

THE WORD OF THE CROSS

1 Cor 1:18

*For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing,
but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."*

Introduction

1. In more recent times we are being told not to focus so much on the cross but to only focus on the Christ. Let us make some important observations:
 - a. If Jesus didn't die on the cross He could not be the Christ. The Scriptures tell us that the Christ would be pierced for our transgressions. (See Psalm 22)
 - b. If Jesus would not have died on the cross he could not bear our iniquities or take the curse of sin. The Scriptures say cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree (See Duet. 21:23)
 - c. If Jesus had avoided the cross there would be no gospel message. Paul said that we preach Christ crucified...not just preach Christ (I Cor. 1:23)
2. Most of us have heard that Jesus the Son of God died on a cross. How many times have you found a cross displayed on a wall, or viewed an image of the Lord on the cross, while taking the time to consider what its significance is all about?
3. Many people cannot comprehend the Almighty Father in heaven sending His Son from a perfect spiritual realm to the world of sinful men. It is hard for us to think that any father would be willing to give his son to die for others.
4. From necklaces to rings that are worn, to pictures in houses and pulpits or other items in church buildings, throughout the world the cross is used to help people remember the death of Jesus.
5. Do we really understand and appreciate all that the cross represents? Why do we sing songs about clinging to the old rugged cross? Why do we pray and thank God for giving His Son on the cross?
6. Let us go back to the cross and read the word of God to fully acknowledge what the cross should mean to us each day. Let us not forget the cross of Christ as we partake of the Lord's Supper.

I. THE CROSS MEANS A CRUCIFIXION

- A. One way of punishing a criminal under the Roman government, was to be nailed and hung on a cross.

1. This method of torture would put the victim in a position to bear a despicable death.
 2. Not able to breathe, most of those crucified will die of suffocation.
 3. The Romans were specialists with this type of punishment, and it was a death that would put these sinners to public shame.
- B. The interesting fact concerning Jesus is that He was not a criminal, yet He was numbered with the transgressors and died for every sinner in the whole world (Isaiah 53:12; I Peter 2:21-24).
1. Tried and not found guilty, the people stilled cried out "Crucify Him, crucify Him". (Luke 23:21).
 2. Jesus, knowing that death was the Father's will for His life (Luke 22:24), went to suffer that painful death.
 3. The cross should mean to us, the innocent death of God's Son for all who are sinful. Do you think about these things as you consider the cross?

II. THE CROSS MEANS A WILLING SACRIFICE

- A. So many times we are told about criminals that run from the consequences of their lawlessness.
1. Not only was Jesus innocent, but He gave His life for each and every sinner freely.
 2. There was no resistance in the garden when they came to arrest Him. There were no remarks of revenge uttered as He was beaten, spat upon and mocked.
 3. Never do we see Jesus trying to avoid what was ultimately the will of the Father in heaven. Rather, Jesus spoke the words, "No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself..." (John 10:18).
 4. No one made Him pay the price for sin. Even Paul wrote down that, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree")..." (Gal. 3:13;).
- B. Jesus made the sacrifice to go to the cross and die.
1. With this sacrifice He knew He was opening the door of peace and fellowship between God and man, even to the bringing of glory to Himself again (Hebrews 12:2)
 2. When we see the cross do we see a willingness to do God's will? Do we see a sacrifice that was given freely by the sacrifice, "*the Lamb of God*"? (See John 1:29)

III. THE CROSS MEANS A MESSAGE OF SALVATION

- A. After Jesus' death, the happenings of this event and the wonderful blessings that would come as a result, became the central message of all that was proclaimed by the followers of Christ...and rightfully so.
1. Paul said that the gospel (good news) is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16).
 2. When people hear about what Jesus did for them, and what they have done against Him, it pierces the heart and causes one to consider their stand before God.
 3. The Corinthians were informed about the good news and their responsibility in trusting and obeying these truths in order to be saved.

Paul recorded, "Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you-- unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures..." (I Cor. 15:1-4).

- B. This is why Paul said earlier in the Corinthian letter, "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (I Cor. 1:18).
1. Have you accepted the message and obeyed the Lord?
 2. Are you seeing the cross as gospel (good news) and spreading it to others?
 3. Does the cross mean foolishness or salvation in your life?

IV. THE CROSS MEANS ALL OF OUR GLORY

- A. People are always concerned about earning salvation and being careful not to do any action in obedience lest they work their way to heaven.
1. While I agree that our glory is not in what we do but in what Jesus did on the cross, Jesus wants us to continue in His words as faithful disciples (John 8:31-32).
 2. Can someone say they believe in Jesus if they will not follow His words for salvation?
 3. We must still obey the commands that Jesus has left for us, yet we boast not in our own work, but glory in the cross of Christ and the works that God has given us as those who desire to be His children through the shed blood of Jesus.

B. Paul said, "For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (I Cor. 2:2).

1. Paul mentioned, "But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ..." (Gal. 6:14)

2. When we read that our sin separates us from God, and that all have sinned (Rom. 3:23; 6:23); that Jesus died on the cross so that we might have the remission of sins through His blood (Matt. 26:28); that remission of sins is obtained in repentance and baptism after believing in Jesus (Acts 2:38); that Jesus is the only way to the Father (John 14:6); that obedience to Jesus is the only way to have the salvation He offers (Hebrews 5:9); then it becomes important to us to glory in the cross of Christ and be faithful to His cause.

3. Have you been crucified with Him? (Rom. 6:1-8)

4. Are you carrying your cross daily as a faithful disciple? (Matt. 10:38)

Conclusion

1. What does the cross mean to you?

2. I hope that today as we partake of the Lord's Supper that it means more to you than every before.

3. While it is true that the cross by itself could not save us without the Christ, remember that the Christ without the cross is also inadequate for salvation.

4. The Bible says in Philippians 2:8-11,

"Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

5. Will you bow with humble hearts as we give thanks for the death of Jesus on the cross and prepare to share in this memorial feast together.

The Message Of The Cross

I Corinthians 1:18

Is a crucifixion...

Is Jesus' sacrifice...

Is full salvation...

Is all our glory...

