

Fourth Annual
TRUTH IN LOVE
LECTURESHIP

Theme:
**The Cross Of
Jesus Christ**



May 18-22, 1994

PAUL SAIN, DIRECTOR

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INTRODUCTION

The theme for the lectureship this year is:
“THE CROSS OF JESUS CHRIST.”

A brief overview of the inspired Word reflects the emphasis we should place upon the cross of Christ. (1) In the Old Testament we see numerous prophetic references to the Messiah who would come to earth and make the redemption possible for all mankind. (2) In Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John (the four accounts of the gospel), we hear Christ often telling His disciples He would be taken and crucified. The Lord’s disciples did not understand all He meant as He spoke these words. In the latter part of the gospel accounts we learn that Christ suffered and died on the rugged cross! (3) In the epistles we find inspired writers reflecting back to what had happened, and pleading with the people of the world to obey the gospel of Christ, for the remission of their sins, which was made possible **ONLY** by the blood of Christ. (4) In the book of Revelation, we see a glimpse of the eternal mansion which we may one day enjoy, as a result of Christ’s death.

An additional way of seeing the importance of Christ’s death on the rugged cross: everything before the time of the cross of Christ points forward to it — and everything after the cross of Christ points backward to it.

Note a few key thoughts conveyed in key passages of Scripture (all emphasis mine, ps).

The apostle Paul would glory **ONLY** in the cross of Christ:

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world (Gal. 6:14).

It is not within man's power to save himself (Jer. 10:23). How thankful we should be that we can be reconciled to God **ONLY** through the cross of Christ:

And that he might **reconcile** both unto God in one body **by the cross**, having slain the enmity thereby (Eph. 2:16).

And having **made peace through the blood of his cross**, by him to **reconcile** all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven (Col. 1:20).

Christ came to earth to do the will of the Heavenly Father. He willingly endured the persecution and pain that wicked man brought upon Him. He humbly obeyed God, and died on the cross for the sins of evil mankind.

And being found in fashion as a man, he **humbled** himself, and became **obedient** unto death, even **the death of the cross** (Phil. 2:8).

The preaching of the cross of Christ is vitally important to the faithful Christian:

For the **preaching of the cross** is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved **it is the power of God** (1 Cor. 1:18).

There were enemies of the cross of Christ in the first century. There are enemies of the cross of Christ today. We must stand strong, faithfully upholding the doctrine of Christ, just as our first century brothers and sisters.

Let us study this great subject – learning as much as possible about the plan of God to redeem man, the purpose of Christ shedding His blood, and

the wonderful benefits of the shed blood of our Lord.

Appreciation Expressed

Words fail to adequately express appreciation and thanks to each one who made it possible for such a series of lessons to occur. May I specifically express appreciation to: **(1) the elders** of the East Hill church, Hugh Cooper, Louie Fuqua, Eldridge Woodard and their families, for their continued faithful and sacrificial service; **(2) the faithful family of God at East Hill**, for their love and support of the truth of Christ, and their continued hard work in His service; and to; **(3) the speakers** and their families, who share their time and talent so graciously in writing the lessons for this book and then the actual presentation during the lectureship.

Only eternity will determine the good that has been accomplished in the presentation of these lessons. It is our sincere prayer that we keep our eyes upon the cross of Christ.

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him **endured the cross**, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (Heb. 12:2).

Paul Sain
Lectureship Director

DEDICATION

The faithfulness and stability of the Lord's church is often reflected in many ways. A few of these "*signs*" would be: willingness to work, dedication to accomplish the Lord's will, keeping on keeping on, attendance to worship services, submission to and love for the authority of God, stability of the home, and many others.

The East Hill family of God is comprised of many faithful Christians. Often we attempt to express appreciation for each one.

This volume of the **TRUTH IN LOVE LECTURESHIP** series is dedicated to twenty-four special couples.

These precious couples reflect love, stability, commitment, devotion, and faithfulness. Each of these couples exchanged marriage vows over **FIFTY YEARS AGO**.

50 th	J. W. & Gladis Alsup	04-08-44
51 st	Wil & Mary Cecil Cordell	08-28-43
51 st	Ed & Pearline Hayes	02-22-43
51 st	Marvin & Dora Wells	11-24-43
51 st	John & Alatha Whitehead	07-10-43
52 nd	James Ed & Helen Holt	09-13-42
52 nd	Horace & Eva Jones	06-11-42
52 nd	Harvey & Mattie McNeese	07-03-42
53 rd	Cecil & Mary Brock	06-26-41
54 th	Tom & Hilda Campbell	12-24-40
55 th	Grady & Chris Crane	06-24-39
55 th	Jimmie & Garnett Nance	07-02-39
55 th	Victor & Mildred Parker	08-26-39
56 th	Robert & Mabel Hughes	07-12-38
57 th	Billy & Mary Ellen Christopher	10-10-37
57 th	Murrey & Estelle Howard	12-05-37
57 th	Herman & Annie Lou Mobley	04-25-37
57 th	Henry & Lillie Young	06-25-37
58 th	Horace & Kittye Locke	05-10-36

59 th	William & Iva Dell Edde	02-23-35
59 th	C. L. & Kathleen Meyer	12-16-35
60 th	Bill & Dora Haislip	12-23-34
61 st	Claude & Pearl Minatra	12-02-33
63 rd	L. K. & Iris White	04-06-31

By this small action, we express a small portion of our love and respect. We shall endeavor to follow their example. We pray that you may have many additional productive and enjoyable years. We appreciate and love you greatly.

Paul Sain
Lectureship Director

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**The
Biblical
Record**

Chapter 1

Why Preach The Cross Of Christ?

Winfred Clark



Winfred Clark serves as an elder of the Hobbs Street church in Athens, Alabama. He has faithfully preached the gospel for almost 50 years. He also directs the **School Of Bible Emphasis**, a unique program that provides classes in various congregations in different states on a monthly basis, utilizing some of the brotherhood's best teachers. Winfred and Polly have been married for 48 years and have two children, and three grandchildren.

This question will serve as the guide for our study of this very vital topic. It will have to do with the reasons we have for preaching the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. One can surely give good reasons for preaching on this great topic for the Bible discusses this subject from the first book in the Bible until the last. There is the scarlet thread that is woven into the very fabric of the Bible. It is at the heart and core of all that God planned for sinful man from the time he sinned (Gen. 3:15). If one were to begin in the book of Revelation, he would read of the "*blood of the Lamb*" (Rev. 7:14). He would read of "*the Lamb that was slain*" (Rev. 5:12). He would read of our being "*washed from our sins in His own blood*" (Rev. 1:5). If you begin in that book and move backward you will find much being said by New Testament writers and speakers. But, you will find the Old Testament writers having much to

say also. You will find this being said until finally you are back to Genesis 3:15. Then one can come to appreciate the cross of our Lord more and more.

Take a moment to think of the fact that Paul, the apostle, did a great deal of preaching. We are also aware of the fact that much of his preaching concerned the cross. There are a number of times when he would mention the cross, or the death of Christ, or the fact that Christ died, or Christ crucified, or the blood of Christ. There can be no doubt about the fact that Paul preached the cross. In fact, he stated, *“But we preach Christ crucified”* (I Cor. 1:23). None of us would doubt for a moment the fact that this good man surely had good reasons for preaching the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. If we can determine why he did so, then surely those reasons should be good enough for us. As we look at a number of references where he mentions the cross, or the death of Christ, we will be able to see what he is seeking to accomplish. We will be able to see why he preached as he did.

To Set Forth God’s Plan For Redemption

This is surely what he had in mind when he wrote to those at Corinth.

But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God (I Cor. 1:23-24).

Why would such preaching be done under these circumstances? The reason is simple. Notice,

For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe (I Cor. 1:21).

The term "*the foolishness of preaching*" means that seems foolish is preached. But it was the cross that was to be preached and this is the message that God would have delivered to men so they might be saved. So the cross is involved in God's plan for man's redemption.

The place of the cross, in relation to redemption, is affirmed over and over in the New Testament. Take the language of Jesus concerning this matter.

Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many (Matt. 20:28).

Does this not show all of us that the cross was in the plan of God in sending Jesus to earth? In fact, John would say,

And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world (I John 4:14).

The angel told Joseph that Jesus would save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21). We would therefore have no doubt about the relation of the cross and redemption. We know that Jesus came to save, but we also know that He came to die. Thus, His coming to die would mean He would save men by dying for their redemption on the cross.

Note again,

And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this

is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins (Matt. 26:27-28).

This event occurred the night before His death and in this conversation our Lord surely related His death on the cross to the redemption of men. If anyone knew the truth about the matter; surely the Lord knew.

It is not only the case that our Lord spoke of the cross and man's redemption, there were others. Take the language of John the Baptist.

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

We need to keep in mind what the angel said to Zacharias concerning John,

For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb (Luke 1:15).

Thus the comments of John are inspired comments. They cannot be wrong. But, these comments relate the taking away of sins to the cross. There is no question in the mind of John concerning the matter of redemption and the cross.

This was true of the apostles. Take the first epistle of Peter. You will find that he spelled this matter out in no uncertain terms. Here is a man who had a great part in the personal ministry of the Lord and he became a great leader in the church of the Lord. He heard the teaching of Christ in person. He was a man who was filled with the Holy

Spirit (Acts 2:3-4). In the later part of his life you will find that he wrote these words. Note,

But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you (I Peter 1:19-20).

Peter had no doubt but that the cross was a part of the plan God had in mind for the redemption of men. This he had preached long before he wrote this epistle and he still believed the same thing.

One will note in his study of the cross and man's redemption that the cross was the means of redemption for all men. It was not just for a few.

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man (Heb. 2:9).

So we see in the cross an "everyman" proposition. He not only died for us, He died for all of us. Again and again we will find this fact affirmed. Note: "*„the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world*" (John 1:29). Again, "*...will draw all men unto myself*" (John 12:32). Again, "*And that he died for all*" (II Cor. 5:15). Also, "*Who gave himself a ransom for all*" (I Tim. 2:6). Again, "*for the sins of the whole world*" (I John 2:2). Finally, "*for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation*" (Rev. 5:9). Passage after passage will show us the universal appeal of the cross. It is by the cross that all may

come to the Lord for redemption.

To Define The Differences Between The Law And The Gospel

Take a moment to note what Paul had to say concerning this matter.

Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances;... (Eph. 2:15).

One would need to keep in mind that Paul was a man who lived under the law of Moses and was a strong advocate for it (Phil. 3:4-6). Yet, you will find time and again that he will speak of the cross in its relation to the law of Moses and the gospel. Take, for example, his letter to the church at Colosse. There is no question in his mind as to the place of the gospel. He will speak of the hope that they have which is laid up in heaven. He says, “*ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel*” (Col. 1:5). He would also have them understand that they are not to be moved away from the hope of the gospel (Col. 1:13). But the hope that we have in the gospel is related to the cross as he said, “*In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins*” (Col. 1:14). So the hope that we have through the gospel is by the blood of His cross. But one will also learn that the cross that becomes the means of our being saved, becomes the instrument that abolished the law of Moses. Note,

Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross (Col. 2:14).

There can thus be no question about the place of the gospel and the law of Moses.

Again, the writer of the book of Hebrews had some things to say about this same thing. Note,

And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance (Heb. 9:15).

Then he moves on to say,

Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (Heb. 10:9-10).

Can one have any doubt about the relationship of the gospel and the law of Moses in this context? The writer will teach lessons on the death of Christ and the cross so as to help these people see the real relationship between the two.

To Emphasize Its Unifying Effect

This is surely a part of the Ephesian letter. Paul dealt with the Jew and Gentile problem in this epistle and would show them that there was indeed a place where they could be united. Notice,

...for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby (Eph. 2:15-16).

He will further show that both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. So Paul would set forth the

fact that it is by the cross that the Gentile could be reconciled unto God in the church. But it was also by the cross that the Jew was to be reconciled unto God in that same body. Each would have to come by the way of the cross. We need to note that this unity takes places in the body. But we know that this body is called the church (Eph. 1:22-23). This would mean that both the Jew and Gentile would find a place for unity in the church. Is this not what Jesus had in mind when He said, “*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me*” (John 12:32)? By drawing the Jew through the preaching of the cross and by drawing the Gentile by the preaching of the cross, these would find themselves united with one another in Christ. This is Paul’s approach in the Ephesian letter but he will relate such to the cross.

One of the most evident letters having to do with unity among brethren would be the letter of Paul to the church at Corinth. Note,

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment (I Cor. 1:10).

Paul was very concerned about their unity. He would speak often of the cross in that connection. He asked, “*was Paul crucified for you?*” (I Cor. 1:13). Again, you will find him saying,

For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the

cross of Christ should be made of none effect
(I Cor. 1:17).

Over and over he will mention the cross in relation to the need for unity. So there can be no question about that matter.

To Assure Christians That Cleansing Is Available

Yes, there are times when the children of God need cleansing. John was well aware of this fact and this is a part of the reason he would say,

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin (I John 1:7).

No, John was not encouraging the children of God to sin. In fact, he said,

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: (I John 2:1).

John was not encouraging a life of sin, but he knew that the child of God could commit an act of sin. He would also know that the child of God would need to be forgiven of such. He would therefore mention the blood of Jesus Christ. That is surely a mention of the cross. That is surely a place and time when John was preaching the cross. But why would he do so? Was it not to assure the child of God that there was a provision made for his cleansing and that would come through and by the cross.

Peter would be well aware of this fact when he

said to Simon,

Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee (Acts 8:22).

We know that forgiveness can come only through the blood. Peter knew this and his admonition would be in line with the teaching of John on this matter.

To Magnify God’s Love And Grace

When one takes the time to read the book of Romans this will become evident. Man’s sinful situation is described in chapters 1-3. It was not just the Gentile that was lost, but the Jew also. In fact, Paul will sum the matter up by saying,

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23).

But there are some provisions that had been made to take care of man’s sin problem. There was a way that a just God could justify sinful man. Let Paul tell us.

Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus (Rom. 3:24-26).

But this does not exhaust the language of Paul as he will address this matter. Note again,

But God commendeth his love toward us, in

that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8).

Notice that he will tie love to the cross. But again, in that marvelous eighth chapter, you will find Paul saying,

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? (Rom. 8:32).

Then he concludes the chapter by affirming that nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God (Rom. 8:39). But all of this is seen so clearly in the cross.

We remember what the Hebrew writer would have to say, *“that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man”* (Heb. 2:9). Note also what Paul will say to those at Corinth.

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain ((Cor. 5:21–6:1).

There can be no question as to what the apostle had in mind. The cross with its bleeding victim was in the background when he speaks of grace being extended to them.

Paul saw that grace extended to him through the cross and he would never forget it. Note what he will say to Timothy:

And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of

all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief (I Tim. 1:14-15).

Notice that Paul will speak of the fact that Christ came into the world to save sinners. He knew that such salvation would come only by the cross. But he also speaks of the grace of God that was exceeding and abundant. Clearly this would show that the cross was an expression of the great love and grace extended to man.

To Measure The Worth Of The Church

This is surely a part of the message of Paul to the Ephesian elders. He would say to them,

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:28).

This is affirmed again,

And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour (Eph. 5:2).

Again he would say,

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it (Eph. 5:25).

One will have no problem seeing the relationship between the cross and the church. The cross represents the purchased price. It shows us the tremendous cost involved for the church. Thus when

we measure the worth of a thing by the cost involved, we surely have to place a great value upon the church of our Lord.

Surely one would have no problem in measuring the worth of the blood of Jesus. Peter knew what it was worth and he expressed it in this way,

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot (I Peter 1:18-19).

Now how does he describe the worth of the blood of Jesus? It is worth more than silver. It is worth more than gold. It is said to be precious. This word means: held as of great price, costly. So if this blood is seen to be of great value then surely that which is purchased by it would be of great value.

To Encourage The Fainthearted

This is surely a part of the reasoning of the Hebrew writer in the long ago. There were a number of people who were becoming weary and fainthearted. They were facing a number of very trying times. The writer would not ignore the fact that they did indeed face difficult times. He said,

But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used (Heb. 10:32-33).

They had faced, and would face, some very difficult things. He would say to them,

Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed (Heb. 12:12-13).

There can be no doubt about the fact that many of these people were becoming discouraged. They were about to give up. Some were turning back. Some had gone so far as to forsake the assembling with the saints (Heb. 10:25). Now, how would this writer seek to put heart into these folks? How would he encourage them to go on and do what they ought to do? To what will he appeal? What will become the motivating factor? One very powerful incentive would be the cross of Jesus. Note,

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (Heb. 12:2).

Then he says,

For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds (Heb. 12:3).

This writer knew the powerful incentive the cross could give to these folks to go on.

Is this not the very thing that Peter would use in his first epistle to encourage those who were struggling? Time and again Peter would make mention of their sufferings. He speaks of “*manifold*

temptations” (I Peter 1:6); *“the trial of your faith”* (I Peter 1:7); *“and suffer for it”* (I Peter 2:20); *“and if ye suffer for righteousness sake”* (I Peter 3:14); *“Yet if any man suffer as a Christian”* (I Peter 4:16). So there is absolutely no question about the fact that these good folks were having to suffer. But time and again Peter will remind them of the cross. Notice, *“But with the precious blood of Christ”* (I Peter 1:19); *“Christ also suffered for us”* (I Peter 2:21); *“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree”* (I Peter 2:24); *“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins”* (I Peter 3:18); *“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh”* (I Peter 4:1). One could therefore easily see that Peter would use the cross as a means to encourage others who were having a difficult time. He would encourage them by saying, *“Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you”* (I Peter 5:7). His cross would let them know just how much He really cared. When they became discouraged to the point where they might give up, they would be able to look at the cross and see reason to go on.

To Inspire Good Works

There was a time when Paul would seek to move the Corinthians to greater effort. This was especially true in the area of giving. They were lagging behind what they had promised to do. See how he would use the cross as that which would motivate them to give as they ought.

For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he

became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich (II Cor. 8:9).

Can anyone doubt that the cross is a part of that which Paul has in mind? There can be no doubt about the matter. This would be a foregone conclusion. He would use the Lord and His death as an illustration to help them see how they ought to give.

To Emphasize The Need For Holy Living

There is a chapter that Paul wrote to those in the church at Corinth where this comes clearly into focus. The sixth chapter abounds with this idea. He will speak of the kind of people they had been before their conversion (I Cor. 6:9-11). He would let these know that they could not continue to live as fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, or drunkards. Though some would reason falsely concerning the body, he would let them know that they would have to flee those things that involved the wrong and sinful use of the body. But notice, he will make an argument as to why they are to use the bodies in the right way.

Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's (I Cor. 6:18-20).

What then is the argument and appeal? Does it not center in the cross? Notice that he will set forth the fact that they are “*bought with a price.*” How were they bought with a price? What was the price paid? Was it not the blood of Jesus on the cross?

There is also an effort on the part of Peter to emphasize the need for holy living. He said,

But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation (I Peter 1:15).

He then moves on to show that they have been redeemed by the blood of Christ and that such redemption demands a holy life. Notice what he will have to say later, “*Seeing ye have purified your souls*” (I Peter 1:22). There are certain things they need to do in view of the fact that they had been cleansed by the blood. They were to live in such a way and respect the blood that had been shed.

To Illustrate Humility

This has to be seen in the letter that Paul would write to the church at Philippi. There were some in that church who were causing difficulty because of pride. Evidently there were some elements of strife and some who were seeking vainglory (Phil. 2:3). But Paul knew the answer to that sort of a thing. He would appeal to them to come to possess the mind and disposition of Christ (Phil. 2:5-8). He would illustrate that mind by showing what occurred in His coming to earth. Notice,

Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself

of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Phil. 2:6-8).

Would any of these folks have any problem in understanding what Paul meant by humility? Couldn't they understand humility in what Jesus did in dying on the cross? They could see there was no pride or selfishness in the heart of Jesus. This would be clearly seen in the disposition manifested by our Lord. It would not be hard for them to understand the meaning of humility if they would learn some lessons from the cross. That is exactly what Paul was doing. He would carry the people who might be at war with one another to the foot of the cross and let them see that such is out of place in the presence of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

Yes, there are ample reasons for preaching the cross. When, someone asks, “*Why preach the cross?*” – we can give good reasons for such. We surely cannot think of any good reasons to fail to preach the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter 2

Prophecies And Fulfillments Of Christ And His Death On The Cross

Roger Banks



Roger is a graduate of Alabama Christian School of Religion (B.A., M.A.) • He has been preaching for over 25 years • Presently he works for the East Wood congregation in Paris, TN (since 1989) • Extensive radio work experience • A faithful defender of the faith, he is a frequent speaker on lectureships and in gospel meetings throughout our land • Roger and Sue have two sons.

I am delighted to have this opportunity to speak in this hour on the important topic, *“Prophecies And Fulfillment Of Christ And His Death On The Cross.”* I commend this faithful congregation of God’s people for their firm stand in the truth of God’s eternal plan to save man. The East Hill congregation is greatly blessed to have faithful elders and a preacher that is dedicated to the Holy Scriptures. The scriptural soundness of this annual effort is reflective of the daily soundness of the membership of this great church of our Lord.

Please think back a few weeks to the names and places that dominated the news media in America. Do you remember Nancy Kerrigan and Tonya Harding the U.S. Olympic Figure Skaters that were so very much in the news recently? Do you remember the young Fort Campbell soldier, Courtney Matthews? Do you remember the Clarksville,

Tennessee Taco Bell murders? Do you remember the mid-west floods of 1993 or the California earthquake of January, 1994?

Now, stretch your imagination to the limit with this idea. Let’s suppose that someone had predicted each of these events with pinpoint accuracy. Suppose they had described in detail the places, people involved, even a correct time of the event complete with enough circumstantial evidence to convince any clear thinking person that this could not possibly be a hoax!

