11, what is the final glory? In verse 15, we are shown the end result.

Note in Philippians 3:7–11 the progression of gain, loss, gain. What is the believer’s final gain?

In 2 Corinthians 8:9, Paul explains the grace of Jesus in another way. How does Paul explain what Christ has done for you? How does this apply to your life?

Death seems to be a constant for the Christian. As explained in 2 Corinthians 4:7–12, what do believers carry in their bodies? How can this be a grace for us? According to verses 16–18, how can we not lose heart? How is the “eternal weight of glory” (King James Version) an anchor for your life?

First John 3:16 pictures of how Jesus’s death is evidenced in the believer’s life and how it affects others. What evidence of this transformation do you see unfolding in your life?

Parables of the Cross: Read pages 32–43 and consider the following:

- LT begins this section with the lesson of the buttercup. Paraphrase that lesson in your own words. Why would God ask us to be “hands off” of the treasures He has given? Do you live in an area where buttercups grow wild? What do you notice about the buttercup?
- Have you struggled with “partial relaxing of grasp” (p. 32)? Is it realistic to think that you can settle something in your heart completely all at once? Compare this with the idea of giving to Jesus what you know right now, knowing that He will ask more if need be.
- In your life, who chooses what you will hold loosely? Do we hold all in life loosely? What do you think are the heart results of that kind of holding?
- LT says letting go is simply yielding (p. 35). To whom do we yield these things? How can that comfort and encourage your heart? How does the “gain” of Philippians 3:7–11 fill to overflowing the heart space created by yielded things? How can this heart space make room not only for God’s presence, but also for the needs of others?
- Has God ever asked you to yield over something that He later returned to you? Describe that time and its significance for/in your faith journey.
- LT encourages the believer to enjoy “His April days” while you have them. It is important to remember in the midst of lessons on dying that “every stage of the heavenly growth in us is lovely to Him; He is the God of the daisies and the lambs and the merry child hearts!” (p. 36). How and when have you seen April days mixed in with days of dying?
- List—and savor—some of the rewards of dying (p. 39). LT writes, “It is loss to keep when God says ‘give.’”
- How does LT tell us we can experience freedom (pp. 39–40)?
- On page 43, we learn that “deeper and deeper must be the dying, for wider and fuller is the lifetide that it is to liberate.” What is LT teaching us? Have you seen this in your life? What is the grace that leads us?
- LT writes about dying to all that is “merely human” (p. 43). Is anything in life merely human? What can she mean by this?
- How has dying to self produced fruitfulness in your life? What signs of Christ’s life do you see growing in you?

For further consideration:

Jesse Penn-Lewis, an acquaintance of Lillas—in relation to Philippians 2:

He, as God, deliberately laid aside His position and power.
He deliberately took the form of a servant.

He deliberately took the place of weakness.
He, as a man, deliberately humbled Himself.
He deliberately carried out an obedience even unto death.
He deliberately went to the cross.

“Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus” . . .

Finally . . . We shall see the cross from God’s standpoint and glory in it. The joy set before us, the joy unspeakable and full of glory, shall even now break forth, as with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord. “Wherefore we faint not!” “For our light affliction, which is for the moment works for us . . . [an] eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4:16–17). —*The Message of the Cross*

Elisabeth Elliot:

Open hands should characterize the soul’s attitude toward God—open to receive what He wants to give, open to give back what He wants to take. Acceptance of the will of God means relinquishment of our own [will and plans]. —*A Path through Suffering*

Saint Augustine of Hippo:

But living a just and holy life requires one to be capable of an objective and impartial evaluation of things: to love things, that is to say, in the right order, so that you do not love what is not to be loved, or fail to love what is to be loved, or have a greater love for what should be loved less, or an equal love for things that should be loved less or more, or a lesser or greater love for things that should be loved equally. —*On Christian Doctrine* 1.27–28.

Hymn reflection:

Jesus, Plant and Root in Me

Charles Wesley

Jesus, plant and root in me
all the mind that was in Thee;
Settled peace I then shall find;
Jesus is a quiet mind.