The “*predictions*” just described are really a very elementary illustration of how biblical prophecy really worked. A very clearly defined event involving identifiable characters and/or places long before the actual happening occurred is a simple description of biblical prophecy.

In the matter before us we are interested in the information given by the prophets of old concerning Christ, the Saviour of mankind and the event that made it all possible, His death on the cross.

Let us begin with a statement made by Jesus concerning Himself. Jesus is making an appearance before an audience just before they were to dine on fish and honeycomb. Luke gives us an insight into this event in chapter twenty-four. Jesus appears to the individuals who were talking about the fact that He (Christ) had appeared to Simon. As He appeared unto them they had become very frightened. In order to calm their fears our Lord showed them His hands and His feet and asked for something to eat. They

watched as He ate knowing that no spirit would be likely to consume food as would a human being. Jesus then makes this statement in Luke 24:44,45;

And he said unto them, these are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. (45) Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.

Please notice the three categories of Old Testament Scriptures that Jesus mentions. (1) The law of Moses, (2) the prophets, and (3) the psalms. These three sections of Old Testament Scripture would provide a wealth of information about Jesus Christ as evidence of the fact that He was indeed the Messiah. We now will note selected verses from these three categories that speak of Jesus Christ and His death on the cross in prophecy. First, we note the verse that is generally regarded as the first Messianic prophecy in Scripture. In Genesis chapter three, the serpent has lied to and deceived Eve into eating the forbidden fruit and then gave to Adam and he also ate. God will now place punishment upon all three of them. The serpent would be cursed above all cattle and every beast of the field. He would crawl upon his belly and eat dust all the days of his life. Then Moses records this profound statement made by Almighty God in Genesis 3:15,

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

There can be no doubt but that with this pronouncement of doom the serpent became the enemy of all mankind. If then the enemy of all mankind, there must be a special enmity between the lying, deceiving serpent, the devil and the Redeemer of all mankind! He would withstand Jesus to His face in Matthew 4:1-11 tempting Him in all the way that would cause multitudes to stumble and fall—but not Christ! The Hebrew writer states in 4:15,

For we have not an high priest which cannot
be touched with the feeling of our infirmities;
but was in all points tempted like as we are,
yet without sin.

Yes, the old serpent would bruise his heel, but Christ would inflict a greater and more damaging blow in bruising his head! We should also consider the fact that the devil has been an ever present enemy of the church, the bride of Christ. The Word of God is literally filled with examples of the devil influencing the minds of men away from the way of God. He still does! James states in the book bearing his name in 1:17 that,

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from
above, and cometh down from the Father of
lights, with whom there is no variableness,
neither shadow of turning.

If all the good gifts that we receive in the body of Christ, the Church, come from the Father, where do the evil gifts of deceit, division and devilish deeds have their origin? The old serpent! The devil is an announced enemy of the Church. A very liberal dose of CHRIST is the medicine the church needs when

bothered by the devil! Christ will once again bruise his head! The most resounding defeat of the old serpent to date was the wonderful day that Christ was raised from the dead. Death has become the enemy of mankind because of the cunning of the old serpent. Paul states in Romans 6:9,10,

Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

The devil missed his “*golden opportunity*” of defacing Christ before all the world by hindering or preventing His resurrection from the dead! IF he had possessed the power, Christ would never have come from the dead. He did not have the power. Christ bruised his old head again! Try as he might, the old devil has never successfully stood against Christ. Jesus bruises his head each and every time. The final and telling “*stomp*” will occur as spoken by John in Revelation 20:10,

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

The loss of this battle will mean war is lost for the old serpent. Christ will crush his old head this time!

In the second place, Jesus stated that the prophets would speak of Him—and speak of Him they did! Isaiah the Prophet had more to say about the Messiah than any of the other prophets. Isaiah prophesied in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. The year 750 B.C. would

fall somewhere near the middle of Isaiah’s life. Isaiah is called the Evangelical and Messianic Prophet, or the Prophet of Redemption because he is cited more often in the New Testament and studied more often than any other prophet. He is cited not less than fifty-eight times in the New Testament. His prophecies concerning Christ and His death are indeed striking! We notice only a few major prophecies. First, we note the prophecy that our Lord would be born of a virgin, Isaiah 7:14 states,

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign;
behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son,
and shall call his name Immanuel.

This prophetic utterance was given approximately 730 years before the birth of Christ. This prophecy is fulfilled in Matthew 1:18,

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise:
When as his mother Mary was espoused to
Joseph, before they came together, she was
found with child of the Holy Ghost.

Notice the words, “*before they came together.*” No further explanation is necessary! Christ was born of a virgin! In the second place, Isaiah prophesied that Christ would come from the root of Jesse in 11:1. This prophecy was fulfilled in Matthew chapter one as we begin to read in the first verse, “*The book of the generation of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham.*”

It is the cross and the substitutionary sufferings of Jesus Christ that the fifty-third chapter points. Please notice the following list of prophecies from this passage and their fulfillment in the New

Testament.

In Isaiah 53:1 the question is asked, *“Who hath believed our report?”* In Romans 10:16 Paul laments the fact that *“they have not all obeyed the gospel.”* The Jews did not believe the report that the carpenter’s son was the Messiah. The sad statement is made in John 1:11, *“He came unto his own and his own received him not.”*

Isaiah states in 53:3, *“He is despised and rejected of men; a man acquainted with grief.”* We clearly see this passage fulfilled in Matthew 27:30-31;

And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head. (31) And after that they had mocked him, and led him away to crucify him.

Was he acquainted with grief as Isaiah prophesied? The answer is found clearly stated in Luke 22:44,

And being in agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

Have you prayed a tearful prayer? Perhaps the cause was the illness or death of a loved one or a shameful event involving your child or a family member. Jesus surely knew sorrow and grief as prophesied by Isaiah 690 years earlier!

In verses four through six in Isaiah chapter fifty-three we learn that Christ would be the substitutionary offering for our grief, sorrow and transgressions.

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken,

smitten of God, and afflicted. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

All these prophecies are seen as fulfilled in I Peter 2:23-25 as Peter states,

Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray: but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

Is there any way that Peter’s account of the crucifixion and suffering of our Lord could be anything other than that event as prophesied by Isaiah? No, as a matter of fact, Peter was directly quoting Isaiah chapter fifty-three, verses seven and nine.

Isaiah stated in 53:7, “*He was oppressed and he was afflicted yet he opened not his mouth.*” This prophecy was fulfilled in Matthew 27:12,14 as he was being accused by the chief priest and elders, “*He answered nothing.*” Pilate marvelled how Jesus could remain silent as they made their mad accusations against Him. As prophesied hundreds of years earlier, he was silent!

Again the prophet states in 53:8,

...he was cut off from the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due.

Isaiah also stated in 53:10 that His soul would be an offering for sin and in verse twelve, "*he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*" John surely recognized this great truth in John 1:29 where the statement is made, "*The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.*" In II Corinthians 5:21 Paul states, "*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*" If there should be any further need to stress the point of prophecy that Christ would be a substitutionary offering for the sins of many, John would have put that argument to rest with I John 2:2,

And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Isaiah's prophecy is clearly fulfilled!

In Isaiah 53:9, Isaiah states,

And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit found in his mouth.

This particular passage presents some difficulty in understanding "*his grave with the wicked.*" Please consider the following explanation: He (Christ) would be slain as if he were a very wicked person. Remember, He was sentenced as a blasphemer by

the Jews and was considered to be a seditionist by the Romans. As a result of these erroneous conclusions the Messiah was nailed to the cross that was designed to kill criminals. In other words, the death that Jesus experienced was designed to be a deterrent for crime in the first century. The type of death that He died was especially designed for the wicked. There can be no doubt about the fact that our Lord was entirely innocent of any wrongdoing. Remember the prophecy of Isaiah 53:9, “*he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.*” The only sinless One of earth died a death for sinners! There can be no doubt but that Luke 23:51-53 is the fulfillment of the fact that He was “*with the rich in his death,*” as Isaiah prophesied in 53:9. Joseph of Arimathea begged the body of Jesus from Pilate and took it and laid it in a tomb that was hewn from stone where “*never man before was laid.*” Matthew states clearly in 27:60 that this was Joseph’s own new tomb. At this point we must also consider the fact that if Joseph had not acquired the body of Jesus, the body would surely have been placed along side of the two criminals that were crucified with Him. The prophecy is absolutely true in that the Messiah died a death designed for the wicked, and was buried in a rich man’s tomb.

In verse eleven of Isaiah fifty-three the following interesting prophecy is given. “*By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.*” This prophecy is fulfilled with the people of Corinth as stated in I Corinthians 6:9-11:

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind. Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

Could there be any clearer example of Messianic prophecy? Isaiah paints a very vivid picture of the “*suffering servant*” justifying many by the travail of His soul.

Finally, we notice Isaiah 53:12,

Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

The fact that Christ died on the cross was not of itself overwhelming proof of His Messiahship. It took the fact of His resurrection from the dead to positively seal the case of Messiahship! His resurrection from the dead would be one of the facts of the gospel to be believed by those seeking salvation. This “*fact*” of the gospel is recorded in I Corinthians 15:6 as part of the things that must be kept in memory in order to be saved. The two thieves, the one on His right hand, the other on His left also died on a cross the same day that Jesus died. Christ was the only one of the three to be

raised from the dead three days later! This, in part is the portion of the great divided to the suffering servant of Isaiah chapter fifty-three. Paul states in I Corinthians 15:20,

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

Jesus has in fact put every enemy under His feet. As a result of His victory we are promised the same reward. He is in fact GREAT! He conquered death. He promised and delivered a resurrection from the dead, He IS great!

Isaiah’s own words best sum up this section of study. Listen to his statement of Isaiah 9:6,7;

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

Could there be any more appropriate word than that of Isaiah in the last verse of chapter fifty-three? GREAT!!

Prophecy reached its peak with the Messianic prophecy. We realize that there were other Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament but Isaiah is more often quoted than the rest. The wonderful statement made by Jesus in Luke 24:44 concerning the things

that the prophets had to say concerning Him were intended to be proofs of His Messiahship. They all had to be true. Indeed, they are all true!

Now, let us notice that last thing the Lord stated in the above mentioned passage. Jesus said, “...*that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the ... psalms concerning me.*” We have earlier recognized the development of the Messianic idea in the Law and in Hebrew history. We now turn our attention to the person and work of the Messiah as pictured by the Psalter. In Psalms 40:7-10 we find the promise,

Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and thy truth from the great congregation.

We must recognize the fact that no writer of the Bible had predicted or prophesied his own work or mission. The Hebrew writer states in chapter ten that it is Christ who is speaking in this psalm. If there should be any doubt please listen to Hebrews 10:10,

By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

My friends, Hebrews 10:10 is the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecy of Psalms 40:7-10.

In the next place we notice the passage from the Psalms that prophesy of the betrayal of the Messiah. We note Psalms 41:9,

Yea, mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.

There is a very strong argument that this passage is referring to Ahithophel as indicated by Psalm 55, but let us notice that the Lord quotes this passage in speaking of the treachery of Judas. Jesus has just finished washing the feet of the disciples in John chapter thirteen when he states in verse eighteen, *“I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture, may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.”* No sound argument could be offered but that Jesus is with His own mouth saying that He is at this time fulfilling the prophecy of Psalm 41:9! Jesus placed a great deal of significance in the event of John thirteen by following with the statement that when He is betrayed they would finally believe that He was the Son of God. The betrayal of the Messiah was of such value as a sign to the believers that it was prophesied in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the last day of His freedom!

There is another very notable event recorded in the New Testament that was predicted in the Old. During the time between the ascension back to the Father and the day of Pentecost you will remember that it was necessary to replace Judas who had hanged himself as a result of having betrayed his

Lord. The Psalmist wrote in 109:8, *“Let his days be few; and let another take his office.”* Peter quotes this passage in the process of replacing Judas in Acts 1:20,

For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take.

Also we notice these passages from Psalms in regard to the betrayal of the Messiah. In 69:25, *“Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents.”* Also, in 69:28, *“Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.”* When your mind searches through the halls of the faithful, do you think of Judas?

There is no message that is any more strongly prophecied than the crucifixion of our Lord. Let me share just a few of these verses as we conclude our thoughts on the subject. First in Psalms 69:4, *“They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head.”* Now, picture in your mind the scene in the city of Jerusalem as Pilate hears the multitudes scream, *“Crucify him, crucify him!”* Psalms 69:12 states, *“They that sit in the gate speak against me.”* This passage is fulfilled by the blood thirsty mob in account of the gospels as they shouted, *“Let him be crucified!”* Note also the accuracy of Psalms 69:20,21;

Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none: and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

This prophecy was absolutely, thoroughly and completely fulfilled at the crucifixion of the Lamb of God. No question about it!

All of the following statements are taken from the first twenty verses of the twenty-second Psalm.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me? O my God, I cry in the day time and thou hearest me not. I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn. They shoot out the lip, they shake the head saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him, Let him deliver him. Thou art he that took me out of the womb; thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother’s breasts. Be not far from me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help. They gaped upon me with their mouths as a ravening and roaring lion. I am poured out like water, my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd: and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws. Dogs have compassed me, the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me. They pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones, they look and stare upon me. They parted my garments among them and cast lots upon my vesture. Be not far from me, O Lord, O my strength haste thee to help me. Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog.

These verses so clearly picture the crucifixion that they could have been written by a news reporter that stood in the crowd that day. They could have been written by any of the four gospel writers. From

the opening words of Jesus crying to the Father to the last scream where he gave up the ghost is clearly prophesied in the Old Testament and just as clearly fulfilled in the New Testament. Read and re-read Matthew’s and John’s accounts of the crucifixion and you will clearly see the Messianic character of these passages.

We close as we began with the wonderful statement made by our Lord in Luke 24:44,

These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets and in the psalms concerning me.

The prophecies that were so carefully planned and shown to man centuries ago were just as carefully planned and fulfilled in the presence of multitudes that should have recognized the glorious events were totally misunderstood! How could that have happened? It is not too difficult to understand when you look at passages such as Romans 10:16, *“But they have not all obeyed the gospel, For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?”* Paul began chapter ten by stating that his *“heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.”* Have you ever wondered why people do not obey the gospel today? The reasons are the same as they were when they failed to see Christ as the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.

Have you wondered how Jesus feels when people that He loves more than His own life do not obey the gospel? We have a very strong indication in one

of the passages we have discussed from the prophecies indicating that Christ would be the Messiah. Carefully note the emotion of Psalm 69:20, “*Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness.*”

In eternity we shall see Him as He was in prophecy, as He was in life, and as He is, “*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today and for ever*” (Heb. 13:8).

Chapter 3

The Old Rugged Cross Of Jesus Christ

Kelby Smith



A native of Tupelo, Mississippi, Kelby received his formal education at Itawamba Junior College, Harding College, and Harding Graduate School of Religion • He preached for 24 years at the Florence Blvd. congregation in Florence, AL • Presently he works with the Broad Street church in Albertville, AL • A frequent lectureship and gospel meeting speaker in many areas • Kelby and Martha (Jobe) have two children (Doug and Kelly).

There is no way to adequately describe the tremendous value and blessings of the cross. Yet I trust this lesson will prove to be somewhat helpful. As far back as any of us can remember, we have heard of, and have been involved in, singing about ***“the old rugged cross.”*** But have we ever stopped to think about the ruggedness of that cross? It stands even today as a monumental landmark separating between the testaments. We need to consider its rugged background and setting. The cross was stationed on Golgotha, the place of the skull. Death was everywhere in evidence. The death of our Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary received no earthly pomp nor glory. In fact, we read in the Bible:

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree (Gal. 3:13).

Have you ever thought of anyone glorying in

an electric chair? Have you ever heard of anyone wearing on a beautiful gold chain, a symbol, or an emblem of the gallows? Certainly not! These are despicable items in our society. The truth is that no one ever thought about glorying in a cross until Jesus came and died on one! Jesus changed the world’s concept of the cross. In fact, he changed it so drastically that Paul said:

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world (Gal. 6:14).

The old rugged cross still has meaning in our day. May we consider some things for which the cross should remind us even in this century.

The Rugged Individual Who Died There

Jesus Christ was not a sissy, but He was indeed a man among men. He was born of lowly parentage, and He was poor in this world’s goods. He did not even own a place to lay His head. He lived the rugged and hard life of a carpenter. I would imagine that if we could have examined the hands of our Lord, we would have found those hands to be quite calloused. He walked almost everywhere He went. When He was tempted, He spent forty days in the wilderness. During that time He was among the wild beasts (Mark 1:13). That no doubt greatly intensified the horror of it all. He courageously cleansed the temple.

And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the

temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves (Matt. 21:12-13).

In the garden, He bravely faced His acusers (John 18:4). He was never a coward! He never ran from anyone. He was indeed a rugged individual. He was even man enough to endure the terrible scourging, and yet remain conscious (Matt. 27:26-27).

He also calls for a spirit of ruggedness among His followers. He calls on us to endure hardships and to be faithful, even when the going gets rough. This idea was expressed to His apostles in the following words:

Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also (John 15:20).

The Rugged Origin Of Christianity

Not only should the old rugged cross remind us of the rugged individual who died there, but it should also remind us of the rugged origin of Christianity.

When Jesus selected His apostles, He did not choose those who were rich and pampered, nor even those who were highly educated. Instead, He selected those who were rough, stalwart, unlearned, and rugged individuals. For the most part, they were simply Galilean fishermen. We would never think that they could ever become what we know they

later came to be. Jesus trained them by hardships. He built their faith through trials. Christianity began after His death on the old rugged cross.

Jesus endured so much even before the actual suffering on the cross became a reality. He was kept up all night having to endure six mock trials. These included three trials by the Jews and three trials by the Romans. Each of the trials was replete with illegalities.

Previous to the suffering on the cross, Jesus was “*scourged*” (Matt. 27:26). The act of scourging may not be very meaningful to us, yet it was a very painful and horrible punishment.

The Roman scourge was a fearful instrument. It consisted of a wooden handle about eighteen inches long. Into the handle were fastened three leather straps. Into the leather straps were attached lead balls, and jagged pieces of metal, and sometimes pieces of broken glass.

The person to be scourged was stripped of his clothing except for a loin cloth. He was then tied in one of two positions. He was either tied over a low wooden block, or made to stand with his hands tied above his head. In either situation, his entire body would be exposed to the fearful blows. The Jews had a law that a man could be beaten no more than forty stripes. Therefore the Jews would always stop at thirty-nine (II Cor. 11:34). Christ was not scourged by the Jews, but by the Romans. The Romans had no such law. They would beat a man unmercifully. It was not uncommon for the person being beaten to collapse, or even to die during the process of

scourging.

The Roman centurion gave the order: “*Beat him.*” Even with the very first lash, the lead balls embedded in the scourge bruised His flesh deeply. The jagged metal and pieces of glass attached to the scourge cut into the flesh. The bleeding was immediately profuse. It was obviously not a light beating, because they ridiculed Him in every way possible. They mocked Him, they spit in His face, and did everything possible to insult Him (Matt. 27:28-31).

Eventually they grew tired of the beating and heaping all manner of insults upon Him, and as time passed, the mock purple robe they had made Him wear had become saturated with blood. Mercifully, the purple robe had caused the bleeding to stop. Then the purple robe was stripped from Him (Matt. 27:31). Can you imagine the pain, that removing the robe would cause? The wounds were violently opened, and the bleeding started all over again.

Our Lord was then compelled to bear His cross, with the assistance of Simon, a Cyrenian, up to Golgotha. The rough spikes were driven through the quivering flesh of Jesus and His arms and feet attaching Him securely to the old rugged cross. The cross was then lifted upright into position, and the suffering and agony then really began.

There has never been a death devised by man that was more painful, horrifying, and dreadful than death by crucifixion. Often, a victim would be on a cross for days. It was a torturous and very slow

death. In the case of Jesus and the two thieves, plans were to break their legs in order to hasten death, because they sought to have them removed from the crosses before the Sabbath day. They did break the legs of the two thieves, but not Jesus, because He was already dead. When the legs were broken, death by suffocation would soon occur since the person being crucified would no longer be able to raise himself up on the cross in order to breath.

Jesus was on the cross from the sixth hour until the ninth hour. That was from 9:00 AM until 3:00 PM. The scene was obviously so horrible that God chose not to allow it to be viewed in its entirety, because there was darkness over all the earth at midday ... from the sixth to the ninth hour. About the ninth hour, Jesus cried out, ***“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”*** (Matt. 27:46). God did forsake His Son, in that He allowed Him to die for the sins of the world.

Yet, His death was a problem both to the Jew and Greek alike. Paul’s inspired statement was:

But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; (I Cor. 1:23).

To the Jews, the cross was a stumblingblock, because they could not conceive of the idea of a crucified Messiah. The Greeks considered the cross foolishness, because they thought it absurd that One who did not save Himself could possibly save anyone else.

Yes, the old rugged cross should continually remind us of the rugged origin of Christianity.

The Ruggedness Of Christianity In History

Not only should we be reminded of the old rugged individual who died there, and of the rugged origin of Christianity, but it should also remind us of the ruggedness of Christianity through history.

In the beginning, persecution threatened to destroy the Lord's church. The mighty nation of Rome came against it with the sword. The Christians did not retaliate, but bravely went forth to give their lives as martyrs. Historians of that day were amazed, because so many of them did not die with a frown on their face, nor in bitterness, but many of them actually died singing.

The church of our Lord has sailed some bloody seas. Christianity has always thrived on ruggedness.

For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard (Acts 4:20).

And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison (Acts 5:18).

And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name (Acts 5:40-41).

Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul (Acts 7:57-58).

And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles (Acts 8:1).

Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket (Acts 9:25).

Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And **he killed James** the brother of John with the sword (Acts 12:1-2).

James was a pillar in the church at Jerusalem. Can the church at Jerusalem survive without a man like James? We must always realize that the progress and ongoing of God’s cause does not depend on any individual.

And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, **having stoned Paul**, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead (Acts 14:19).

And when they had laid **many stripes upon them**, they **cast them into prison**, charging the jailor to keep them safely (Acts 16:23).

Perhaps there was never one who was more rugged, and endured more, than did the apostle Paul. This is true with the obvious exception of Jesus Christ Himself. Paul’s affliction and suffering for Christ is vividly described in Scripture.

Of the Jews, five times received I forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a

night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches (II Cor. 11:24-28).

No wonder Paul said, “*I die daily*” (I Cor. 15:30). He instructed Timothy to be partaker of the affliction of the gospel (II Tim. 1:8).

The old rugged cross ought to daily remind us of the ruggedness of Christianity in history. Yet, today we have things so easy. We have nice buildings, with padded pews, and carpet on the floor. There is absolutely nothing wrong with these things, and I am happy that we have them! Yet, we need to realize that if we had to meet to worship under adverse and trying conditions, that such would not stop the ongoing of God’s cause. It would serve to make us even stronger in the Lord!

The Cross Made Possible The New Testament

Not only should the old rugged cross remind us of the rugged individual who died there, of the rugged origin of Christianity, and of the ruggedness of Christianity in history, but it should remind us that it made possible the New Testament. The New Testament is very clear in this regard.

And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator (Heb. 9:15-16).

Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? (Heb. 10:29).

What effect should this fact have in our lives as Christians? Obviously it should cause us to appreciate it, and study it more.

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (II Tim. 2:15).

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me (John 5:39).

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and **searched the scriptures daily**, whether those things were so (Acts 17:11).

As we come close to appreciate His death even more, we will also be inclined to defend the Word at all cost. From a dark, damp prison cell, Paul declared his readiness to defend the gospel (Phil. 1:17).

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that

abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed (II John 1:9-10).

Paul's philosophy was to preach Christ crucified (I Cor. 1:23). It did not matter if it was a stumblingblock to some or if it was considered foolishness by others. His conviction was that one could take it or leave it, love it or hate it, but he intended to preach Christ and Him crucified! May we always be reminded that the old rugged cross made possible the New Testament.

The Cross Made Salvation Possible

We have considered how the old rugged cross should remind us of the rugged individual who died there, of the rugged origin of Christianity, of the ruggedness of Christianity in history, and that it made possible the New Testament, but in closing we need to consider that it also made salvation possible. Nothing is more important than salvation. Being saved from sin is made possible by the blood shed on the old rugged cross as we obey and follow the teachings of the New Testament.

For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins (Matt. 26:28).

In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace (Eph. 1:7).

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and

gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot (I Peter 1:18-19).

Though the cross did make salvation possible, it presents one of the most startling paradoxes known to man. (The following paradox and illustration is from George Bailey along with some other ideas for this lesson).

It was the most tragic event in history...

Yet it was the most wonderful thing that ever happened.

It was the saddest spectacle mankind ever beheld...

Yet by it came the greatest joy.

The old rugged cross was Satan's greatest victory...

Yet by the cross Satan suffered his most stunning defeat.

The cross was the greatest exhibition of Divine justice...

Yet it was the most wonderful demonstration of Divine mercy.

It was through the cross that God condemned sin...

Yet by it He forgave the sinner.

The cross stands for God's hatred of sin...

Yet it was the greatest proof of His love for the sinner.

The cross was mankind's darkest hour...

Yet it was the greatest of all lights.

On that day the sun, the S-U-N, refused to shine at midday...

But on that day the son, the S-O-N, became the light of the world.

There is simply no way to be saved without the cross! Man cannot save himself. In Matthew 18:23-25 the Lord gave the account of the man who owed his master 10,000 talents, an unbelievably large sum of money even in our day. From Matthew 20:1-16 we learn that the wage of a day labourer in Palestine was one denarius, or as the King James Version renders it, a penny a day. One talent equals to 6,000 denareii. But this man owed, not one talent, but he owed 10,000 talents! That is equivalent to 60,000,000 denareii, or 60,000,000 days pay! Sixty million days is equal to 164,183 years. If the man had kept

nothing to live on, had worked seven days a week, it would have taken him 164,183 years to pay the debt! There is no way that such a debt can ever be paid!

That is exactly the condition of every accountable human being in the world. There is no way one can give enough, work enough, or do enough to get even one sin forgiven! Yet, what we cannot do ourselves, Jesus did for us when He died on the old rugged cross. We must never forget that the cross made salvation possible.

Conclusion

After discussing the old rugged cross and all the things of which it should remind us, what effect should all this have in our lives? I am convinced that an appreciation of the cross will invariably beget a spirit of sacrifice in our Christianity. It will cause us to gladly and willingly give up anything that stands between us and God!

It should also result in an attitude of commitment and dedication like we have never seen. If one is trying to decide whether or not to attend Bible class, worship, or Wednesday night Bible study – thinking about the cross and what Jesus endured will make the decision easy.

Appreciation for the cross will also result in a renewed commitment to seek the kingdom first in our lives each day. No one can say he loves the cross, and at the same time, be indifferent toward the kingdom.

The old rugged cross should motivate one to be restored.

It should cause one to obey the gospel.

The Old Rugged Cross

*On a hill far away, stood an old rugged cross,
The emblem of suffering and shame;
And I love that old cross, where the dearest and best,
For a world of lost sinners was slain.*

*Oh, that old rugged cross, so despised by the world,
Has a wondrous attraction for me;
For the dear lamb of God, left his glory above,
To bear it to dark Calvary.*

*To the old rugged cross, I will ever be true,
Its shame and reproach gladly bear;
Then he'll call me some day, to my home far away,
Where his glory forever I'll share.*

*So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,
Till my trophies at last, I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross,
And exchange it some day for a crown.*

Chapter 4

Sins That Crucified Jesus, And Spectators Around The Cross

Flavil H. Nichols



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Never in human history has the crucifixion of Christ been equalled by any other crime. He was the world's best and purest person, yet He was executed in the most cruel death ever devised. God *"made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him"* (II Cor. 5:21). He *"did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. ... When he was reviled, (he) reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously"* (I Peter 2:22-23). Jesus did all of this in order that He might pay **my** sin-debt—and **yours!**

Who his own self bare **our** sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed (verse 24).

A Review Of Jesus' Trials

Upon His betrayal by Judas Iscariot, Jesus was

arrested by the mob. They led Him *“away to Annas first; for he was the father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year”* (John 18:13).

Some think he (Annas) had been high priest, but had been deposed by Roman authorities, and his son-in-law, Caiaphas, had been honored with that office (H. Leo Boles, **Commentary On The Gospel According To Matthew**, Gospel Advocate Company, 1936; p. 515).

Annas *“sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest”* (v. 24), *“into the high priest’s house”* (Luke 22:54); and *“with him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes”* (Mark 14:53; cf. Matt. 26:57). This group constituted the Sanhedrin, the *“Supreme Court”* of the Jews. *“They all”* (Mark 14:64) declared him guilty of blasphemy, which carried the penalty of death (Lev. 24:10-16) by stoning (v. 14; cf. Acts 7:58; 14:19).

He was blindfolded (Luke 22:64), and *“the men that held Jesus mocked him and smote him”* (v. 63), demanding that He identify who struck Him, or who spat upon Him (Matt. 26:67-68; Mark 14:65; Luke 22:63-65). It was probably around the time of this trial by the Sanhedrin that Peter thrice denied Jesus.

Jesus then was delivered to Pontius Pilate the governor (Matt. 27:1; Mark 15:1; Luke 23:16), who inquired of the charges against Him. *“Blasphemy”* was a religious charge; so Pilate told the Jews to try Him *“according to your law”* (John 18:29-32). If this had happened, He would have been stoned—and that would have made false His own predictions

of His death by crucifixion (Matt. 20:19)!

Pilate’s verdict was: “*I find no fault in this man*” (Luke 23:4)—“*no fault at all*” (John 18:38). But upon learning that Jesus was from Galilee, Pilate sent Him unto Herod. Herod’s verdict was that Jesus had done “*nothing worthy of death*” (Luke 23:15). Herod returned Jesus to Pilate.

In a dream, Pilate’s wife had “*suffered many things*” because of Jesus; and she sent Pilate word to “*have thou nothing to do with that just man*” (Matt. 27:19).

Judas Iscariot, who had betrayed Him, returned the “*blood-money,*” saying, “*I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood*” (Matt. 27:3-20).

Pilate gave them a choice: Shall I release Barabbas (a notable prisoner)? Or, Jesus who is called Christ? The multitude was stirred up to ask that Barabbas be released, and to demand that Jesus be crucified (Matt. 27:15-26; Mark 15:6-15; Luke 23:16-25; John 19:12-16). Even in “*signing the death warrant,*” Pilate inconsistently declared Him to be a “*just person*” (Matt. 27:24). The sentence of death by crucifixion began promptly to be carried out.

With one voice we condemn those who murdered the sinless Son of God. Meanwhile, many of us are guilty of those same sins, or uphold others who are guilty of those sins.

Consider with me some of the sins which put Jesus on the cross.

The Sin Of Hatred Put Him There

Jesus told His apostles:

The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my sayings, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin. He that **hateth** me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and **hated** both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, they **hated** me without a cause (John 15:20-25).

There was absolutely no justifiable reason for men to hate Jesus. But from His own teaching we get some insight as to why they did hate Him. Of the world, He said, "*Me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil*" (John 7:7). They hated Him because He told them the truth! He stated clearly: "*I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you*" (John 5:42).

Some hated Jesus because He said their worship was in vain. He pointedly said: "*In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*" (Matt. 15:9). If He were on earth today, I verily believe He would condemn much that is in the name of "*religion,*" for much that is advocated now has no authority back of it except the doctrines and commandments of men.

When we, today, tell people the truth, they sometimes hate us. When we point out that Christ

built only **one** church (Matt. 16:18), and that “*There is ONE body*” (Eph. 4:4), or that we should wear the name of Christ (I Peter 4:14,16; Acts 4:11-12; 11:26)—some hate us. But it is still in the Bible!

When we show them that the Bible baptism is immersion, with a burial and a resurrection in it (Rom. 6:3-5), some hate us.

Others hate us for showing them that, like **repentance**, Bible baptism is “*for the remission of sins*” (Acts 2:38). Three days after Saul of Tarsus believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, three days after he had repented, and three days after he also had called Jesus “*Lord,*” Saul was not yet saved. He still had his sins! He was instructed to “*Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins...*” (Acts 22:16).

Some hate us today when we show them that there is absolutely not one shred of Bible authority for using mechanical instruments of music in worship.

When we show that the divine rule is: Second marriages are adulterous, some hate us! To this rule the only New Testament exceptions are: (1) the death of one’s first spouse (Rom. 7:1-4); or (2) fornication on the part of one’s first spouse (Matt. 19:3-9).

“*Hatred stirreth up strifes*” (Prov. 10:12). “*He who hates disguises it with his lips, but he lays up deceit in his heart*” (Prov. 26:24, NAS). “*He that hideth hatred with lying lips ... is a fool*” (Prov. 10:18). “**Hatred**” is a “*work of the flesh*” for which people will be lost eternally, for “*they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God*” (Gal. 5:19-21).

It comes with poor grace for us to condemn the hatred which crucified Jesus, if we are guilty of that same sin. *“Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him”* (I John 3:15).

The Sin Of Ignorance Nailed Him To The Tree

Jesus Himself prayed for His murderers, saying, *“Father, forgive them; for they **know not** what they do”* (Luke 23:34). Hence the sin of **ignorance** contributed to the rejection and crucifixion of Jesus. On Solomon’s porch, Peter indicted his Jewish brethren for crucifying Jesus:

...whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses (Acts 3:13-15).

But he added: *“And now brethren, I wot that **through ignorance** ye did it, as did also your rulers”* (verse 17).

Jesus refuted the Sadducees by their ignorance: *“Ye do err, **not knowing** the scriptures, nor the power of God”* (Matt. 22:29). Ignorance of the scriptures causes many to err, today, too.

The apostle Paul wrote, *“Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory”* (I Cor. 2:8). However, their ignorance did not make

them innocent. *“They willingly (were) ignorant”* (II Peter 3:5) of the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Not only did they have all the Old Testament books, which point to the coming of a Messiah, but God had also sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for the coming of Christ. Plus, they had ample opportunity to learn from Jesus Himself. But they had closed their eyes, stopped up their ears, and hardened their hearts against the truth (Matt. 13:15); they had no excuse for not knowing better. Yes, their ignorance was inexcusable: but it contributed to the crucifixion of Jesus nonetheless.

Ignorance can today alienate man from God. Paul described the Gentiles as *“having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the **ignorance** that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart”* (Eph. 4:18). So, ignorance is not something to be winked at, or treated lightly.

Some church members are living in sin and immorality, simply because they are ignorant of God’s plan for holy living. The scriptures abundantly teach that God’s children are not to live like the Devil’s children! There is a line of demarcation, a line of separation, between the two classes. *“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty”* (II Cor. 6:17-18).

You see, in conversion, God demands **repentance**. The Greek word for *“repentance”*

(METANOEO) is defined by Thayer in these words: *“to change one’s mind for the better, heartily to amend with abhorrence of one’s past sins”* (Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 405). My father (the late Gus Nichols) used to say that in repentance one *“comes out of the sinning business, and he ought to stay out!”*

Unknown truth will not make us free, for Jesus Himself taught: *“Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”* (John 8:32). This is why we should *“search the scriptures daily”* (Acts 17:11).

Ignorance keeps many from regular, scriptural worship (Heb. 10:25). As of old some worshipped ignorantly (Acts 17:23), so today some do not know how properly to commune, or sing, or pray. And some have never learned scriptural liberality—how to give generously (Rom. 12:8).

The Sin Of Unbelief Crucified Jesus

Yes, **unbelief is a sin!** Of the Holy Spirit, Jesus promised His apostles: *“I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin ... because they believe not on me”* (John 16:7-9). John wrote selected items of the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, saying:

These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name (John 20:31).

The evidence supporting Jesus’ claims to be the Son of God are so overwhelming that He declared: *“If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins”*

(John 8:24).

Wherever the gospel is preached in all the world, Jesus expects it to produce obedient faith. So He promised: *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. But he that believeth not shall be damned”* (Mark 16:16). *“Without faith it is impossible to please him, For he that cometh to God must believe...”* (Heb. 11:6). One cannot truly believe God without believing in Jesus Christ His Son (John 14:1). Twice God spoke from heaven, announcing: *“This is my beloved Son”* (Matt. 3:17; 17:1-5).

The apostle Paul wrote that his former ignorance and unbelief caused him to be *“a persecutor, and a blasphemer, and injurious”* (I Tim. 1:13).

The Sin Of Hypocrisy Crucified Him

The mob that arrested Jesus was given a sign by Judas Iscariot, one of Christ’s disciples: *“Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; hold him fast”* (Matt. 26:48). A kiss is a token of friendship and love; but Judas used it to betray Jesus. It was hypocritical to use a sign of love, to mark or identify the one to be arrested. In the darkness of night in the Garden, Judas may (?) have been surprised when Jesus, calling him by name, asked, *“Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?”* (Luke 22:48).

But Judas was not the only hypocrite involved in the death of our Lord. Pilate pretended and professed, *“I am innocent of the blood of this just person,”* washing his hands (Matt. 27:24). He said to the chief priests and to the people: *“I find no*

fault in this man” (Luke 23:4); and to the chief priests and the rulers and the people: “*Behold, I having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him*” (Luke 23:13,14). But then he turned right around and signed His death warrant! Pilate’s action was hypocritical! Afterward, by his authority, the soldiers platted a crown of thorns and put it on Jesus’ head, and cruelly and brutally executed Him.

Like Pilate, many sinners today pretend to be innocent, while going right along with the world, doing as the world does. Jesus warned against being like hypocrites (Matt. 6:5). The apostle Paul wrote: “*Let love be without hypocrisy*” (Rom. 12:9, ASV).

A hypocrite may pretend to be on God’s side, deceiving the people. But God is not deceived!

The Love Of Money Put Jesus On The Cross

It was not **His** love of money, but that of Judas! At the last Passover, Jesus lamented: “*Woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! Good were it for that man if he had never been born*” (Mark 14:21). That night Jesus announced to His apostles: “*One of you shall betray me*” (Matt. 26:21). They began to inquire which one, and Jesus said, “*He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped a sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after the sop, Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus, That thou doest, do quickly*” (John 13:26-27).

“One of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you?” (Matt. 26:14-15). Earlier we read of Judas that *“he was a thief, and having a bag, took away what was put therein”* (John 12:6, ASV). *“Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot ... and he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money”* (Luke 22:3-5; cf. Mark 14:11). *“And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver”* (Matt. 26:15).

But Judas, when he saw *“that he (Jesus) was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? See thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself”* (Matt. 27:3-5). (Note: the Greek word here translated “repented” is META-MELOMAI, while the word used when God commands sinners to “repent” is META-NOEO.)

While Judas betrayed Jesus for money, some today will preach false doctrines for money! Some would even leave the Lord’s church and join a denomination, if the price were high enough. *“For the love of money is the root of all evil”* (I Tim. 6:10). This “root” sin is very dangerous! Note this example from real life: A man said, I can’t **afford** to come to Wednesday night Bible study: In addition to my regular accounting job, I keep books at night for

various people, and they pay me \$25 an hour. Bible study would take me away from my accounting work for two hours—one hour for service, plus 30 minutes before, and 30 after. So it would cost me \$50.00 every week to attend that service!

Prostitutes sell their sexual favors for money. Many business men sell pornography, alcoholic beverages, or other sinful products, to increase their own income—because of the love of money.

Truly, *“The love of money is the root of all evil”* (I Tim. 6:10), or *“...the root of all kinds of evil”* (ASV). There is no sin in the catalogue of sins that somebody would not commit if the price was high enough! Christians are taught that covetousness is a sin, and should not be *“once named among you”* (Eph. 5:3). This is one of the sins which put Jesus on the cross!

The Sin Of Ingratitude Crucified Jesus

I love to remember that Jesus is a *“gift”* from heaven to mankind. *“For God so loved the world, that he **gave** his only begotten **Son**...”* (John 3:16). Jesus *“came unto his own, but his own received him not”* (John 1:11). They were not grateful! Hear this warning: *“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word have I spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day”* (John 12:48).

He said that His purpose in coming from heaven was *“to seek and to save that which was lost”* (Luke 19:10). He was the world’s best friend and benefactor—yet their ingratitude was supremely

manifested when they crucified Him!

The Sin Of Envy Put Him On The Cross

Pilate “*knew that for **envy** they had delivered*” Jesus up to be crucified (Matt. 27:18; Mark 15:10). Our English word **envy** denotes chagrin or discontent at the good fortune, success, or excellence of another. In naming sins of the Gentiles, “*envy*” is just before “*murder*” in the list in Romans 1:29. “*Envyings*” is just before “*murders*” in the “*works of the flesh*” condemned in Galatians 5:19-21. Like Paul, unconverted people often are “*living in ... envy*” (Titus 3:3).

But God’s children are taught to lay aside “*envies*” (I Peter 2:1)—for “*charity*” or “*love*” (A.S.V.) “*envieth not*” (I Cor. 13:4). Christians are taught to “*walk honestly, as in the day; ... not in strife and envying*” (Rom. 13:13). “*For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work*” (James 3:16).

“*Almost the whole city*” of Antioch (in Pisidia) assembled to hear Paul preach “*the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with **envy**, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming*” (Acts 13:44-45).

Brother H. Leo Boles wrote:

The word ‘envy’ in ancient writings implies somewhat more than it does now. It signified all those hostile feelings which are included under the general term ‘unpopularity.’ Fear of his power with the people, jealousy at his purity,

his wisdom and miracles, a mean desire to crush a good and great man, with all the wicked, malicious feelings of a fickle multitude are ranked under the word 'envy' as used here. John explains what their **envy** was when he says, 'Behold how ye prevail nothing; lo, the world is gone after him' (John 12:19). Again they said, 'If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him' (John 11:48). ...The people prefer a murderer to the Son of God. In their blind rage and determination to put Jesus to death, the Jews work out the plan of salvation for others—of ruin to themselves. (**A Commentary On The Gospel Of Matthew**, Gospel Advocate Co., Nashville, TN: 1936: p. 532).

List Not Exhaustive

There may have been many other sins which contributed to the death of our Lord. By His cruel, inhumane, and shameful death on the cross, Jesus willingly paid the penalty for all the transgressions of all the inhabitants this world has ever had, or ever will have. With His own blood (Matt. 26:28) He redeemed us from our sins. From God the Father, He purchased the remission of our sins. Then He turns to us and says, "*By your faith in me, you repent and be baptized in my name, to obtain from me the remission of sins which cost me my blood.*"

Our obedience to Christ in baptism does not in any way "*pay for our salvation.*" Nothing that man does, or can do, **pays** for our redemption! The blood (Matt. 26:28) of Christ **paid** for it! So far as man is concerned, salvation is "*the free gift of God*" (Rom. 6:23, ASV)! But that "*gift*" is conditional: God

requires sinners to hear the gospel (Rom. 10:13-15), believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16:30-31), repent of sins (Acts 3:19; 17:30), and be baptized into Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38; 22:16)—all of this in order to obtain from Jesus the remission of sins which He paid for with His own blood.