We Give Thee but Thine Own

William W. How

We give thee but Thine own,
whate’er the gift may be:
all that we have is Thine alone,
a trust, O Lord, from Thee.

May we Thy bounties thus
as stewards true receive,
and gladly, as Thou blessest us
to Thee our first fruits give.

To comfort and to bless,
to find a balm for woe,
to tend the lone and fatherless
is angels' work below.

And we believe Thy word,
though dim our faith may be:
whate'er for Thine we do, O Lord,
we do it unto Thee.

Lesson 5: Death to Self Is the Gate to a Life of Sacrifice: Part 1

(*Parables of the Cross*, pages 44–59)



Section summary: The death of the self-life is not hindered merely by selfishness. The death of the self-life is more subtle and may look like sacrifice. Overcoming the self-life is not accomplished by struggling or wrestling but by dying to it in Jesus. The gladness of the resurrection results in power set free to multiply new life. Although dying may look different for each believer, sacrifice will overflow in service.

Scripture reading: Romans 12:1; Philippians 2:12–13; 1 Peter 2:4–12; 1 Peter 1:22; John 5:30; 6:38

- In Romans 12:1, Paul notes what spurs us on to sacrifice. How does God's great mercy enable us to offer ourselves as a sacrifice? What does Paul call that sacrifice? How is sacrifice worship?
- What does Philippians 2:12–13 say about who is responsible for our growth in Christ?
- What is meant by "spiritual sacrifices" in 1 Peter 2:5? List the truths of 1 Peter 2:9–10. How do they encourage us in making "spiritual sacrifices"?
- According to 1 Peter 1:22, what is the result of an obedient walk with Christ?
- What does Jesus say about Himself in John 5:30 and 6:38? How should that instruct us? How do you respond when you realize that even Jesus laid down His own will?

Parables of the Cross: Read pages 44–59 and consider the following:

- LT uses the examples and images of the dandelion, wild iris pods, and oat grass to explore the truths of sacrifice. How are these examples helpful to you?

- The above examples do not hold on to their petals or pods but give freely. In contrast, LT says that believers often do not let go because of “mere selfishness” (p. 47). What are some subtle reasons why what looks like sacrifice may not be what it seems? (See p. 47 for LT’s list.) Are there others?
- LT calls this deeper surrender to the self-life the “last surrender” (p. 47). What do you think this means?
- LT says (p. 48) that it is not by struggling and wrestling that we lay down the self-life but by dying to it in Jesus. Can even that dying be a work that I try to do myself? Does LT get at the heart of what strengthens the believer to give all to Jesus? A paragraph from her book *The Sevenfold Secret* may be helpful:

Again, as the bread satisfies the hunger of the body, so this indwelling of Christ in us satisfies the hunger of the soul, until it becomes rested through and through. And we believe that this hunger of the soul has been granted to you . . . by the Grace of God, to prepare you for the satisfying that is to be found in our Lord the Christ according to these His words: “He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth in me shall never thirst.” (p. 15)

- How does the deep love of God the Father—shown in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the filling of our hearts by the Holy Spirit—enable us to release completely our hearts and lives to Him?
- LT gives new meaning to 2 Timothy 2:12. On page 54, what does “reigning with Him” mean? What can it look like in your life? Can you see ways that your life brings glory to Jesus? If not, try consider asking for input from a trusted friend.
- On pages 54 and 57, LT testifies to the riches of this life that is surrendered to Jesus. Which of those are especially important for you?
- How can it be helpful (p. 59) to remember that we are not responsible for “the tangible results of our ministry to others”? What does a ministry that demonstrates the Spirit look like? Where have you seen or experienced this?