Spectators Around The Cross

When Jesus was arrested, “*all the disciples forsook him, and fled*” (Matt. 26:56; cf. Mark 14:50). John (18:15) reveals that Peter “*followed Jesus, and so did another disciple*”—probably a reference to himself. They were nearby during at least part of the three illegal trials by the Jews, and the three illegal trials by the Romans. And John seems to have been present at the cross, at first. But who were some of the spectators at that shameful miscarriage of justice?

Roman Soldiers Saw Him Die

Luke (23:26) indicates that Jesus bare His own cross at first; then “*they compel one Simon, a Cyrenian ... to bear his cross*” (Mark 15:21; Matt. 27:32). Did **Simon** linger at Golgotha long enough to witness the use of that cross? He may have; but we know not.

We do know that as Simon carried the cross for Jesus, “*there followed him a **great company** of people, and of **women**, which also bewailed and lamented him.*” Calling them “*Daughters of Jerusalem,*” Jesus told them to weep not for him, but for themselves, and for their children (Luke

23:27-31). Did they stay and watch Jesus die? Some of them probably did, for some women are specifically named as being near the cross, as we presently shall see.

About nine o'clock (Mark 15:25), the actual work of crucifying Jesus was done by four soldiers; for John (19:23-24) tells us that the soldiers "*took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part.*" But rather than ruin His coat which was "*without seam, woven from the top throughout,*" they cast lots for it—unintentionally fulfilling an Old Testament (Psm. 22:18) prophecy!

*"Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title then **read many of the Jews**; for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. Then said the **chief priests** of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written"* (John 19:19-22; cf. Matt. 27:36-37; Mark 15:25-26; Luke 23:38).

From this we know that "**many of the Jews**" saw Jesus on the cross, and read the inscription. Luke (23:35) declares "**the people** stood beholding. And **the rulers also with them** derided him ..." This is the very next verse after Jesus prayed, "*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*" Matthew (27:39-41) specifies that the "*chief priests ... with the scribes and elders*" reviled Jesus while He was on the cross (cf. Mark 15:29-32).

Our Lord’s Mother Was At The Cross

“There stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene” (John 19:25). We should not be surprised that His loving Mother was among the women nearby! She knew she was a virgin at His conception, yea, even at His birth (Matt. 1:25). Mary had a heart full of stored-up memories, including a message from a heavenly visitor (Luke 1:26-38). When she did not understand all that Jesus told her, *“she kept all these sayings in her heart”* (Luke 2:51). From the cross Jesus asked *“the disciple whom he loved”* (John 19:26—generally believed to be a reference to the apostle John) to care for her. This fact has given rise to the speculation that Mary’s husband (Joseph) was already dead.

Apparently not **one** of her other six children—all younger than Jesus—was at the crucifixion. One tradition says that Salome, the wife of Zebedee and mother of John, was Mary’s *“sister”* mentioned in John 19:25. If this be true, Mary was committed by her dying Son to the care of her nephew. *“From that hour that disciple took her unto his own home”* (John 19:27).

Remember: during His personal ministry, *“neither did his brethren believe in him”* (John 7:5). Later, however, our Lord’s brother, James, became a *“pillar”* (Gal. 2:9) in the church at Jerusalem, and probably wrote the book of James in the New Testament.

Two Thieves Were At The Scene

Two “*robbers*” (ASV) or “*thieves*” (Matt. 27:38; Mark 15:27), also called “*malefactors*,” (Luke 23:32-33) or “*criminals*” (NAS), were crucified that same day, one on either side of Jesus (John 19:18; Matt. 27:38; Mark 15:27; Luke 23:33).

The Greek word translated in the King James “*thieves*” is KLASTAI (“robbers”) which is “Not to be confounded with KLEPTAS **thief**, one who takes property by stealth, (although the distinction is obscured in A.V.)”—**Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament**, American Book Co., New York, Cincinnati, Chicago; Corrected Edition, copyrighted 1889; Joseph Henry Thayer, p. 349.

Brother J.W. McGarvey wrote:

They had been condemned to death for robbery, and were executed at this time probably to save the trouble of separate execution; but the circumstance, whether so intended or not, added materially to the indignity heaped upon Jesus.—**The New Testament Commentary**: Vol. I, Matthew and Mark, 1875 Lexington, KY: Reprinted by Eugene S. Smith, Des Moines, Iowa (no date); p. 245.

It appears from Matthew (27:44) that at first both these outlaws “*reviled*” Jesus (cf. Mark 15:32); but evidently one of them repented, and rebuked the other. Confessing their guilt, He acknowledged they deserved to die. That notorious “*Thief on the Cross*” rendered powerful testimony of Jesus, saying: “*This man hath done nothing amiss*” (Luke 23:41).

Then he pleaded: “*Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.*” Jesus responded: “*Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise*” (Luke 23:39-43).

Please bear in mind that Christ’s promise to him was made **before Jesus died**. However, like any man’s “*Last Will and Testament,*” the Testament **of our Lord** did not go into effect until after His death! “*For a testament is of force after men are dead ...*” (Heb. 9:15-17; 10:9-10). Therefore this “*thief*” is no example of how one can be saved now, since the will of Christ has become operative.

Furthermore, the man does not live who can prove that notorious “*Thief on the Cross*” had not been baptized earlier, either under John’s baptism (see Matt. 3:5-6; Mark 1:5; Luke 3:3,7), or that of the disciples under the limited commission (John 4:1-2).

Note this carefully: (1) The death of Christ for our sins, (2) His burial, and (3) His resurrection from the dead (I Cor. 15:1-4), are three cardinal facts of the gospel. You and I must believe all three of these facts in order to be saved. Paul said he preached that “*If thou shalt ... believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved*” (Rom. 10:8-10). Without FAITH in the **resurrection** of Jesus from the dead, we cannot be saved! But the “*Thief on the Cross*” did NOT believe this!—**He could not have believed God HAD RAISED Jesus**—for Jesus had not even died yet! Consequently He could not have been raised yet! So, that notorious “*Thief*” is no example of how

people now can be saved!

That thief died before Jesus ever said,

Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19, ASV).

The thief died before Christ ever said, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*" (Mark 16:16).

Under the will of Christ, we have examples of thousands of conversions in the book of Acts (for instance, three thousand on Pentecost Day, Acts 2:36-41); but the "*Thief on the Cross*" is NOT an example for us!

The Centurion Saw Jesus Die

The officer in charge of the execution squad that day probably observed all the foregoing happenings. At the end of the ordeal, Jesus "*cried again with a loud voice,*" and all four biographers say He "*yielded*" or "*gave up the ghost*" (Matt. 27:50; Mark 15:37; Luke 23:46; John 19:30), asking the heavenly Father to receive His spirit (Luke 23:46). Since "*the body without the spirit is dead*" (James 2:26), the body in which Jesus had lived on earth for about a third of a century is now dead.

When Jesus "*yielded up the ghost, ... behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom*" (Matt. 27:50-51; Mark 15:38). No longer was the Old Testament temple worship in the "*holy place*" separated from "*the most holy place!*" The separating veil is now gone! No wonder, then, that soon after Pentecost "*a GREAT COMPANY OF*

THE PRIESTS were obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7).

At Jesus’ death *“the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened” (Matt. 27:51-52).* But the Sabbath would begin at sundown, and He did not die until *“about the ninth hour” (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34; Luke 23:44),* or about three in the afternoon the way we count time. There was not time enough to secure tools and seal again those tombs before the Sabbath would begin. So they were left open until the Sabbath was past. But early on the first day of the week, Jesus arose! —*“And many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves **after his resurrection,** and went into the city, and appeared unto many” (Matt. 27:53).*

That Friday afternoon, not the Centurion only, but also *“they that were with him,”* when they *“saw the earthquake and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God” (Matt. 27:54; cf. Mark 15:39; Luke 23:47).*

An Appeal

The evidence that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of God, is overwhelming, irresistible! The Centurion, and others who did not at first believe His claims could not fight against God. Neither can you afford to do so! Believe the facts of the gospel, obey its commands, and trust its promises—today!

Although we did not actually nail Him to the cross, whatever sins we are guilty of will face us in the judgment—unless we submit to His will in loving obedience. I plead with you to do this—now!

Chapter 5

The Physical Death Of Christ On The Cross

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The act of nailing or binding a person to a cross or tree, whether for executing or for exposing the corpse, is the ancient punishment known as crucifixion. According to historians such as Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus, various forms of crucifixion were used by the Assyrians, Scythians, Phoenicians and Persians. The practice was taken by Alexander the Great and his successors, and especially by the Romans who reserved this form of the death penalty for slaves in cases of robbery and rebellion. Roman citizens could be punished in this way, but only for the crime of high treason. When the Jews delivered Jesus to Pilate (Mark 15:1), they were expecting the sentence “*death by crucifixion,*” as the claim of Jesus to be the Messiah could be construed as rebellion against Rome. Jesus is compared to Barabbas (Mark 15:7) where the people ask for the release of Barabbas (v. 11). Pilate then

agrees to crucify Jesus, who is scourged (v. 15), mocked by the Romans soldiers (vs. 16-19), and crucified together with two “robbers” (vs. 25-27).¹

It is for this reason that death by crucifixion becomes such an important topic rather than just an historical fact in human history. It is because of the One who died and why He died that this ancient form of capital punishment deserves our earnest attention. Everything that one can read about this form of punishment conveys something of the extreme agony that is accompanied with it. In many ways the suffering sustained by a victim of the cross defies adequate description. Yet by attempting to recapture something of the horror that is attached to such a death will surely lead one to see that Jesus has made the ultimate sacrifice for man. It will lead one to appreciate even more the horrible nature of sin as God truly sees it as well as His matchless love for the souls of men and His desire for all men everywhere to live eternally with Him in heaven. Only God could take such a terrible instrument of human suffering and turn it into an item which conveys God’s great glory and His potent power to save.

This chapter, which will serve as the basis for the lecture given in the lectureship series itself, will focus on the actual physical death of Jesus on the cross. It will do this from four different perspectives. **First**, in order to maintain the proper priority, the theological significance of the cross will be presented. **Second**, some of the historical events leading up to the cross will be presented which will help in

understanding some of the emotional and physical persecution which Jesus sustained which contributed to His death on the cross. **Third**, the physiological significance of the cross will be presented in order to help us understand something of the extent of the suffering experienced on the cross. **Fourth**, this research will conclude with certain deductions which naturally follow from such a discussion.

The Theological Significance Of The Cross

The theological consideration regarding the cross of Christ cannot be overemphasized. In fact, they are of paramount importance if one is to keep a proper priority. Even though the actual physical suffering of Jesus on the cross is a matter of utmost consideration, as will be pointed out later in this work, still if one does not understand the implications of the cross, then the crucifixion scene becomes merely an event in history and nothing more. The fact of the matter is that the crucifixion of Jesus is not merely the story of the suffering of an individual in human history, but rather has profound consequences regarding man, sin and salvation. In reality, the cross was necessary because of the nature of God and the nature of sin. God is absolutely holy, pure, righteous. When man freely chose to commit sin, that is, to transgress the Divine law of God, then a way to satisfy the Divine justice of God and at the same time satisfy His Divine mercy and love for man and man's salvation had to be employed. On the basis of pure justice, God would

have blotted man, making him pay eternally for sin. However, God's nature of perfect love provided a way of escape for man. The cross of Jesus was the only way that this twofold nature of God could be truly satisfied. Hebrews 9:22 states,

And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission (Heb. 9:22),

The blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin (Heb. 10:4). It required the sacrifice of Jesus (Heb. 9:26). The offering of His body (Heb. 10:10) and His blood (Heb. 10:19) was necessary for the salvation of man. The cross was not a type of spiritual luxury nor accidental development. The cross was and is indispensable. Old Testament prophecy predicted that Jesus would be the satisfaction for sins. The Passover lamb looked forward to Christ.

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed (Isa. 53:5),

Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many (Matt. 20:28).

For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself (Heb. 9:26).

These Bible passages, along with others, teach that the cross was necessary to satisfy the demands of justice, to provide an appropriate sacrifice for sin, a

propitiation, an atonement, making salvation possible for all who obey God’s terms for pardon (Heb. 5:8-9).

The cross was at the heart of the preaching and teaching of inspired apostles. Though the cross was foolishness to some and was a stumbling block to the Jews, still the cross is at the heart of the Christian message of salvation (I Cor. 1:18-24). Romans 3:25 states,

Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God (Rom. 3:25).

Again Paul states,

And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled (Col. 1:20-21).

It is clear that the Biblical position is that God was in Christ reconciling the world.

Therefore, the cross of Christ has profound significance for all men. If one were to look at the cross and only see pity for one who has suffered, then the point of the cross has been missed. Jesus voluntarily came to the cross,

And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Phil. 2:8).

For indeed, if Christ has not died for our sins and been raised, then our preaching is vain and our faith is also vain (I Cor. 15:12-18).

The Historical Events Leading To The Cross

Naturally, the events leading up to the crucifixion are important in understanding something of what the Lord experienced physically. The last week of the Lord's earthly life was filled with emotionally charged activity. Sometime Thursday of that last week (Matt. 26:17-35; John 13:1-17) Jesus sent two of His disciples into the city to prepare for the Passover. That evening He sat down at the table with the twelve, and even here Judas, still being with the disciples, is in reality a traitor at heart. During this event-filled evening Jesus said to the disciples, "*One of you shall betray me*" (Matt. 26:21). Judas would soon leave the group to complete the act of betrayal. Later that night Jesus leaves with His disciples from the upper room and goes through the city to the Kedron valley and on to the foot of Mount Olivet to a well-known garden called Gethsemane. Here He leaves the disciples except for the three and enters further into the garden for prayer. Leaving the three close by, He goes still further into the garden where Matthew says,

And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt (Matt. 26:39).

Obviously, as the hour of trial and suffering approaches, Jesus fortifies Himself with prayer. He advises His disciples to do the same thing as His arrest would involve them too, and it would naturally bring about temptation (Luke 22:40). He goes on to tell them, “*My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death...*” (Matt. 26:38). McGarvey says that this phrase was not a figure of rhetoric.

The nervous prostration of Jesus was such as to endanger his life, and the watching of the apostles may have been doubly needful. Not only did he require their sympathy, but he may also have looked to them to render him assistance in the case of a physical collapse.²

Isaiah had described the Lord as “*the man of sorrows*” (Isa. 53:3). Luke adds that the Lord, while in the garden, was in “*an agony*” (Luke 22:44). Here he states,

And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground (Luke 22:43-44).

The Greek word translated “*drops*” in the passage is from the Greek term “*thrombos*,” referring in its meaning to a small amount of (flowing) blood, or clot of blood.³ Thayer renders it “*a large thick drop, especially of clotted blood.*”⁴

Writing from a medical perspective, Joseph Clements states:

One of the rarest medical findings in this case is that of bloody sweat (hematidrosis or

hemohidrosis). Jesus, realizing that the time of his death was near, suffered great mental anguish and, as described by Luke (22:44), His sweat became like blood. This pathological occurrence is a result of blood vessels rupturing into sweat glands. This may occur in highly emotional or stressful states. The blood loss thus occurring would be minimal but the high stress level is certain worth noting.⁵

What does all this mean? Was it fear of physical death that forced the bloody sweat from His face and the cry of agony from His lips? There have been many warriors throughout world history that faced death in the line of duty. It was not the reality of death that caused such anguish of body and spirit nor the fact of His being betrayed by Judas. The real cause of anguish comes from knowing that He was about to experience a separation from His Father, whose presence He had always enjoyed. He was about to take upon Himself the sins of the world, as if He were actually guilty of such, temporarily disrupting His fellowship with God. Paul states,

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (II Cor. 5:21).

Jesus knew and understood the great tragedy it is to be separated from the source of all goodness, thus the physical display of great emotions in the garden.

Jesus is betrayed and arrested. Jesus is brought first to Annas and later to Caiaphas. It must have been soon after midnight that Jesus was arrested, and the time spent between His arrest and the

meeting of the Sanhedrin where He would be formally charged was spent in brutal mockery. It is during this time that He is asked regarding His disciples and what He teaches (John 18:19). Jesus responds by saying that He has been teaching openly; simply ask anyone and they will tell what He has been teaching. At this point Jesus is struck with the hand by one of the attendants. Such is typical of the emotional time Jesus is going through.

And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him (Luke 22:63).

And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophesy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands (Mark 14:65).

Over a prolonged period of time the physical stress Jesus continues to endure would naturally take its toll on His physical body, ultimately contributing its part to His death on the cross. Jesus is formally condemned by the Sanhedrin and is led away to Pilate. After questioning Jesus, Pilate sends Jesus to Herod Antipas. Herod is anxious to meet Jesus, but Jesus does not answer Herod a word. Herod takes vengeance upon the silence of Jesus by treating Him with contempt and ridiculing Him. They dress Jesus in bright colored clothes and send Him back to Pilate. Pilate struggles with the mob but finally yields and gives the order for Jesus to be crucified. Josephus reveals the fact that those who are condemned to death by crucifixion should first be scourged.⁶ Scourging was so cruel a punishment that the victim often died under its infliction. The

victim was stripped and fastened to a low post to bend the back so as to stretch the skin. Blood spurted at the first blow.

Scourging (flogging) or examination by scourging (Acts 22:24,29) was a legal preliminary to every Roman execution and only women and Roman servants or soldiers (except in cases of desertion) were exempt. The usual instrument was a short whip (flagrum or flagellum) with several single or braided thongs of variable lengths, in which small iron balls or sharp pieces of sheep bones were tied at varying intervals. The naked back, buttocks, and legs were repeatedly struck with the iron balls causing deep contusions (bruising) with the thongs and sheep bones actually cutting into the skin, subcutaneous tissue and even muscle. Pain and blood loss generally led to circulatory shock and the severity of this condition would usually determine how long the victim would survive the cross. Thus, by modern-day criteria, when Jesus was led away to be crucified (Mark 15:15,20), his condition was serious if not critical.⁷

Thus Jesus is led away to be crucified. The events which have been recounted perhaps have taken from fifteen to eighteen hours (Luke 22:14; 23:44-46). It is in the morning hours when Jesus is made to carry His own cross (most likely the patibulum or cross-beam) a journey perhaps as much as 2.5 miles.⁸ However, before reaching Golgotha, the guards seize a man from Cyrene named Simon and lay the cross on him. Perhaps the weight of the cross was too great for Jesus, who by now must be

reaching exhaustion because of the events which took place the night before along with the sufferings experienced in the morning hours.

Some Physiological Considerations About Crucifixion

At the cross Jesus is crucified between two thieves. A stupefying drink for such occasions is offered, but Jesus refuses to cloud His faculties even to ease His pain and does not accept the wine mixed with gall (Matt. 27:34,38). He has had nothing to eat or drink since the night of the supper which He ate with His disciples. He has undergone the severest kind of emotional persecution; He has been beaten (Matt. 26:67), scourged (John 19:1), and now He is crucified (John 19:16). The writers of the gospel account do not give a detailed description of our Lord's physical sufferings, but simply say “*they crucified him.*”

Secular writers of the time do not tell us much about the method of crucifixion, but new light has been thrown on the subject by archaeological work in Judea. The remains of a young crucified man, dating from probably between AD 7 and AD 66, judging from Herodian pottery found there, will perhaps shed considerable light on the matter of crucifixion in general. The victims' arms appear to have been nailed to the patibulum, the cross-beam. The legs had been bent at the knees and twisted back so that the calves were parallel to the patibulum or cross-bar. One iron nail had been driven through both his heels together, with his right

foot above the left. A fragment shows that the cross was of olive wood. The legs found in the sight itself seem to indicate that they had both been broken, presumably by a forcible blow, like those of Jesus' two companions in John 19:32.⁹

Clements, a medical doctor, considers some of the physical aspects of crucifixion.

The major pathophysiologic effect of crucifixion, beyond the exquisite pain, was a marked interference with normal respiration, particularly exhalation. A maximum inhalation would be obtained by resting the body weight on the nailed wrists with outstretched arms. In this position, however, exhalation would be impossible. In order to breathe the victim had to lift the body by pushing up with the legs, transferring the body weight to the nails in the feet. This allowed the arms and chest wall to relax and thus permit exhalation. Thus a respiratory cycle would require Jesus to lift himself on the cross, exhale and then gently let himself down as he inhaled. Muscle spasms in the legs, shoulders and arms, and pain directly from the nails in the hands and feet were cyclically experienced with each respiratory cycle. As a result, each respiratory effort would be more agonizing and tiring and would lead eventually to asphyxia.¹⁰

From such a discussion it would seem clear that breathing over an extended period of time would become increasingly difficult.

The actual cause of death by crucifixion would vary in each case, but the two most prominent causes were probably hypovolemic shock and exhaustion asphyxia. Other possible

contributing factors include dehydration, cardiac arrhythmias, and congestive heart failure with the rapid accumulation of pericardial and pleural effusions. Crucifracture (breaking of the legs below the knee) led to an asphyxia death within minutes.¹¹

Clements in his research continues to offer other possible contributing factors to the death of Jesus. For instance, he suggests that another possibility could be cardiac contusion with myocardial damage and subsequent rupture of the wall of the heart resulting in sudden death.¹² On the cross, the workload of the heart was greatly increased due to multiple factors. This, Clements says, could result in a rupture of the anterior wall of the heart causing Jesus to cry out in a loud voice and suddenly die (Mark 15:37). Though the very cause of Jesus' physical death may not be precisely identified, still it is clear that Jesus did die while on the cross, and this can be known for several reasons. First, the soldiers perceived that Jesus was already dead, so they did not break His legs (John 19:33). Instead, they pierced His side with a spear (John 19:34). Second, flow of blood and water from His side is a proof of His death.