For further consideration:

Rankin Wilbourne and Brian Gregor quote Nietzsche as writing:

Nietzsche, who is the actual originator of the phrase “long obedience in the same direction,” writes of the importance of the thousand tiny decisions that make up our days: “The little vegetation that grows in between everything and understands how to cling everywhere, this is what ruins what is great in us—the quotidian, hourly pitifulness of our environment that goes overlooked, the thousand tiny tendrils of this or that small and small-minded feeling growing out of our neighborhood, our job, the company we keep, the division of our day. If we allow these small weeds to grow unwittingly, then unwittingly they will destroy us!” — *The Cross before Us*

C. S. Lewis:

About the past, and nothing being lost, the point is that “He who loses his life shall save it” is *totally* true, true on every level. *Everything* we crucify will rise again; *nothing* we try to hold onto will be left us. —C. S. Lewis *Collected Letters* [letter to Dom Bede Griffiths, May 25, 1944]

John Wesley:

If we do not continually deny ourselves, we do not learn of Him, but of other masters . . . If we are not walking in the way of the cross, we are not following Him; we are not treading in His steps; but going back from, or at least wide of, Him. —“On Self-Denial”

Hymn reflection:

Take My Life and Let It Be

Frances Ridley Havergal

Take my life and let it be
consecrated, Lord, to Thee.
Take my moments and my days,
let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move
at the impulse of thy love.
Take my lips and let them be
filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold;
not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect and use
every power as Thou shalt chose.

Take my love, my Lord, I pour
at Thy feet its treasure store.
Take myself, and I will be
ever, only all for Thee.

Lesson 6: Death to Self Is the Gate to a Life of Sacrifice: Part 2

(*Parables of the Cross*, pages 59–64)



Section summary: Life leads on to a new death, which then brings new life: “God’s Divine spiral” (p. 60). The lesson from sphagnum is that death is crowned with new life. In LT’s *Parables of the Cross*, death has been emphasized, but life is uppermost. Death is a gateway to life, so we should not be filled with gloom. Our works will remain after us if Jesus carries. What are the endless possibilities of what God will do? Surrender and sacrifice, which lead us back to the cross of Jesus, can be seen in nature and tested again and again in the life of the believer.

Scripture reading: Romans 6:8–14; Philippians 1:20–24; Galatians 2:20; Luke 20:38; 2 Corinthians 9:6–10; Psalm 37:4–6

- Back to Romans 6:8–14 again. With whom have we died? Because He lives, how should we view death? On page 60, LT says that death is a gateway and “is never a dwelling-place; the death-stage is never meant for our souls to stay and brood over, but to pass through with a will into the light beyond.”
- How does Paul face the tension of Philippians 1:20–24 with living for Christ as in Galatians 2:20?
- Write a statement now about your understanding of death and life for the Christian. How might this tension be lived out in your life? Are there places where God has asked you to continue to die? Are there areas He has given the relinquished gift back to you again, perhaps in a different way? If you are familiar with details of LT’s biography, you might consider examples in her life.

- What does Luke 20:38 say about the character of God? How does God’s “glory of His gladness” shining out affect your view of life (p. 63)?
- What does 2 Corinthians 9:8 say about God’s provision for His children? What idols or disordered loves (Augustine) must be given up for the love of God the Father? Which such loves in your life are stubbornly trying to stay alive? On the other hand, have any disordered loves lost their power in your life?
- On what does Psalm 37:4–6 encourage us to focus, given that God is the God of the living?

Parables of the Cross: Read pages 59–64 and consider the following:

- LT quotes Emerson as saying, “There is no end in nature, but every end is a beginning. Every ultimate fact is only the beginning of a new series.” And from Genesis 8:22, “While the earth remaineth seed time and harvest . . .” Where do you see this in nature? How have you seen “God’s Divine spiral” in your own life? How might the realization that in every ending or dying there is a beginning affect the way we see our lives and our work?
- How does LT’s illustration and lesson of the sphagnum moss expand this idea?
- LT reminds the reader that this writing is about dying to self, so the emphasis is on death. But what is our true destination (p. 60)?
- “I live, yet not I, but Christ.” Galatians 2:20 How do you understand this verse at the end of this study, especially with her emphasis not on gloom but gladness?
- LT always hoped for a national church in her adopted country. She did not live to see it. However, at the time of this writing, there is a national church in her adopted country.
- LT quotes Revelation 14:13, “their works will follow them,” if Jesus does not return right away. How can you understand the future of your “works” in light of the life of LT? What perspective does that give you on your own life? How can that be an encouragement to people in full-time ministry? And to believers facing a lack of visible fruit in their work?
- LT is writing about death to the self-life or self-despair. This is a foundation for the rest of life as we walk with Jesus. How does death to self become a “glory of His gladness” shining out of your life? How will you go forward delighting yourself in the Lord?