The piercing of his side almost certainly indicates a laceration of the heart itself which would, even under normal circumstances, be fatal. The separation of blood and water further implies some time had elapsed since his death. The appearance of blood and water probably meaning a post-mortem separation of the cellular components of blood from the fluid component (serum).¹³

Third, Jesus Himself gave the time of His death by His own statement, "*Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit*" (Luke 23:46). Matthew goes on to say, "*Jesus ... yielded up his spirit*" (Matt. 27:50). The certainty of the death of Jesus on the cross is beyond any doubt as it is proven by both medical and biblical means. Jesus' body was delivered to two of His disciples, Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus; loving hands prepared it for burial in Joseph's new tomb; and at the request of the Jews, the Roman seal and Roman guard made the sepulchre secure.

Some Concluding Deductions Regarding The Cross

Naturally, from a study such as this, there are certain deductions which necessarily follow. Christ is indeed the exclusive way to God. He said,

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me (John 14:6).

He is the only saviour of the world.

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him (Heb. 5:8-9).

Christ and His death and subsequent resurrection are man's only hope for eternity.

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed (I Peter 2:24).

It is by His death that we are healed and not by any other. He is our exclusive hope of heaven.

The cross is a marvelous demonstration of the love of God for man. By understanding the significance of the actual physical death of Jesus on the cross, one is able to come to a greater appreciation of the truth that...

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved (John 3:16-17).

Surely the actual physical death of Jesus is the greatest manifestation of the love of God that there is. *“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”* (Rom. 5:8).

An understanding of the suffering of Christ on the cross should move man to love God supremely. This will mean taking God at His Word and following that Word in directing our lives. Jesus and His instruction regarding the importance of obedience remain the same.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven (Matt. 7:21).

It is essential, if we are to be pleasing to God that we follow His instruction for our lives faithfully (Heb. 11:6). The suffering of Christ on the cross has given us meaningful purpose for living. We live for Him

because we love Him.

The actual physical death of Jesus upon the cross teaches us something of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. The terrible nature of sin must be great so as to make it necessary for God to give His Son as He did. To see Christ on the cross, bearing our sins in His body, tells us a great deal about sin and its consequences. The death of Christ should cause us to stop and think just how terrible sin really is. From a human perspective, sin is not nearly as bad; however, from the Divine perspective, it is so terrible in its nature that it took the death of Christ to atone for sin, and it will cause one to lose his soul eternally. To understand the suffering of Jesus on the cross for our transgressions should cause us to *“abhor that which is evil”* (Rom. 12:9).

The actual physical death of Jesus on the cross should motivate each and everyone to tell the world that Christ is the answer to all of our problems. One comes to understand Paul’s statement better when he says,

I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also (Rom. 1:14-15).

It is a sad thing to consider the fact that there are millions who have not yet heard the marvelous truth of the death of Christ on the cross and what that means. What took place on the cross should move us to tell the world that Christ has tasted death for every man (Heb. 2:9).

Endnotes

1 Helpful material pertaining to the history of the ancient practice of crucifixion may be found in: Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan, editors, **The Oxford Companion To The Bible**, Oxford University Press: New York, 1993, pp. 141-142. The reader will also want to consult the **New Bible Dictionary**, edited by J.D. Douglas, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois, 1973, pp. 253-254.

2 J. W. McGarvey, **The Fourfold Gospel**, p. 686.

3 See William F. Arndt and F. Wilber Gingrich's Lexicon, p. 364.

4 See Thayer's Lexicon, p. 2364.

5 Please see **When I Survey The Wondrous Cross**, edited by Floyd Baily, Jr., Mark Howell, Allen Webster, *“Medical Aspects of The Crucifixion Of Jesus Christ”* by Joseph C. Clements, MD, p. 107.

6 McGarvey, *Ibid.*, p. 713.

7 Clements, *Ibid.*, p. 107.

8 Douglas, *Ibid.*, p. 253.

9 Douglas, *Ibid.*, p. 254.

10 Clements, *Ibid.*, p. 108.

11 Clements, *Ibid.*, p. 108-109.

12 Clements, *Ibid.*, p. 109

13 Clements, *Ibid.*, p. 109.

Chapter 6

The Attitude Of Jesus On The Cross

Roger Jackson



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In the kingdom of God attitudes count for much. Both the thing done and the reason for our doing it are taken into consideration. For example Paul said,

Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing (I Cor. 13:3).

The Lord told a rich young man that he must sell all that he had and give it to the needy to be saved (Matt. 19:16), but here we learn that a man might even do that and still be lost because his attitude was not right. He might even be a martyr for the faith and yet lose his soul because of an attitude that was not what it should have been.

In Matthew 6:1,2 Jesus warned about giving alms for the purpose of being seen of men. He quickly explained that if that is the reward the alms giver is seeking it will be the only one he gets. The

Pharisees were the main target of the lesson on service to be seen of men.

The Lord cautioned,

The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you to observe, that observe and do: but do not ye after their works: for they say and do not ... but all their works they do for to be seen of men ... (Matt. 23:2,3,5).

If we may be permitted to have a favorite among the parables mine is the parable of the two men who went up to the temple to pray (Luke 18:9-13). The Pharisee's claim to righteousness was not questioned by the Lord. If everything he said about himself had been true he was still lost because of his attitude.

Everything we believe and practice, indeed, what we are religiously we are because of our attitude. There are teeming millions out there who are lost in sin and error for the very same reason the Lord gave in John 5:44, "*How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?*"

The Lord is our example in both attitude and action. "*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith ...*" the Hebrew writer admonished (Heb. 12:2). The very context in which this admonition is made is that of His hanging on the old rugged cross. Whatever pain and discomfort I may experience because of righteousness I can always look back to the cross and say the Lord went through more and still maintained His exemplary attitude. As a matter

of fact that is exactly what all of us must do. He has given us the pattern in attitude and by inspired men required.

But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord (II Cor. 3:18).

In loving one another, we do not merely love with the highest esteem, but as He loved us (John 15:12). When we feel like ruling the heads of men the Lord reminds us to wash their feet instead, AS did He (John 13:5-8). When we esteem ourselves better than others and draw into a selfish shell of looking out for ol' number one, the Lord's words should pierce to the heart. *“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves”* (Phil. 2:3). There follows the example we have come to expect—that of the Lord. It is possible to fill all the allotted space with examples like these, however, the Lord reached the zenith of attitude adjustment when He said,

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets (Matt. 7:12).

The cross changed neither the attitude nor the actions of the Lord. I would have considered the occasion an exception and called the leagues of angels, but that just shows how much room for improvement there is. A lot of people take the position that good attitudes are right, but that every one of them may be changed if the circumstances

warrant. The Lord said when you are smitten on one cheek, turn the other also, but as one preacher said, He did not say what to do after that. Still another explained that the Bible says not to let the sun go down on your wrath, but up to then you can dish our pure misery.

The circumstances only serve to highlight the good or bad attitude. The seven sayings of the Lord on the cross carry an even deeper significance when it is remembered that He said these things while nails pierced His flesh. This was indeed the greatest test of His attitude, especially that one He spoke of in John 5:38-42,

... love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you (Matt. 5:44).

It was time for the Lord to show how much He believed and practiced what He said. We will see. We will see.

“Father, Forgive Them, For They Know Not What They Do”

I know of no occupation that more quickly lends itself to *“burn out”* and growing old and bitter than that of a faithful gospel preacher. If he is not careful he will find himself thirty years into the effort with nothing to show for it but gray hair. After being kicked out, lied about and lied to, and scarcely being able to save his own children he may grow old and bitter brooding more and more and occupying his time thinking about getting even. Let the Scriptures

warn us (Rom. 12:17-21). They have never done to me as they did to the Lord. And besides this, I refuse to let a few old sore heads ruin my life. I refuse to pray for their salvation in their sins (Luke 13:3; 17:3), and neither did the Lord, but I do not want a one to go to hell, and if you do shame on you! The Lord wanted them to repent and prayed for them the opportunity to do so. On Pentecost about 3,000 did.

If you want to talk about hard sayings I challenge you to find one harder than Matthew 6:14,15. Read it over and over:

For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will you Father forgive your trespasses.

There is no sin more destructive to a congregation of God’s people than the sin of an unforgiving attitude. It is perhaps the most inconsistent attitude a Christian can have. The way God has forgiven us is the way we must forgive each other. And yet I know of one place where a man’s “*confession*” was rejected by the elders because he typed his name at the bottom instead of signing it! Another case involved a man who confessed the same fault three times, but when he found that his name did not appear on the list of those who lead prayer and waited on the Lord’s table he asked about it and was told, “*Well, some of the members were not satisfied with your confession.*” Well, pin the badge of judge and jury on them! I may not like a

confession, believe it could have been worded better or not even believe the confessor is sincere, but I must forgive! Paul said, love, "... *believeth all things.*" I want to have faith in my brother who repents and what I cannot know about his intentions I will leave up to God.

There are five things that I have found helpful in remembering that I must forgive and in teaching my brethren that they must do the same: (1) We must remember that our offenses toward God are greater in number and in magnitude than those we commit against each other. This was the Lord's point in the parable of the wicked steward (Matt. 18:23-35). (2) We must remember that none of us can ever pay the debt. The wicked steward owed an enormous amount and the rich young ruler thought he could pay what he owed (Matt. 19:16). However, the Lord pointed out that with men, this (being good enough to save self) is impossible. (3) We must remember that it hurts deeply to seek forgiveness and be denied. When Esau sought a change of mind in his father's heart he found none (Heb. 12:15-17), and the Scriptures say he wept bitterly. I recall a case in which a man and his wife asked me to come talk to them, and they told me a sad story. A couple in the congregation had stopped speaking to them (as they had a number of others). This godly man and his wife had asked for forgiveness for whatever error they had committed. The couple who would not speak to them would not say what the offense had been. Their unforgiving attitude had caused many

tears to be shed, and the church was finally split by them. (4) We must remember that God has chosen mercy instead of justice and this mercy is available when we obey His will. The Lord said,

But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (Matt. 9:13).

It is not until a man admits that he, too, is a sinner and in need of God’s mercy that he will truly forgive others. The day I stop sinning is the day I shall don the robe of the judge and hand out mercy as I see fit. (5) We must remember that God expects us to forgive as He forgives us. *“Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him”* (Luke 17:3). This is exactly what the Lord did even while hanging on a Roman cross.

“Woman Behold Thy Son ... Behold Thy Mother.”

The record indicates that the Lord spoke this to John. It was the Lord’s request that someone take care of His mother after His death. More than likely Joseph had died, but we do not know. This shows the Lord’s attitude regarding the mercy needful to care for the ones who are our personal responsibility. The Jews had used the *“corban”* rule to relieve themselves of this responsibility and the Lord intended that such clever dodges be avoided in the new order of things (Mark 7:9-13; I Tim. 5:8). He even taught that we have a responsibility regarding

the assistance of those who are outside the fold (Luke 10:29-37).

We hear a lot these days about human rights. Many have taken the matter too far and suggested that animals have rights too. However, the fact is that we do have certain “*inalienable*” rights, or rights that should not be taken away from us. (1) We have a right to life. Since the infamous court case Roe vs. Wade, January 22, 1973, in which abortion on demand resulted, this country has allowed 1 1/2 million unborn children each year to be murdered. That comes to 31.5 million unborn children. Save the blue whales, save the eagles, save the snail darter, but kill the unwanted children. This is not the attitude of the Lord, but is pure barbarism in all its ugliness. (2) Every one of us has the right to be loved. Psalm 127:3 says children are a gift from God. (3) Every child has a right to receive training for the future. His training begins with the Bible (Prov. 22:6). (4) Every soul has a right to hear the gospel of God’s Son, and we have the responsibility to take it (Rom. 1:14-16; Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15).

“Today Shalt Thou Be With Me In Paradise”

Little doubt is left in the Record to believe that the thief was not saved, but I would not contest the matter if anyone believes differently. We do not need to get bogged down in matters that do not matter and overlook the important lessons. Perhaps such a request as, “*Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom*” would have been met with disdain if

I had been the one to whom the thief made it. I might have rebuked him for his selfishness in asking such a favor of a man whose feet and hands had been nailed to a cross, but I would not have had the right attitude if it were the case. When the Lord took time and effort to save just one more soul before He died He said in His actions loud and clear that lost souls are important. Brother Gus Nichols is reported to have said, *“I would crawl on my hands and knees over broken glass to get the gospel to one more precious soul.”*

The main reason liberals among us are calling for unity in diversity and joining hands with the denominations in worship and work is simple; they no longer believe they are lost. The reason churches are not growing is because they no longer believe the unbaptized masses are lost. Instead of going out and teaching them we are hearing more sectarian arguments in favor of their already being saved. I have not heard any of my liberal brethren use the case of the thief on the cross to get unsaved people saved, but they have used other favorite sectarian quibbles and I think they are on their way.

Why a thief? Why do you suppose this case is used most often to try to prove men can be saved today without baptism? There are other cases in the same book that are never used. (1) In Luke 5:19,20 there is a case I call, *“Roof Top”* salvation. Some men brought a man to Jesus to be healed and when they could not reach Him because of the crowd they tore off the roof and let him down on a cot.

The Lord looked up and forgave him of his sins. I have never heard anyone say they wanted to be saved that way, but it is in the same book as the thief's story. (2) In Luke 7:48 the Record says a woman broke an alabaster box of ointment and anointed Jesus. He forgave her sins. I have never heard of anyone using that as a case of salvation for us today. Perhaps they do not know who to anoint. (3) In Luke 12:33 we are instructed to sell what we have and give to the poor to be saved, if our possessions stand between us and God. I have never heard anyone use that as a pattern for salvation today, and yet it is in the same book as the case of the thief! It is obvious that the case of the thief is pulled out of thin air for no other reason other than to deny what the Lord said about baptism (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; I Peter 3:21).

“My God, My God, Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me”

There was a special closeness between God and His Son. Artists attempted to represent this closeness in portraits they painted of what they conceived to be His likeness. This closeness they tried to represent by a bright spot behind His head. However, the Bible says God cannot look upon sin. In Isaiah 53:6 we are told that God laid upon Him the sins of all of us. He became the personification of sins (II Cor. 5:21). He had no sins of His own, but carried the sins of the world to the cross. God was no longer close, just for the moment, and Jesus felt it deeply.

Although we cannot be as close to God as His Son, we are in fellowship with Him. We maintain that fellowship by “*walking in the light*” (I John 1:7). When people do not do that, this closeness is lost and they know it by the guilt they feel.

Sometimes parents and children no longer feel close. As the years go by and we learn to get along on our own that dependence is no longer there and we drift away until one day we realize it and say, “*I no longer feel close to my parents.*” Husbands and wives often do not work at their marriages and after many years are forced to admit, “*We are no longer as close as we once were.*” Even best of friends drift apart because they let a close relationship suffer.

In the same way we can slip away from God. One day we wake up out of service to God and out of attendance at worship, and we say, “*I no longer feel close to God.*”

In the Book of Luke the Lord spoke of a lost coin, lost sheep, lost boy and lost nation. The Lord in life and death was concerned about the lost and their relationship with God.

Sometimes married people drift apart because the mates do not work at it as hard as they should. The same is true with members of the church. How many times have you heard people who have quit say, “*We just didn’t work at it very hard?*”

Sometimes children drift away from their parents because they grow out of dependence on them. It is all right to be self dependent and self supporting, but there is no need to drift apart in

our relationship with our parents. The same is true with God. Even though there is a time of weakness (Rom. 14:1) we need to grow up (Heb. 5:12-14; II Peter 3:18). Growing up should be *“in the Lord.”*

Sometimes a disagreeable incident will cause friends to part. Often it is trivial and foolish. I had taken a new and challenging work once when I met one of the disgruntled former members in a social setting. In the presence of the wife of one of our deacons he gave some trivial excuse for leaving about something somebody said to him at services. He said he would never be back because of it. I hesitated to say anything, being new. But the deacon’s wife knew him better and remarked, *“When we were children we all acted like that, but we grew up, didn’t we?”* I wanted to shout, *“Amen, sister,”* but that was inappropriate in a funeral home.

Most brethren leave the church and abandon their relationship with God in the pursuit of THINGS.

There is a segment of humanity that lives only for material things. They spend their lives striving for wealth and fame only to come to the end of life with nothing to show for it but a lot of enemies and a bag of money that they must leave behind. One man decided to put his money in the attic and pick it up on his way to heaven. He died and the money was left behind. One brother remarked, *“I knew we should have put it in the basement.”* A funeral director who knows how to live said, *“I told ol’ what’s-her-name when I die just stuff me in an old hollow log and roll me out into the woods.”* She may do it.

What You Have Given Away

Carve thy name high over the sifting sand
Where the steadfast rocks defy decay
All you can hold in your cold dead hand
Is what you have given away.

Build your pyramid skyward and stand
Gazed at by the millions, “Cultured” they’ll say
All you can hold in your cold dead hand
Is what you have given away.

Count your wide conquests on sea and land
Heap up the gold and hoard all you may
All you can hold in your cold dead hand
Is what you have given away.
Culture and fame and gold—ah so grand!
Kings of a solar, the mart, a day
All you can hold in your cold dead hand
Is what you have given away.

— Author Unknown

The good thing about relationships is that they can be reestablished and become strong again. If you no longer feel close to God it is because you have moved. The barrier to coming back must be removed, although most of them are figments of our imagination. You might feel that no one cares, but the truth is you must first care. You might feel like you will not be accepted, but remember that such is not your problem. You may feel weak, but there are many helpers (Gal. 6:1). When coming back is, like the prodigal’s decision, the most important thing in your life, you will return, and not until.

“I Thirst”

So far as we know this is the only personal request the Lord ever made. In it we can see the human side of His being. There is no doubt that the Lord’s suffering on the cross was real. When we think of what He could have asked for and did not, the simple request of water underscores His own selflessness. In this statement He showed the very attitude required to accomplish Matthew 6:33,

But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

We live in a world fraught with many fears and daily apprehensions. People are leading lives of desperation from day to day. While there are many things about which we must be concerned, the fact is that we may lose our trust in God, forget the difference between needs and luxuries, and resort to pure worry, which the Lord condemned in Matthew 6:19-33.

All of us worry about something. Some people worry about yesterday, today and tomorrow. Others worry about how to get money, spend money and keep money. Still others worry about the weather, but never do anything about it. Global warming is sure to melt us all! We have never been as cold as we have been since we learned about the chill factor, nor as hot as we have been since we learned about the heat index. One man in a science class was not listening when the teacher said that in about two million years the earth will explode. *“How long?”* he

interrupted. “*About two million years,*” the professor explained. The man quieted down suddenly as if his fears had been relieved. “*I thought you said one million.*” As if he should worry about it!

Single folks worry about getting married while the married seem more concerned about their being married. A couple who had been dating in their golden years was sitting on the porch when the lady (fearful of waiting too long) asked, “*John, don’t you think it is time for us to get married?*” To which he replied, “*Sure, but who will have us?*” A young man whose girlfriend had rejected him asked, “*What is wrong? Is there someone else?*” She replied, “*There just has to be.*”

We worry about getting old and the elderly worry about not getting old. But most of all we worry about life’s necessities: appearance, food, clothing, shelter. The Lord said, “*I thirst.*” That is all He needed.

“It Is Finished”

The Lord had always honored and respected the Scriptures. In John 10:35 His attitude is recorded as, “*... the Scriptures cannot be broken.*” We need a good dose of that attitude in the church of Christ today. The Bible is our guide, our road map and our blueprint. The Scriptures are complete now (Jude 3), but they were not when Jesus was on the cross. The Scriptures told of a suffering Messiah who would bleed and die for the sins of the world (Gen. 3:15; Psm. 22:1-31; 110:1-7; Zech. 13:1,6). Jesus Himself said, “*O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that*

the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory" (Luke 24:25,26). And then to His apostles He said,

These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me (Luke 24:44).

When Jesus said, "*It is finished,*" He meant the law was finished (Matt. 5:17; Col. 2:14) His redemptive work was finished (Rom. 3:23-25) and His work on earth was finished (Heb. 10:10-14). He will not return to this earth some day as the premillennialist believes.

“Father, Into Thy Hands I Commend My Spirit”

The destination of every soul is given in Ecclesiastes 12:7, "*Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.*" If we must not give account for this life nothing matters. If we must give account, nothing matters more. Our Lord went back to heaven with a clean, perfect spirit. He could place His spirit into the hands of a just God with all trust and confidence. This attitude was not new to the Savior.

By inspiration Paul said,

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for

me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing (II Tim. 4:6-8).

The J.W.'s say there is no such thing as a spirit. They say the word means “*breath.*” Then how do we “*try the spirits*” (I John 4:1)? The “*cannot-count-Pentecostals*” say Jesus was God the Father and the only member of the Godhead (Actually they do not believe in any Godhead). If so, to whom did He commend His spirit? They say the flesh gave the spirit His spirit! Marvelous, isn't it, how much trouble we can get into when we just do not believe what the Bible says? Since the flesh goes to the grave and the spirit to God they have half of a man in the grave and half in heaven.

Jesus said to fear Him who can cast both soul and body in hell (Matt. 10:28). Man is a dual being and death of the flesh is not death of the soul. No modern leftovers from the era of the Sadducees should ever shake that confidence.

Conclusion

The Lord has left us an example of how to live and how to die. The quality of our lives and our destiny when we die depend upon our attitudes throughout life. In each case we must ever follow the Lord's example, who was unmoved in attitude even while hanging on a Roman cross.

Chapter 7

Why Did Christ Die? What Kept Him On The Cross?

Dan Winkler



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And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. And sitting down they watched him there; And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left. And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads. And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King

of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him. Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God (Matt. 27:33-54).