For further consideration:

John Donne:

I know that when Christ says that “God is not the God of the dead,” he says that to assure me that those whom I call dead are alive. And when the apostle tells me that “God is not ashamed to be called the God of the dead,” he tells me that to assure me that God’s servants lose nothing by dying. —“Sermon 20,” [Easter Day, 1627]

John Piper:

Being dead to the world means that every legitimate pleasure in the world becomes a blood-bought evidence of Christ’s love and an occasion of boasting in the cross. When our hearts run

back along the beam of blessing to the source in the cross, then the worldliness of the blessing is dead, and Christ crucified is everything. —*Fifty Reasons Why Jesus Came to Die*

Samuel Rutherford:

The cross of Christ is the sweetest burden that I ever bore. It is a burden to me such as wings are to a bird or sails are to a ship, to carry me forward to my harbor.

George MacDonald prayer:

Thy breath wakes beauty, love, and bliss, and prayer,
And strength to hang with nails upon Thy cross. --*Diary of an Old Soul*

Hymn reflection:

Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus

Helen Howarth Lemmel

O soul, are you weary and troubled?
No light in the darkness you see?
There's light for a look at the Savior,
and life more abundant and free.

Refrain:

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
look full in His wonderful face,
and the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
in the light of His glory and grace.

Through death into life everlasting
He passed, and we follow Him there;
o'er us sin no more hath dominion
for more than conqu'rors we are!

His Word shall not fail you, He promised;
believe Him and all will be well;
then go to a world that is dying,
His perfect salvation to tell!

O Jesus, I Have Promised

John Ernest Bode

O Jesus, Thou hast promised
to all who follow Thee

that where Thou art in glory
there shall Thy servant be.
And Jesus, I have promised
to serve Thee to the end;
O give me grace to follow,
my Master and my Friend.

In closing: As you complete this study, consider the message of *Parables of the Cross*. Write your thoughts. Which is your favorite of Liliias Trotter's featured drawings? Are there other sketches or drawings of LT's that are favorites? Why? Which of her analogies connected you most deeply with the dear heavenly Father LT wants the reader to know and love? What spiritual truths have you gained to carry with you?

Note: If you are not familiar with some of the hymns, you may find them on YouTube.

Scriptures quoted in *Parables of the Cross*

Genesis 8:22, pp. 59–60

Genesis 18:14, p. 23 illustration

1 Chronicles 29:14, p. 33 illustration

Psalms 78:41, p. 20

Psalms 136:4

Ezekiel 18:20, p. 9

Malachi 1:7, p. 31

Matthew 11:6, p. 35

Matthew 16:25, p. 37 illustration

Matthew 27:46, p. 35

Mark 11:24, p. 26

Luke 20:38, p. 63 (no quotation marks) God not of dead but living

John 5:30, p. 47

John 6:38, p. 47

John 12:24, p. 57

Acts 20:35, p. 30

Romans 6:6, pp. 15, 16

Romans 6:11, p. 13 illustration

Romans 7

Romans 8:1, p. 12

Romans 13:10, p. 48

2 Corinthians 4:12, p. 43

2 Corinthians 6:9, p. 61 illustration

2 Corinthians 8:11, p. 44

2 Corinthians 9:7, p. 49 illustration

2 Corinthians 12:15, p. 51 illustration

Galatians 2:20, pp. 10, 48, 63

Galatians 5:17, p. 11

Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14, p. 7 illustration

Philippians 2:17, p. 43

2 Timothy 2:12, p. 54 (no quotation marks)

Hebrews 2:9, p. 55 illustration

Hebrews 12:11, p. 26

Hebrews: 12:24, p. 9

1 Peter 2:9, p. 55 illustration

1 Peter 3:18, p. 10

2 Peter 3:8, p. 25

1 John 3:16, p. 43

Revelation 1:6, p. 55 illustration

Revelation 2:10, p. 36

Revelation 14:13, p. 65 illustration