Golgotha! A “*crown*” of thorns. A “*cry*” of mockery. A “*cross*” of shame. A “*cry*” of loneliness: “*My God, my God, why...?*” But, wait a minute. That is an excellent question. “***Why?***”

“*Why did Christ die?*” “*What kept Him on the cross?*” What force or forces, what thought or

thoughts kept Jesus nailed to a meager crossbeam of wood? It was His voice that rang across the proud nothing and spontaneously called a universe into existence (Gen. 1:3-26; John 1:1-2,14; Col. 1:16). It was He, so to speak, that planted a tree from which the cross was planed. He forged the metal from which spikes were refined, spikes that pierced His hands and His feet. He cursed the earth, refused to cultivate the virgin soil of creation, and allowed thorns to grow, thorns which composed His diadem of derision. What force this side of eternity could have kept Jesus nailed to some finite crossbeam?

No less than three verses of the New Testament speak of Jesus as One *“delivered up”* by God and for man. A study of these verses should serve to answer our assigned questions and stir our hearts with even a deeper appreciation for Jesus, blessed Jesus.

“Why did Christ die?” “What kept Him on the cross?”

I. THE “SCHEME” OF GOD (Acts 2:23) “A Plan”

Ever heard it said, *“Plan the work and work the plan?”* Well, before the birth of time, before the omnipotence of God condescended to the creation of man, before the concept of sin was ever entertained by Adam and Eve, God had a plan ... a scheme of redemption. The first verse which employs our words *“delivered up”* alludes to this plan.

Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you

by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain (Acts 2:22-23).

First, look at the surrounding verses of this passage. After defending his fellow apostles with a citation of Old Testament prophecy (Acts 2:14-21), Peter began his great sermon on Pentecost with the words cited above. In this sermon, Peter underscored the “*confirmation*” of Jesus by the miracles He performed (Acts 2:22); the “*crucifixion*” of Jesus by lawless Romans yielding to the hatred of Jews (Acts 2:23); the “*resurrection*” of Jesus by the power of God as foretold through predictive prophecy (Acts 2:24-32); the “*exaltation*” of Jesus by the right hand of God (Acts 2:33-35); and that Divine “*conclusion*” about Jesus: “*God hath made Him both Lord and Christ*” (Acts 2:36). Within this Christ-centered sermon we find the first answer to our question: “*Why...?*” So, let’s study a little deeper.

Second, look at the passage itself ... to three specific words. Yea, Jesus was “*delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.*” Take a minute to think about the words:

Determinate – The word translated, *horismene*, means “*to make out the boundaries...to determine, appoint...decree*” (Joseph Henry Thayer, **Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament**, p. 453). Frequently my wife and I enjoy an evening walk through the neighborhood. In so doing, we have been

fascinated by what appears to be bottle caps nailed into the middle of the street. You will find one, walk several paces, find another, and then another, and another, etc. Such mark the property lines for the various lots which make up our neighborhood. Note, these lines have been surveyed, marked off, and set. Even so, God's omniscience has etched certain things into the immutable concrete of eternity. He has marked out the boundaries of a scheme by which man could be redeemed, reconciled, and saved eternally. This scheme involved the incarnation, the crucifixion, and the resurrection of Jesus in that He hath been "*declared [lit. determined] to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead*" (Rom. 1:4; cf. Luke 22:22). By the way, this plan also involves His serving the godhead as "*he who is ordained [lit. determined] of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead*" (Acts 10:42; 17:31). Why did Christ die? It was predetermined!

Counsel – The word translated, *boule*, carries the idea of "*deliberation, resolve, design, purpose, a plan, a project*" (see Gerhard Kittle, ed., **Theological Dictionary of the New Testament**, Vol. 1, pp. 633,634). There was a "*meeting of the singlemindedness*" of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. From such came a decision of Deity to undertake the redemption of man via a specific, unchangeable plan. Ever had a change of plans? A vacation postponed because something came up at work? A weekend excursion forfeited to some family

emergency? The purchase of a new suit or dress delayed because the washer decided to give up the ghost? Indeed, “*The best laid plans of mice and men often go astray!*” But such is not the case with God. His plan, His counsel was “*immutable*” (Heb. 6:17). Why did Christ die? It was predetermined. It was part of an unchangeable plan!

Foreknowledge – The word translated, *prognosei*, means to know intimately beforehand. It is interesting to note that Jesus was “*delivered up*” by Judas in that the word translated “*betrayed*” (Matt. 26:2,15,16,21,23,24,25,45,46,48) is the same word translated “*delivered up.*” Too, Jesus was “*delivered up*” by the Jewish leaders (Matt. 27:2,18) and by Pilate (Matt. 27:18). However, these individuals, by their own volition (!), were fulfilling an already-put-together plan. Why did Christ die? In keeping with the foreknowledge of Deity, it was predetermined as part of God’s unchangeable plan to redeem man!

“Why did Jesus die?” “What kept Him on the cross?” God had a PLAN! Remember the words of Peter:

Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ ... things the angels desire to look into (I Peter 1:10-12).

In these words he alluded to predictive prophesy as

well as celestial curiosity. Old Testament prophets predicted with detailed accuracy “*the sufferings of Christ*” (cf. Luke 24:25-27,32). How was such possible? Their predictions about Christ came from God through the Spirit, and all three of these were involved in comprising the predetermined plan predicted. Still further, the angels’ stooped down, bowed their heads forward, and with bent bodies, longed to inspect these predictions (cf. I Tim. 3:16). No doubt they reveled in Jesus’ perfect life as He, one by one, brought these prophesies into fulfillment and God’s “*determinate counsel*” into fruition.

II. THE “SIN” OF MAN (Rom. 4:25) “A Problem”

It is my problem ... yours!

...they are all under sin ... For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23).

Our problem is the shame and stain, the blight and blemish of sin. It is the daughter of temptation and the son of lust. It is the mother of whoredom, and the father of sodomy; the brother of riot, and the sister of seduction. It is my problem ... your problem! But the second verse to employ our words, “*delivered up,*” encouragingly tells us there is a solution to this problem. Jesus was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification (Rom. 4:25).

First, look at the surrounding verses of this passage. Earlier, Paul referred to our being justified by grace through faith in Christ Jesus (Rom.

3:23-25). In Romans 4, Abraham is used as an example of the faith that justifies (Rom. 4:1-3). Yea, his was a faith that obeys (Heb. 11:8). Even so, we are to “walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham (Rom. 4:12). So the verse of our current interest, flows from a context giving attention to the obedient faith which justifies us by the grace of God through Christ. Such being true, emphasis is given to the “*submission*” of an obedient faith in Christ (Rom. 4:24); the “*crucifixion*” of Jesus (Rom. 4:24-25); the “*remission*” of sin (Rom. 4:25); the “*resurrection*” of Jesus (Rom. 4:25); “*justification*” from sin (Rom. 4:25); “*reconciliation*” with God (Rom. 5:1-2); the “*anticipation*” of heaven (Rom. 5:3-5); the “*affection*” of God which made all of this possible (Rom. 5:6-8); and “*salvation*” from the wrath of God when these blessings are claimed, through an obedient faith (Rom. 5:9-11). Within this context of encouragement, we find the second answer to our question: “Why...?” So, let’s study on.

Second, look at the passage itself ... to three specific words. Again, Jesus “*was delivered up for our trespasses, and raised for our justification.*” Take a minute to think about the words:

For – The word translated is the Greek preposition *dia* which, when used with the accusative as in this passage, projects the “*cause-effect*” element. Yea, “*because of, on account of this ... such and such happened.*” We find this little word twice in our passage of interest. “*For/on account of*” our sins and “*for/on account of*” our need for justification from

sin, Jesus died and was raised. Why did Christ die? Because of one specific problem, sin!

Trespasses – The word translated, *paraptomata*, implies the concept of offending another. Repeatedly, we find three words used in Scripture for the fruit of disobedience. When man “*trespasses*,” offends God’s holiness by disobedience, such is described as: “*transgression*” [lit. rebellion, a clinched fist shaking in the face of God]; “*iniquity*” [lit. a perversion of that which is right]; and “*sin*” [lit. missing the way and incurring guilt]. Why did Christ die? My rebellion, my perversion, my spiritual failure ... and ... my need of being saved from God’s wrath because of the same. Trespasses!

Justified – The word translated, *dikaiosin*, is a judicial term carrying the idea of an acquittal. By the grace of God and death of Jesus, with my obedient faith I can stand “just-if-ied” never sinned in God’s eyes (Heb. 12; cf. Psm. 51:9; Isa. 43:25). Consequently, I can enjoy the “*peace*” of a life right with God (Rom. 5:1), the “*promises*” of grace (Rom. 5:2), the “*power*” to endure life’s cruelties (Rom. 5:3-4), and the “*prospect*” of a bright tomorrow in heaven (Rom. 5:5-9)! Why did Christ die? In keeping with God’s predetermined plan, Golgotha was designed to satisfy God’s offended holiness as a solution to sin. My problem! And ... yours!

“Why did Christ die?” “What kept Him on the cross?” Man had a PROBLEM! Listen to the predictive prophecy of God’s plan:

Surely he hath borne our **griefs**, and carried our **sorrows**: yet we did esteem him stricken,

smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our **transgressions**, he was bruised for our **iniquities**: the chastisement of our **peace** was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all (Isa. 53:4-6,).

For whose griefs? Whose sorrows? Whose transgressions? Whose iniquities? Whose peace? For ours! He “*died for our sins according to the Scriptures*” (I Cor. 15:3)!

III. THE “SPIRIT” OF INTERCESSION (Rom. 8:32) “A Promise”

To the apostles, Jesus promised,

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you ... But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning (John 14:26; 15:26-27).

Even so, on the first Pentecost after Jesus’ ascension, He kept His word, sent forth the “*Comforter*,” and thousands were converted when the apostles preached “*as the Spirit gave them utterance*” (Acts 2:41ff). Now, think about this. If it were not for the crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and exaltation

of Jesus ... there would have been no sending of the Holy Spirit, no speaking as the Spirit gave utterance, no establishment of the New Testament church, no revelation of the new covenant, etc. (John 16:7). The third verse to employ our words “*delivered up*,” implicitly underscore this thought.

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? (Rom. 8:32).

First, look at the surrounding verses of this passage. They focus primarily on the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christians today. Reference is made to the “*assurance*” of those who are in Christ, living by the law of the Spirit (Rom. 8:1-11); an “*appreciation*” for the Spirit whose mind we possess by studying and applying His law (Rom. 8:12-17); the “*anticipation*” of glory belonging to those who possess the first fruits of the Spirit (Rom. 8:18-25); the “*aid*” we receive from the Spirit for those times when we know not how to pray as we ought (Rom. 8:26-30); and “*all things*” working in our favor because of the Spirit (Rom. 8:31-39). Within this Holy Spirit-oriented context, we find the third answer to our question: “*Why...?*” So, again, let’s dig a little deeper in our study.

Second, look at the passage itself ... to three specific words. God “*spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all*” and will, thus, “*freely give us all things*.” Take a minute to think about the words:

Spared – The word translated, *epheisato*,

means “*to abstain*” (Thayer, p. 650). In fact, the word is used in the Septuagint to translate words which mean “*to keep back*.” God did not hold back or keep in reserve His “*only begotten Son*” when man needed a Savior. Such is true, even though His Son “*offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears*” out of a desire to be spared (Heb. 5:7; cf. Matt. 26:36-46). Why did Christ die? God would not intervene and change His plan to redeem man.

Freely give – These two terms are translated from one, *charisetai*, which is the verb form for the New Testament word “*grace*,” *charis*. Interestingly, the word “*grace*” is found in no less than 150 verses of the Bible. Too, the adjective “*gracious*,” coupled with the adverb “*graciously*,” are found in more than 30 verses. Grace, indeed, is a predominant and wonderful subject of Scripture. It is the composite of three elements: mercy, love, and kindness (Eph. 2:4-8; Titus 3:5-7). Why did Christ die? God refused to intervene and cancel out Calvary, so that His grace could extend certain benefits to those “*in Christ*.”

All things – The word translated, *panta*, is used repeatedly throughout the later portion of this chapter (Rom. 8:28,31,32,37), logically referring to the “*things*” mentioned in the first part of the chapter. But what are “*these things*” provided by the grace of God in that He spared not His Son? Reference, no doubt, is to the “*law of the Spirit*” (Rom. 8:1-4); the mind of the Spirit (Rom. 8:5-8); the indwelling of the Spirit (Rom 8:9-11); the

leadership of the Spirit (Rom. 8:12-14); the witness of the Spirit (Rom. 8:15-17); the fruits of the Spirit (Rom. 8:18-25); and the intercession of the Spirit (Rom. 8:26-30). Yea, with *“all these things”* by the grace of God and our obedient faith, God is for us (Rom. 8:31-33); Christ is for us (Rom. 8:34-36); and, we are more than conquerors (Rom. 8:37-39)! Why did Christ die? To provide all the particulars, the benefits, and the consequent victory involved in the non-miraculous work of the Holy Spirit.

“Why did Christ die?” “What kept Him on the cross?” God had made, and God has made, A PROMISE! He had promised the apostles that the Holy Spirit would come to them with revelation/inspiration and, thus, *“convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment”* (John 16:7-14). But note: Whereas the apostles were promised revelation and inspiration from the Holy Spirit, today’s Christians are promised the non-miraculous indwelling (Acts 2:38-39; 5:32; I Cor. 6:19-20), and non-miraculous intercessory work of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8). In keeping with this thought, consider the words of brother H. Leo Boles.

There are three members of the godhead – God, the Creator, the Word, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Each member of the godhead had his dispensation with man on the earth ... God’s dispensation means that time from the creation of man to the coming of Christ ... When the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, when the Christ began his personal ministry on earth, then Christ’s dispensation began. We do not mean by this that God had *nothing* to

do with Christ’s dispensation; we simply mean that the work of Christ was conspicuous eminent, salient; this continued until Christ made his ascension back to the Father ... Following the dispensation of Christ’s personal ministry, and the beginning on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ, the dispensation of the Holy Spirit began. We now live in the period of time that we may call the Holy Spirit dispensation. We do not mean that the Holy Spirit had nothing to do during God’s dispensation or the dispensation of Christ’s personal ministry, but that he takes the lead during this age as a member of the godhead. The Holy Spirit is salient and present in all the work of God and Christ in the redemption of man today. The Holy Spirit is the executing power of the godhead during the church age. The Holy Spirit took up the work where Christ left it and carries it on to completion and to its final consummation. The Spirit age, so far as revelation instructs us, is the last dispensation. (H. Leo Boles, **The Holy Spirit**, pp. 51-53).

Conclusion

Jesus, blessed Jesus! This is the man that turned water into wine. This is the One who defied the temper tantrum of Mother Nature and walked, unincumbered, amidst the waves of Galilee. This is the man who demanded the very elements of nature, rebuking the wind and calming the sea: “*Peace, be still.*” Just the touch of His garment healed a woman with an issue of blood. Just the sound of His voice called the soul of Lazarus back from an unseen realm called Hades, fused that soul back into lifeless flesh,

and raised the dead.

What force this side of eternity could have kept Jesus nailed to some finite crossbeams? Perhaps one final verse could sum it up, one final verse which employs the same word translated “*delivered up*” in the two previous verses from Romans.

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live;
yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life
which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith
of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave
himself for me (Gal. 2:20).

Note, Jesus “*gave himself up*” [lit. delivered Himself up]! But why? The answer to that question should grieve the hearts of us all. Yea, God delivered Him up ... He delivered Himself up ... **“for me!”**

The “*plan/scheme*” of God ... purposed and projected for the “*problem/sin*” of man ... making available the “*promise/Spirit*” of intercession ... nailed Jesus to the cross. Golgotha! But, why? WHY?! Before God, you and I are forced to our knees in shame, knowing that it was all ... **“for me!”**

My Dream Of The Third Man

*Last night I dreamed I took a walk
Up Calvary's lonely hill.
The things I saw with my own eyes
Could not have been more real.*

*I saw upon three crosses
Three men in agony;
Two cried out for mercy;
The third man looked at me.*

*And, Oh, the hurt in this Man's eyes
Just broke my heart in two.
It seemed that I could hear Him say,
“I'm doing this for you.”*

*I knelt beneath the third man's cross
And slowly bowed my head.
I reached out to touch His feet,
They stained my hand with red.*

*And when I heard Him cry in pain,
I raised my eyes to see.
The blood spill from the third man's side
And some of it spilled on me.*

*And there among the mighty crowd
The ones who mocked Him cried,
“King, save thyself if thou art King.”
And then the third man died.*

*Suddenly I heard the thunder roar,
I saw the lightning pierce the sky.
The third man was still hanging there;
And I began to cry.*

*I saw the darkness fall;
I heard the breaking of the ground.
Then, I awoke, and though I had dreamed,
I touched my cheek and found.*

*My eyes were wet where I had cried,
A dream? I wish I knew.
Yes, I can still hear Him say,
“I'm doing this for you.”*

– Unknown

The Results Of The Cross And Man's Reaction

Chapter 8

The Message Of The Cross (The Faith Once Delivered)

John Barcus



John W. Barcus presently serves as minister of the Kibby Street Church of Christ in Lima, Ohio, where he has labored for eighteen years • John attended Memphis School of Preaching and Alabama School of Religion • Bro. Barcus is a powerful preacher and has been involved in numerous lectureship programs across the brotherhood • John and Otha (White) have two children.

Jude, in his short epistle writes in regard to two issues, set out under the categories of doctrine and practice.

Under the heading of doctrine, some were denying the one Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. Theirs was a preference for their own dreamings, rather than for a reliance on God's revelation. These dreamings may have been ecstasies during which they claimed to receive messages from God, but the whole method was fundamentally opposed to God's method of making Himself known.

Jude was also deeply shocked by their moral practices, they were licentious and indulged in unnatural lust (vs. 4,7,16,18). Their passions apparently ruled over them. They had become defiled (vs. 8,23). Not only so, they were also discontented, arrogant, avarious (v. 16).

Today, when one reads the daily news, listens

to the radio, and observes the talk show programs on television, we are chilled as we see and hear the very same troubles of Jude’s day. What a time to be reminded of **THE FAITH ONCE DELIVERED**.

The Faith

This “*faith*” does not mean mere trust or mental assent to a doctrine, but that body of doctrine (trues), both dogmatic and practical, which has been committed to the church by divine authority and fixed and unalterable, according to Matthew and the book of Psalms:

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away (Matt. 24:35).
Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven (Psm. 119:89).

This faith is the sum of all that which Christians are to believe and obey. It is the same faith referred to by Luke in Acts 6:7, when it is said that “*a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith,*” and Galatians 1:23, where Paul is affirmed to have preached, “*the faith of which he once made havoc*” (see also II Tim. 1:13,14; Titus 2:21; Heb. 13:7; and I Cor. 16:13).

To the Church, the body of Christ has been committed, therefore, a sacred deposit of truth, called “*the faith,*” embracing evangelistic history, doctrine, and precept. This body of truth is a permanent trust. It has survived the times of the church’s greatest trials, and by it the church has lived. It is the church’s chief advantage and distinction, as the possession of the “*oracles of God,*” the apostle Paul

says, it was the chief advantage of the Jews over the Gentiles:

What advantage then hath the Jews? Or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God (Rom. 3:1-2).

The faith once delivered us lends great advantages to us today also. It is that faith which:

1. Instructs us in, what I must do to become a child of God. Thank God that, held securely within the walls of “the faith,” is the gospel of Christ, which is the death burial and resurrection story (I Cor. 15:14). It is called the “good news” and indeed it is, because it tells us of the life of Jesus and His coming again to receive the obedience. What an advantage we have in that we have been instructed in “the faith” of how to prepare for that coming (Heb. 11:6; Luke 13:3,5; Matt. 10:31-32; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; and Rev. 2:10).

2. Set forth our pattern of worship (Acts 2:42; Eph. 5:19; Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:1-2; I Tim. 4:13).

3. Encourages us in a life of living faithfully and steadfastly, unto the Lord (I Cor. 15:58; Rev. 2:10).

4. Encourages us and enables us to set our hopes and confidence in Christ and heavenly things, in our hour of trials, tribulation, sorrow, and death (John 14:13; II Tim. 2:19).

5. Thoroughly furnishes us (II Tim. 3:16,17). It was the faith that enabled Paul to ‘fight the good fight of faith, and finish his course.’

This is the faith for all occassion. While there

may be many faiths (beliefs) there is only one with divine approval. There is only one which has been authorized by God.

Once

This faith of which Jude speaks, has once and for all, not simply formerly, but for all times, been delivered to the saints. This meaning is that the truth is delivered for all times; it is a permanent trust of trues, providing the means with which to deal with the gainsayer, and resist the advocate of false doctrine. This deposit of truth was infallibly delivered, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit which states:

But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man (Gal. 1:11).

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (II Peter 1:21).

There is no part of this faith that is unnecessary or superfluous. It is everything that we need or shall ever need as the scriptures teach in II Timothy 3:16,17:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect throughly furnished unto all good works.

It throughly furnishes our needs, thus, there is no need for addition. This is a nautical term, something a captain might say before he launches out to sea. *“This ship is throughly furnished.”* What

does that mean? It means that he has everything on board that he needs for the entire journey, regardless of the weather. If foul weather comes, he has everything he needs. His ship is totally prepared for the entire voyage, no matter what circumstances he may encounter. God only needs to deliver the faith “*once*” and that is sufficient, even as in the creation it was “*very good.*” Notice the usage of the word “*once*” in other passages:

For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation (Heb. 9:26-28).

For then would they not have ceased to be offered? Because that the worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sins (Heb. 10:2).

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit (I Peter 1:18).

Any latter day revelation received from the pens of modern day “*preachers*” is just too late for God’s pages of inspiration. The faith has “*once*” and for all times been given, there shall not be another to come.

Delivered

This faith is something delivered to us, not

elaborated on by our own thoughts. It is not of human origin, nor was it discovered by the human mind. The delivering of this faith referred to here is evidently that made by revelation, or the system of truth which God has made known in His Word. God has revealed, disclosed, and unveiled this system of faith to us. It is literally delivered from God. This divine truth is mediated to the human messenger from God.

Also, since it is a revelation, it is something that man in himself could never know. It is a disclosure only God could make. If it is something man can discover for himself, it is not a revelation. There are books on astronomy, chemistry, anatomy, physics, biology, all of these are things that men discover and write, delivered by men. But that is not revelation which comes to man by revelation that is beyond him and he is not capable of ever discovering it, truly *“the faith”* is delivered of God.

To The Saints

This faith delivered to the saints has its purpose for the children of God. When it is received, accepted, and practiced, the faith will sustain us for any and all occasion. It is able to give us the assurance of spiritual victories, in Christ. It offers us protection when our finances are temporarily blocked or our deliverance is somehow delayed. It encourages us not just while we are at church, in the presence of our mentors; but it will sustain us when we have to climb the mountains by ourselves. Paul states such confidence, in the following verses:

At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen (II Tim. 4:16-18).

When we are assaulted and attacked with discouragement; we lack courage, become disheartened and unable to respond adequately to life as we are called upon to live it in these “*last days*.” The Word of God says, “*For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind*” (II Tim. 1:7).

The knowledge of the faith enabled Paul to move beyond his thorn in the flesh and acknowledge the words of God the Father, “*My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness*” (II Cor. 12:9). Paul could now say, “*most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*” This faith will now allow him to say:

I can do all things through Christ which strengthened me (Phil. 4:13).

For I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for

me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not unto me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing (II Tim. 4:6-8).

This faith once delivered to the saints tells us, *“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His”* (II Tim. 2:19).

When our backs are against the wall and we have given ground until our space has run out, the faith will encourage us to stand a little taller and say, *“For God I live, and For God I die, I’m not going to give up, I’m going on in the name of the Lord Jesus.”*

Conclusion

How great is the responsibility attached to our stewardship of the faith. The trustee’s duties are to keep this deposit intact, to protect it against any corruption, and to keep our hands and hearts holy as we hand it on to others and say as the apostle Paul and Timothy said:

... I am set for the defence of the gospel (Phil. 1:17).

And these things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also (II Tim. 2:2).

Therefore, the saints are to love *“the faith,”* keep *“the faith,”* and ultimately die in *“the faith.”*

Chapter 9

Knowing Christ And Him Crucified

Jimmy Clark



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Paul wrote to the brethren which were in Corinth, saying,

And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God (I Cor. 2:1-5).

The context of these words begin in the first chapter of First Corinthians. Paul stated, *“For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect”* (I Cor. 1:17). The theme of these verses has to do with the nature of the message

delivered to the Corinthians when Paul first preached the gospel to them. The question was “*Is the gospel preached by Paul of men or of God?*” Such a thought is very serious to contemplate when it comes to the souls of men. Therefore, it is important to explore the statement “*For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified*” (I Cor. 2:2).

The Foundation Of The Gospel

Paul stressed the heart of the gospel when he reminded the Corinthian brethren about the message first delivered to them as he wrote in chapter fifteen.

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how 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).

These are some key words found in these passages to explain why Paul would determine at the first not to know anything among those brethren except Christ and him crucified.

Paul first stressed that the gospel preached by him and their reception of it produced their ability to stand. Here one sees that without this gospel man cannot stand before God. The word “*stand*” can also

be translated in this passage “*to persist, continue, persevere*” (Thayer, p. 308). The figure of standing or falling is found throughout the scriptures. Consider some passages found in the book of I Corinthians alone.

And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God (I Cor. 2:4-5).

“*Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall*” (I Cor. 10:12). “*Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong*” (I Cor. 16:13). God has always been interested, not only in people being converted, but also in people staying converted.

A second element concerning the gospel which Paul preached is found in the clause “*by which also ye are saved*” (I Cor. 15:2). Paul knew that the gospel which he preached was the only message which could provide salvation for man. Paul wrote to the church at Rome,

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek (Rom. 1:16).

This is very similar to the words of the Corinthians, where he wrote, “*For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God*” (I Cor. 1:18). The exclusiveness of this gospel is seen in Paul’s words to the Galatian brethren.

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ (Gal. 1:6-10).

Since the ability to stand spiritually and the nature of salvation are tied to the gospel which Paul preached, it is no wonder that he determined to preach that which was the wisdom of God and not the wisdom of this world.

The Focus In Solving Problems

Since the message of Christ and Him crucified is the foundation of the gospel and the life of the child of God, then it should go without saying that the solving of problems should be found in this same message. The book of I Corinthians is filled with problems that were present in the congregation at Corinth. Nevertheless, Paul emphasizes Christ and/or His cross throughout the book as the focus of how to solve the difficult problems in the church.

The major problem in the book of I Corinthians was the problem of division. The fruits of that

division were manifested in the other problems which stemmed from that division. Consider how Paul addressed the divided state in the church at Corinth.

Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul (I Cor. 1:12-13)?

Notice that every question actually points to the fact of who Christ is and what He did on the cross. Paul is seeking by those questions to focus their attention upon the person to which all congregations are to be loyal. All of the questions of verse thirteen are rhetorical questions that demand a negative answer. Since there is only one Christ and He is not divided, then all submit to the same person, not different men. Since Christ was crucified for all, then all owe their lives to Him, not to some other man. Since the authority for baptism is in Christ, then man is not to subvert that authority by substituting anything else for it. The unity of the church is based upon the oneness of Christ and His sole mission on earth. Notice another passage in I Corinthians that points to this fact about Christ in order to stress the principle of unity in the church.

For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man

lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ (I Cor. 3:9-11).

Notice how Paul ties all workers in the construction of God’s building under the one foundation. Since Jesus is the Christ, then all people submit to His rule and authority. Some in the congregation at Corinth had lost sight of the very nature of the church. The church was not to be treated as a human, political institution. The church is the kingdom of God with Jesus Christ as the King. Any problem of division in the church is due to a lack of appreciation for or simply losing sight of the real owner of the church. No congregation belongs to any single human being or group of human beings. As Paul said, “...and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (I Cor. 6:19-20).

Notice another problem in the congregation at Corinth wherein the cross of Christ was used to produce a correction.

It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father’s wife (I Cor. 5:1).

Any genuine Christian or local congregation should have been appalled at such a state in the church for which Christ died. However, such was not the case with some. “*And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you*” (I Cor. 5:2).

What had happened at Corinth that such an attitude would take place? Does not division in a local congregation affect the thinking of the membership about other sins that may be present? Had the entire congregation considered who they really were as a people and to whom they belonged and owed their allegiance, then it is likely that such pride would not have been present. Notice how Paul addressed the situation.

Your glorifying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are leavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: (I Cor. 5:6-7).

What does the sacrifice of Christ have to do with the solving of the problem of fornication in the church at Corinth, or anywhere else for that matter? The cross of Christ was necessary for man to be freed from his sins. The cross of Christ does not move the person who understands the meaning of the cross to continue in sin. On the contrary, the cross of Christ moves a person to abhor sin, any sin. How can a child of God look at what Christ did for him/her on the cross and live unto sin? The sacrifice of Christ does not encourage sin; it discourages it. The Passover was a reminder to the Jews of the grace of God extended to them in freeing them from Egyptian bondage. Christ, our passover, is a reminder that His atoning blood is the means of covering all sins. How could a person see sin in a boastful way who sees what was necessary for sin to be taken away and man set free from its bondage?

Paul appeals to the same goodness of God through the sacrifice of Christ as he did to the church at Rome. *“Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?”* (Rom. 2:4). The emphasis in the sixth chapter of I Corinthians about living righteous lives is centered upon what happened to the brethren when they obeyed the gospel.

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God (I Cor. 6:9-11).

There could have been no cleansing, no sanctification, and no justification were it not for what Christ did on the cross. The continued blessed state of these brethren as well as all God’s people is dependent upon the continued application of that blood to the lives of God’s children. John reveals how that takes place.

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin ... If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (I John 1:7,9).

Paul is doing in the book of I Corinthians what John wrote in the book of I John. The way to abhor sin is to see sin through the cross of Christ. Paul continued to stress the importance of seeing sin as it would affect the body of Christ, where he wrote, *“Know ye not that your members are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid”* (I Cor. 6:15). He concludes that point by stressing that Christ paid a price on the cross that man might be freed from such consequences (cf. I Cor. 6:19-20).

When Paul addressed the situation about man’s earthly callings, such as marriage or even being a bondservant, he again appeals to Christ and the cross for the answer.

For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord’s freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ’s servant. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God (I Cor. 7:22-24).

The solution to the questions asked by the brethren about marriage or any other question fell under the understanding that the authority of the Lord was all over. Such authority should be respected and honored by following the instructions given through the inspired apostle Paul. Again, since Jesus is the Christ, the loyalty in any matter of judgment or expediency should be viewed with His will being done.

When Paul addressed the matter of meats

offered to idols and how that the weak brethren might stumble in eating such or in seeing another member eat such, Paul appealed to Christ and the cross.

For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol' s temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend (I Cor. 8:10-13).

Consider how that Paul connected the weak brother with the concern of Christ for him. Paul specifically points out that Christ died for the weak as well as the strong. Paul also emphasized that to do something against one for whom Christ died is also to do that same against Christ Himself. The constant perspective of the mind of Christ for man would lead all who would have that same mind to be careful in matters of judgment.

At that same time Paul addresses the fact that one must be loyal to the Lord and flee anything associated with idolatry. His appeal again is in terms that remind us of the cross of Christ.

Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread

which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread (I Cor. 10:14-17).

Since Christ died for all, then the unity of the church was to be maintained. Such unity was not in diversity. The church at Corinth could not have fellowship with idolatry and with the Lord. Jesus is the Christ, not any idol or anything called a god or lord. Jesus Christ died for man, not any idol or anything called a god or lord. The focus of the object of the child of God's allegiance is clear when seeing Christ and His cross.

When Paul discussed the situation of upholding the divine arrangement set by God that was being abused in that congregation, he appeals to Christ again.

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is man; and the head of the Christ is God (I Cor. 11:3).

Any situation which involves the role of men and women in the Lord's kingdom must be viewed from God's divine arrangement revealed here. Respect for who Christ is and what He has done does not make it difficult for both men and women to fulfill their roles. Whenever someone loses sight of the authority of Christ, then the problems mount.

When Paul discussed the situation of some not waiting on others to eat the common meal and the situation that arose because of it, he again appealed to Christ and the meaning of the Lord's Supper (I

Cor. 11:23-34). How could those brethren worship together and especially take the Lord's Supper which involves the unity of the church in the remembrance of Christ giving His life for all men alike when they were divided over the common supper that was eaten before the worship assembly took place? Paul appeals to the necessity of being united outside the assembly as well as in the assembly.

It should go without saying that chapter fifteen of I Corinthians would be meaningless without a discussion of Christ and the cross. This is exactly how Paul begins the discussion of the resurrection (I Cor. 15:1-4). It is also true that Jesus could not be the Christ without the cross and the resurrection (cf. Acts 2:22-36). Fifteen times the term “*Christ*” is found in this chapter. The last verses emphasize the whole truth about the resurrection and how its reality affects the life of mankind on earth, especially the child of God.

But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord (Cor. 15:57-58).

All of the problems that faced the Corinthian church were approached with Christ as the solution. Since Christ and the church are connected (cf. Eph. 5:32), it would be essential that the church look to Christ for the answers. Is this not why congregations still struggle with the same old problems of the past?

The Fundamental In The Success Of The Church

Paul closes the I Corinthian letter with a sobering statement. *“If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha”* (I Cor. 16:22). The love that man should have toward Christ, and especially in the church, is the key for success in the world today. The love for Christ comes as a result of the appreciation for His love demonstrated in His sacrifice on the cross. Jesus Himself said, *“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me”* (John 12:32). Jesus knew that the meaning of the cross in the hearts of men would move the souls of men to be loyal to Him. One can see from this why Paul would say *“For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified”* (I Cor. 2:2). That message was and is not only the message of salvation, but also the message that motivates men to serve the one who died for them. To seek to motivate people apart from the message of Christ and His cross is an exercise in futility. The gospel has within itself the motivation to move men. Where there is a deep love for the Christ who died for him, one does not see anything but a loyal life in service to His king. Where there is no love for Christ, then all activity is in vain.

Chapter 10

The Church Purchased By The Cross Of Christ

James Watkins



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When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (Matt. 16:13-19).

As everyone knows, and few people seem to understand, the word “*church*” translates the Greek word “*Ekklesia*” which, in its basic definition, describes a “*called out*” assembly. It can be used in reference to a political gathering (Acts 19:39). In the Septuagint it is used with regard to a gathering of Israelites. In Acts 19:32,41, it is employed in reference to a riotous mob. In our text, however, our Lord uses the possessive pronoun “*My*” church. This gives the term “*Ekklesia*” an exclusive, unique significance.

Through what revenue or by what means did our Lord plan to build that which He promised in our text? He gives us a hint when He said, “... and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18). “*Even though I must die and go into the hadean realm yet will I build my church*” seems to be the significance of His statement. With further revelation, we can even say, “*Because He died*” the church came into being. Our subject is, “***The Church Purchased By The Cross Of Christ.***”

Note with me Paul’s statement to the Gentiles recorded in Ephesians 2:11-16:

Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body THROUGH THE CROSS, having slain the enmity thereby.

This passage tells us several things. Man, “*in the world*” is “*without God.*” Jesus said to His disciples,

If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you (John 15:19).

Couple that statement with Colossians 1:12-13, “*...the Father, who made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love*” and you have the “*Ekklesia,*” the called out body, the redeemed of Jehovah.

The Ekklesia

From the transgression of Adam in beautiful Eden, the whole creation has suffered through alienation from its maker. Man is separated through sin.

Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have

hid his face from you, that he will not hear
(Isaiah 59:1-2).

Where once grew only perfection and beauty there now grows thorns and thistles (Gen. 3:18). The apostle Paul tells us that, “...*the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now*” (Rom. 8:22). Alienation is complete. Sin has become a way of life, and Satan, by man’s appointment, has become the “*god of this world*” (II Cor. 4:4).

Against this background of spiritual darkness and eternal ruin, Jesus Christ came “...*to seek and to save that which was lost*” (Luke 19:10). The prophets of old foretold His coming, defined His mission and, in great measure, described the means by which it would be accomplished (Gen. 3:15; 22:18; Num. 24:17; Isa. 2:2-4; 53:1-6; Jer. 31:31-34; Dan. 2). These passages, and others, teach us that the “*Lord’s House*” (church; I Tim. 3:15) would be established in Jerusalem in the “*last days*” when the “*Word of Jehovah*” goes forth from that city. It will be “*set up*” in the days of the Roman kings (Dan. 2:44). Luke gives us the proper time frame with his statement recorded in Luke 3:1-2.

Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

Our Lord explained, as recorded by Mark, that it

would come with the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles.

And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, **till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power** (Mark 9:1).

The Holy Spirit came upon the apostles, as recorded in Acts 2:1-4 and for the first time we find the Lord adding the saved to the church (v. 47).

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved (Acts 2:1-4, 47).

But the question arises, just what is the church promised in our text and referred to in the second chapter of Acts? It is not the meeting house in which the church (ekklesia) may gather, though, by metonymy, it is frequently so used. God does not dwell in houses made with hands (Acts 7:48; 17:24). The church can possess a sense of fear (Acts 5:11). The church has ears (Acts 11:22). Such makes it obvious that the New Testament use of the term “*church*” has reference to people, not buildings. The

cross purchased church is not the Jewish tabernacle perpetuated. Two different births are required (John 3:1-5). The church is not a political organization, as such (John 18:36). Though sociable the church is not a social order.

The cross purchased church is in no sense of the term a denomination. The word “*church*” never, as it appears in the New Testament, refers to the modern day concept of denominationalism. Note:

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? (I Cor. 1:10-13).

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me (John 17:20-21).

With regard to its government, the church is a monarch. Note the interchangeable use the Lord makes of the words “*church*” and “*kingdom*” in our text. “*...I will build my church*” and “*...I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom*” (Matt. 16:18-19).

Most denominations claim a democratic form of government. Of course the New Testament teaches that any government of and by the people condemns the people (Matt. 15:8-9).

Jesus Christ is King (John 18:36; Luke 23:3; Matt. 28:18; Acts 2:30; I Cor. 15:25; Rev. 1:5). Christians are citizens in the kingdom of Christ. They become such by complying with the naturalization laws of the King. One could illustrate by using an alien desiring citizenship in the United States. Christ’s requirements are very simple (John 8:24; Luke 13:3; Rom. 10:9-10; Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16).

Concerning the organization of the church purchased by the cross of Christ, it is described as a body. This is one of the perfect analogies of the New Testament (Rom. 12:4-5; Col. 1:18,24; Eph. 1:22-23; I Cor. 12:12).

For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another (Rom. 12:4-5).

And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence...Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church (Col. 1:18,24).

And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all (Eph. 1:22-23).

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ (I Cor. 12:12).

Each member is important to the well being of the body as a whole. I Corinthians 12:13 tells us how we enter the body. The body moves only at the instigation and direction of its head.

In its relationship with God, as we have already noticed, the church is His family. Quite frequently the word “*house*” is used to refer to the household or family. Such is to be observed in Acts 16:31 and Hebrews 11:7. Paul refers to the church as the “*house of God*” in I Timothy 3:15 and Ephesians 2:19. It seems unnecessary to suggest that God has no children outside His family. Entrance into this spiritual family is accomplished by means of a spiritual birth. Notice,

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John 3:3-5).

The cross purchased church, as it relates to Christ, occupies a most enviable position; it is His bride. Note the testimony of the Scriptures:

Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God (Rom. 7:1-4).

Therefore as the **church is subject unto Christ**, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as **Christ also loved the church**, and **gave himself for it**; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, **That he might present it to himself a glorious church**, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but **nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church**: For **we are members of his body**, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but **I**

speak concerning Christ and the church

(Eph. 5:24-32).

This is the most fruitful and productive relationship (Matt. 28:18-20; I Peter 2:5). It is a union of love established by faith (John 8:24; 14:15).

As it were, in contradistinction with the world, the church is just that, the church (Ekklesia). Our Lord said,

If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you (John 15:19).

The church is thus, by the intervening, cleansing blood of Jesus Christ, separated from the world. Consequently there are many admonitions given to the followers of Christ relating to the world: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world" (I John 2:15), "...*the friendship of the world is enmity with God*" (James 4:4), "...*be not fashioned according to this world*" (Rom. 12:2) and numerous others.

This calling is of God:

Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began (II Tim. 1:8-9).

The apostle Peter speaks of, "...*the God of all grace, who called you into his eternal glory of Christ*" (I

Peter 5:10). We are called out of darkness into His marvelous light (I Peter 2:9). Paul tells us that we were called in one body for which we are to be thankful (Col. 3:15). We are called to be saints (Rom. 1:7).

The source and power of this calling is, of course, the gospel (II Thess. 2:13-14). Paul sums up the gospel in its simple, basic form when he tells us that it is comprised of the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord. Note what Paul said:

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how 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).

Without this Good News there would be no called out body of the redeemed (John 12:32).

Chapter 11

Suffering Persecution For The Cross Of Christ

Bobby Duncan



Bobby has been preaching since 1951, yet has served under only two elderships in local work • Bobby attended Freed Hardeman College Jacksonville State, and Southern Christian University • He is the author of the book “**The Elders Which Are Among You**” • He has been with the Adamsville, AL congregation for almost a quarter of a century • He is an effective proclaimer of the Word • Bobby and Lois Ann have two children, and two grandchildren.

Jesus said, in His sermon on the mount:

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

This statement from Matthew 5:10-12 uses a form of the word *persecute* three different times. The indication is that those who live righteous lives can reasonably expect to suffer persecution as a result thereof. In fact, the apostle Paul wrote: “*Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution*” (II Tim. 3:12). Jesus said in John 15:20,

Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if

they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also (John 15:20).

Reading statements like these from the Word of God is a little embarrassing. In comparison to Christians in the first century, most of us who are Christians here in twentieth century America actually suffer little persecution because of the cross of Christ. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule.

One such exception would be the case of the woman who was a member of the church where I preach. I answered a knock at the door one morning, and standing before me was a young mother of four. One of her eyes was swollen together and badly bruised; her arm was in a cast up past the elbow. I thought she had been in a car wreck. When I asked, “*What happened to you?*” her reply was: “*My husband got angry with me because I insisted on going to church and bringing the children, and he did this to me.*” I would say that woman suffered persecution for the cross of Christ.

Another such case is the young mother I heard of whose husband refused to allow her to take the children to church, and threatened to beat the children if she went to church. On more than one occasion she would leave the house to go to worship, and would hear the children screaming as she left. One Sunday morning the old rascal had told her she was not going to church that day. She proceeded to get ready to go to church. He saw she was ignoring his mandate, and he became very angry, and got his pistol, and held it to her head, and said, “*Now, tell*

me again where you are going?” Her calm reply was, “If you pull the trigger, I’m going to heaven; if you don’t, I’m going to church.”

But these cases and others like them are exceptional, and not the rule. As a rule, we do not suffer, here in the United States, severe persecution for the cross of Christ.

As I speak to you on the subject of **“Suffering Persecution For The Cross Of Christ,”** I want you to think with me about some questions I feel are very pertinent to this subject.

The first question I would like for us to consider is: **Why do we not suffer more persecution for the cross of Christ?** It could be because we live in a society that is very tolerant, and one in which freedom of religion is guaranteed by our constitution. For this fact we should be extremely thankful. How many times have we heard some brother lead us in praying, *“Lord, we thank thee that we have the privilege of assembling in this capacity without any fear of molestation.”* The laws of this great land in which we live simply do not allow that we be persecuted in certain ways because of our faithfulness in serving the Lord. It is unfortunate that these laws which protect us and guarantee our right to worship and serve the living God have caused some to lose their appreciation for the assembly. The assembly has become so commonplace as not to be appreciated by them. For example, my wife and I recently made three visits in one afternoon. We visited a dear sister who was a cancer patient. She had been faithful in her attendance at

the services, and now would have given her right arm to be able to attend just one more time. We then visited a dear brother, who also was a cancer patient, and who would have given his right arm to be able to attend worship. Our third visit was to a man and his wife who were in good health, but who had quit attending. As we knocked on the front door, we could see through the glass, and we saw the woman go out the back door. The husband came to the door, and told us his wife was not at home. Can you see the difference in attitudes toward the privilege of assembling with the saints in worship?

Perhaps a second reason we do not suffer more persecution for the cross of Christ is simply that we allow our lives to be patterned after the world in which we live. In Romans 12:1-2 the inspired apostle wrote:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God (Rom. 12:1-2).

If our lives are conformed to this world, then we will not suffer persecution from the world. Why would the world persecute us if we are no different from the people of the world? Why would the devil even want to persecute us, if he already has us in his clutches?

Worldliness is likely one of the greatest problems in the church today, or in any generation,

for that matter. By *worldliness* I do not necessarily mean that which is immoral or ungodly within itself. I refer rather to the attachment so many of us have for the things that have to do with the world as opposed to the things that have to do with heaven. If we are charmed by our surroundings here on this earth, it becomes difficult for us to look beyond this earth. The pull of this world on our heart strings is so strong that we cannot feel the tug of the gospel of Christ. Jesus knew of this danger, and that is why He said in Matthew 6:19-21:

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Matt. 6:19-21).

In Romans 12:2, where Paul says, “*And be not conformed to this world...*” he uses a Greek word which means, according to Thayer, “*to conform one’s self (i.e. one’s mind and character) to another’s pattern.*” When I was a boy, we milked some cows. Some of the milk we allowed to clabber, so we could churn it and make buttermilk and butter. My mother had a butter mold that looked very much like a miniature churn. We knew we had finished churning the milk when the butter had risen to the top. I watched my mother lift that soft butter from the top of the milk with a wooden paddle, and when she had worked it around a little bit, and drained

it as much as she could, she would put that soft butter into that butter mold and place it in the refrigerator. When it had cooled and had come out of that mold, what shape do you suppose it had? Why, it had the exact shape of that mold, including the little flowery design on top. Now Paul, in Romans 12:2, is saying that we should not allow ourselves to become like the world in which we live. One translation (the one by J. B. Phillips) says it this way: “*Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold...*”

John said in I John 2:15-17:

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever (I John 2:15-17).

Notice the phrases, *of the Father* and *of the world*. We have seen what it means to be of the world, that is, to be what we are because we have allowed the world in which we live to fashion us. Some are what they are because of the influence of this world upon them. These are the ones who are “*of the world*.” What, then, does it mean to be “*of the Father*?” Obviously it means to be what we are because of the influence of the Father upon us. One either allows the world to mold and fashion him, or else he allows the Father, through the teaching of the

Bible, to mold and fashion him. Which is it with you?

Those who have allowed this world to cut the pattern by which they live likely will not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ, even though they might be members of the church. Why should the devil persecute them? He already has them exactly where he wants them.

The second question I would like for us to consider is: **What should be our attitude toward persecution when it comes to us?** The question is not what should my attitude be toward persecution that comes to you. That's an easy question for me to deal with; it is easy for me to accept the fact that your persecutions should be a blessing to you, just like the Bible teaches. It is not difficult at all for me to have the right attitude about your persecutions. But what about mine? What should be my attitude toward persecution when it comes to me?

In the sermon on the mount, Jesus said:

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you (Matt. 5:11-12).

This is a marvelous passage about persecution. It tells me four remarkable things about the persecutions that come upon me because of the cross of Christ: (1) that my persecutions are a blessing to

me, and should cause me to rejoice and be exceedingly glad, (2) that the kingdom of heaven belongs to me, (3) that my reward in heaven is great, and (4) that I have become a member of a very elite, distinguished, and honored group in which the faithful prophets of God hold membership: those persecuted for the sake of righteousness.

Evidently the apostles of Jesus believed exactly what they heard their Lord say about this matter of persecution. In Acts 4:18 they were threatened and commanded “*not to speak in the name of Jesus.*” In chapter five, because they had continued to do what they had been told by their persecutors not to do, they were imprisoned, beaten, and were commanded again that they should not speak in the name of Jesus. Then when they were released, the Bible says,

And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name (Acts 5:41).

They remembered that Jesus had taught them that persecution for the sake of righteousness is a blessing and a cause for rejoicing.

Concerning the suffering that one might do for the sake of the cross of Christ, the apostle Paul said this in II Corinthians 4:16-18:

For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen,

but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal (II Cor. 4:16-18).

Brother Hugo McCord's translation puts verse 16 in these words:

Therefore, we are not discouraged, for though our outer person is wearing out, our inner person is being renewed daily.

Is that not a beautiful thought? And then the statement, "*our light affliction, which is but for a moment,*" emphasizes and underscores the fact that, regardless of how long and how severely we might suffer for Christ, it really does not amount to very much when compared to the rewards for faithful service. It is a "*momentary light suffering*" (McCord's translation), which is not even great enough to be compared to that "*eternal weight of glory.*"

Now, in order for my attitude toward persecution to be as is here described, I must be blind to the visible and able to see the invisible. Isn't that what verse 18 says?

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

The most miserable people in this world are the ones who center their attention on themselves and their own physical afflictions. Think of Abraham as he came out of the land of Ur of the Chaldees. Genesis 12:1-3 says:

Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee

out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed (Gen. 12:1-3).

Abraham could see his country, his kindred, and his father's house, but God said to put them out of sight, and go into a land he had never seen. If he had centered his attention on all he was giving up, it would have been extremely difficult for him to obey God. But instead he centered his mind on God and God's promise. In talking about these Old Testament worthies, the Hebrews writer said,

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear (Heb. 11:3).

If I am to handle my persecutions successfully, and not allow them to destroy me, I must develop the ability to look beyond the passing things of this world, and see the invisible, realizing that I am but a stranger and a pilgrim on this earth. If I am able to do this, then I can never be ruined or even seriously hurt by anything that happens to me in a physical way.

The next question for our consideration is this: **Why do we suffer persecution?** We need to understand that what we sometimes think of as persecution for the sake of the cross of Christ is nothing more than reaping what we have sown. In

other words, we think we are being persecuted when we are suffering the consequences of our own carelessness, or of our own hatefulness. Many faithful preachers of the gospel have lost their jobs for preaching the truth; I know this to be the case. But many preachers who lost their jobs, and who think they were fired for preaching the truth, were not fired for preaching the truth at all. They were fired for being so obnoxious in their presentation of the truth. From hearing some present the truth, one might almost get the impression that the preacher believes his soundness in the faith is measured by his ability to act arrogant and defiant, or by the number of people he can castigate.

Our Lord was plain and firm in His denunciation of sin and error and His proclamation of the truth. But He never once conducted Himself in a hateful, obnoxious manner. The late brother Gus Nichols used to say that, just as false teachers often preach their error as if it were the truth, so some preach the truth as if it were error. There is no blessing pronounced upon me if I suffer persecution because of my own foolish mistakes. In fact, it is not persecution at all if I get into trouble because I am abusive or arrogant in trying to deal with people.

Sometimes the righteous suffer persecution because of the ignorance of otherwise good people. Was not that the case in the early church when Stephen was stoned to death? Saul of Tarsus, it seems, was the leader in that incident, and he later wrote that he *“was before a blasphemer, and a*

persecutor, and injurious: but...” he said, *“I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief”* (I Tim. 1:13). Jesus had said, *“They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.”* That is exactly what happened on this occasion. Many who persecute righteous people today do it because of their own ignorance. No doubt that is one of the reasons Jesus said, *“pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you”* (Matt. 5:44). Do you remember that Stephen was praying for his persecutors while they were stoning him to death?

In Acts 3:14-15 Peter declared to those Jews that they had *“denied the Holy One and the Just ... and killed the Prince of life.”* However, in verse 17, he said, *“And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.”* If ignorance on the part of otherwise good people could cause them to crucify the sinless Son of God, then we should not find it difficult to believe ignorance on the part of otherwise good people causes them to persecute those who are following Him.

Sometimes we are persecuted because of prejudice. Jesus said concerning certain ones of His day:

For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them (Matt. 13:15).

No doubt, this is the class of people Paul had in mind when he wrote in II Thessalonians 3:1-2,

Finally, brethren, pray for us ... that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.

That is the nature of prejudice. The word *prejudice* itself comes from the verb *prejudge*, which means, “*To judge beforehand without possessing adequate evidence*” (**American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language**). Those characterized by prejudice against the church have formed their adverse judgment without knowing the facts, and, in many cases, do not want to know the facts. That is the reason Paul referred to some as unreasonable and wicked.

Sometimes the people of God are persecuted because of envy. That is what happened to Paul and his company in Antioch of Pisidia. In Acts 13:44 we are told that almost the whole city came together to hear what Paul preached. But then look at the next verse:

But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were **filled with envy**, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming (Acts 13:45).

A similar incident occurred in Thessalonica in Acts 17. Paul was having some success in leading some of the Jews into a knowledge of the gospel.

But the Jews which believed not, **moved with envy**, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the

house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people (Acts 17:5).

Here is what is taking place with some in the denominational world. Let me illustrate it. Recently my wife and I had a Bible study with a young lady in her twenties. She is a member of a denomination that claims to believe one church is just as good as another, so far as salvation is concerned. Now, this young lady is engaged to be married to a young man who came out of denominationalism, and cannot conscientiously go back into it. After our study, that young lady said she had learned more about the Bible in that two hours than she had learned in all the rest of her life at her church. But she went to talk with her preacher about the matter. What did he tell her? He said, *“Now, Sallie, since you are going to marry that fine young man who is a member of the church of Christ, and since he cannot conscientiously join our church, then you should go with him to church. After all, the church one belongs to has nothing to do with his salvation.”* Do you think he told her that? He advised her not to study with us anymore; we would get her all confused. Here is that old problem of envy. Just as the Jews in Antioch of Pisidia were filled with envy, and began to do everything they could to destroy the influence of the gospel, even so; many in the religious world today will countenance any and every kind of religion, except one that calls people back to the Bible and urges them to allow the Word of God to be the sole guide in faith and practice.

Sometimes persecution comes from those we

love most, and who love us most. Many times it is not physical abuse, like that of the two ladies I mentioned in the outset of this study. For example, in the 1950's a Christian young lady from Jasper, Alabama married a fine young man who happened to be a devout member of a prominent denomination in Adamsville. She was weak in the faith, and finally gave up on converting him, and started going to his church. They were rearing their children in his denomination when a devout Christian lady who was married to an alcoholic moved into the house next door. These two ladies became very close friends, and the one who had left the church began to profit by the example of the other, and finally decided that, if her friend could overcome the obstacles presented by an alcoholic husband, then she could certainly overcome the obstacles presented by a good moral husband who happened to be ignorant of the truth. She began attending the services and was restored, much in opposition to the wishes of her husband. He continued to go to his church, and sometimes would barely speak to her for days at a time. He resented the fact she attended faithfully the services of gospel meetings, both day and night. When he would come home from work in the late afternoon during our meetings, she would have the evening meal on the table. He would sit down and eat, and then get up and leave the table without saying a word. She would clean up the dishes, get the children dressed, and bring them to church.

Here is a kind of persecution that is probably more common than most of us realize. It may be

the husband instead of the wife who is persecuted in this way. In such cases that sulking husband or wife, of course, resents not only the time that Christian spouse gives in worshipping the Lord, but also the money he or she gives to the church. I am convinced there are many cases of this kind of persecution that never come to our attention, simply because that one being persecuted in this way is too embarrassed by the situation ever to complain.

We need to remember also that persecution has been involved in the working of the providence of God. Do you remember how the brethren of Joseph persecuted him, and finally sold him as a slave? Do you remember all the bad things that happened to him down in Egypt as a result of the treatment of his brothers? Now look what Joseph said about the matter in Genesis 45:5:

Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life (Gen. 45:5).

He further said in verse 7:

And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance (Gen. 45:7).

I am not suggesting that God is the One who has caused bad things to happen to you. I am reminding you simply that *“God moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform.”*

Remember also that Jesus said, *“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake...”* Persecution comes to those who live righteous lives

for the simple reason that righteousness is incompatible with unrighteousness. Those who obey God have always been offensive to the wicked and disobedient, and those who are wicked and disobedient have always been offensive to the righteous. The reason Cain killed his brother Abel was not so much because God rejected his own offering, but because God accepted his brother's offering. He simply could not be happy in his sinful ways living alongside one who was righteous. He either had to change his own ways, or else do something to get rid of that righteous person. Faithful service to God and rebellion against God cannot peacefully co-exist. They can co-exist, but not peacefully. Righteous people cannot be content to allow sinners to continue in sin without trying to change them and make them Christians. By the same token, whether they realize it or not, those who choose not to serve the Lord are made unhappy by those who choose to serve Him.

The final question we will consider is: **What should our response be to persecution?** Persecution may cause us to become discouraged, to become bitter, or even to retaliate. Neither of these is a proper response; in fact, these are all reactions, and not responses. We will respond to persecution properly if we really see that it is a blessing to us. After all, didn't Jesus say, "*Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake*"? James said,

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the

trying of your faith worketh patience (James 1:2-3).

If our faith were never tried, then how would we obtain patience? In James 1:12 he said,

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

A beautiful poem, which has been set to music in one of our songbooks, says:

For all the heartaches and the tears,
For all the anguish and the pain;
For gloomy days and fruitless years,
And for the hopes I've lived in vain.

For ev'ry hill I've had to climb,
For ev'ry stone that bruised my feet;
For all the blood and sweat and grime,
For blinding storms and burning heat.

My heart sings a grateful song,
These were the things that made me strong;
I do give thanks, for now I know,
These were the things that made me grow.

When we, as Christians, suffer persecution or any other kind of adversity, there are many passages in the Word of God that are able to sustain us, provided we believe them with all our hearts.

I will close with two of my favorites along this line. The first is Romans 8:28:

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose (Rom. 8:28).

I realize Paul was discussing the working out of God's purpose in connection with the scheme of redemption. But I firmly believe that Paul is stating a rule that applies at all times and under all circumstances. He is making an application of that rule specifically to the development of the working out of God's plan to save the world.

The second passage to which I call attention is in this same chapter, verses 35 through 39:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:35-39).

Chapter 12

The Cross of Christ: Of None Effect To Whom

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.



Keith Mosher, Sr. was born in Pennsylvania • He is a faithful, and loving proclaimer of the Word of God • His formal education includes attending Cleveland State University, University of Louisville, and Memphis School of Preaching • Presently he is a full-time teacher at the Memphis School of Preaching • Keith and Dorothy have been married almost thirty years, have three children and two grandchildren.

Some are fond of asserting that the gospel is merely a matter of the heart, and “ask Jesus to come into me” religion. These same errorists prioritize the person of Christ and contrast the institution which Christ built, the church, as a non-essential element. It is beyond the obvious that Jesus did direct His message to people, but it seems to be forgotten that the gospel message is not some abstract personalism isolated from the objective form of the community to which God has called the lost: “Upon this rock I will build my **ekklessia** ...” that is, my “called out” (Matt. 16:18). The Cross calls one to a family, a brotherhood, and a work (Eph. 3:15, 21; I Peter 2:17; Eph. 2:10).

Existential personalism is the underlying flaw of the above error of “*the man versus the plan*” because such a philosophy defines man as the product of his environment—but fails to realize that

modern man is the product of a social system that emphasizes greed, competition, and achievement.¹ If one “*internalizes*” the Cross, such a system is hardly commensurate with the gospel. Those who have taken flight into “*better felt than told*” religion have asked Jesus to enter the **status quo** instead of realizing that the existing inward man is criticized by Jesus:

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me (Matt. 16:24).

It is this “*God of subjectivity*” which has led to Pentecostalism, modern forms of atheism, and charismatic movements even among churches of Christ.

Even further, modern redemption preaching with its emphasis on social structure and person has become a serious, dangerous abstraction and distraction to the pure gospel message. For many, who claim to follow Jesus and His Cross, Christianity means affirmation of another’s personhood (a sort of Dale Carnegie approach to the gospel) and/or a political world more habitable for humanity. Jesus said that His kingdom was “*not of the world*” (John 18:36). But, it is increasingly amazing that concepts of salvation are today linked to “*saving whales,*” as well as saving souls!

The consequence of existential-personalism is that a “*liberation*” theology has replaced the gospel. For, they say, how can one explain, experience, or accept the freedom offered by the love of God until

one has been the object of “*freeing*” love from a fellow human? Increasingly the foregoing concept has culminated in the idea that salvation is **love** (human) and all doctrine is merely a supposition to love. It would be wonderful, supposedly, if everyone were social-politically liberated, but for this idea to be the total message of the gospel means that the Cross has essentially become a new slavery—a servitude to man instead of a bond-slave to Christ (cf. James 1:1; et al.).²

The New Testament message, centered as it is in the history of first-century peoples, does take note of how those early Christians expressed their salvation to their societies (Acts 2:47; 5:11; et al.). But, that expression never required changing the social nor political situation (I Tim. 6:1—slaves are to be obedient; and Rom. 13:1-6—government is to be obeyed). Man is to change and the Cross can never be effective to any not willing to alter self. The Cross of Christ was the divine action designed to draw people to God (John 12:32). The expression, the “*Cross is of no effect to whom*” may seem strange to many but such is a biblical message (Gal. 5:4) and, because of the rampant existential-social preaching of this century, is a much needed study.

The Cross And Deity

The gospel accounts stress the fact that Jesus died willingly or voluntarily:

Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified (Matt. 26:2).

In the garden of Gethsemane Jesus commanded: “*Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand*” (Mark 14:42). Jesus insisted that His disciples not interfere with His arrest so that “*the Scriptures be fulfilled*” (Matt. 26:52-56). Luke writes that Jesus voluntarily exited the garden with the multitude (Luke 22:50-52) and adds that Jesus said:

When I was daily with you in the temple ye stretched forth no hands against me; but this is your hour, and the power of darkness (Luke 22:53).

Perhaps no better record of just how much an act of free will was Jesus’ acceding to His own death can be found than John 10:17-18:

Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.

Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies of His martyrdom (cf. Isa. 53); He died as part of God’s plan of salvation (cf. Gen. 3:15; 49:10; etc.); His death has a saving efficacy (Matt. 1:21). Jesus, in other words, was a sacrifice whom God exalted after Jesus willingly submitted to the crucifixion. The foregoing facts are some of the reasons that Peter could insist that,

This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:11-12).

However, the death of Jesus, for many Jews, was just another in the long line of prophets who were killed (cf. Matt. 5:11-12; 23:29-36; et al.). Nehemiah ascribed to Israel and Judah compliance in the violent deaths of all the prophets of the kingdom period (Neh. 9:26). The Chronicler added that the prophets were mocked and misused (II Chron. 36:14-16). Not to rise above the understanding that Jesus is merely a prophet makes the Cross of none effect. *“But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumblingblock...”* (I Cor. 1:23).

Jesus insisted that His disciples give the correct answer to the question, *“Whom say ye that I am:”* (Matt. 16:15b). Some Jews called Him John, Elijah, and even Jeremiah (Matt. 16:13-14), but revelation called Him **deity** (Matt. 16:16-17). One cannot receive the benefits of the Cross who is not willing to admit and confess that this peasant Jew is deity (John 10:30; cf. Matt. 10:32-33). The fact that God, of His own free will, sacrificed Himself for man is an essential belief:

I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am **he**, ye shall die in your sins (John 8:24).

The King James Version adds **he** after *“I am.”* John 8:58 reads: *“...Before Abraham was, I am.”* Therefore, what Jesus indicated as essential to the efficacy of the Cross, is belief in His deity.

Since God cannot die, a body was prepared in which death could occur (Heb. 10:5-14). The Word

(God) was made flesh (John 1:1-14) and “*tasted death for every man*” (Heb. 2:9). It is shocking to realize that many sectarians teach that Jesus is just an angel (Michael) who came to earth.³ But the **Hebrews** author wrote:

But to which of the angels said he at any time,
Sit on my right hand, until I make thine
enemies thy footstool (Heb. 1:13).

Others have insisted that the Christ was eternally the Son of God (a general Protestant view), but the Bible teaches that He became the Son at the time of His birth and was co-equal with the Father prior to Jesus’ nativity (John 1:1-14). Even among Restorationists the idea of a created being as the pre-human state of Christ has been taught.⁴

But, this doctrine of His deity is to be believed as essential to the effectiveness of the Cross. One must confess in order to obtain salvation (Rom. 10:9-10). To confess anything less of Jesus than that which He is leaves one in one’s sins (John 8:24)!

The Cross And The Law Of Moses

In his day, Paul told some Christians that “*Christ is become of no effect until you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace*” (Gal. 5:4). That Paul had in mind the law of Moses and not law in general (especially the law of Christ—I Cor. 9:21) is indisputable. Note the following verses in the context of Galatians:

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: For it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things

which are written in the book of the law to do them; And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect; Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgression ...; Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ ...; (Gal. 3:10, 17, 19a, 24a).

The law of Moses was good, just, and holy (Rom. 7:12), but the law was designed so that men keeping it could be justified (Gal. 3:21,24). The blood of bulls and goats reminded man of his being a sinner, but animal blood could not take away sin (Heb. 10:1-4). The Cross has no effect for those trying to be justified by the Ten-Commandment code given to Moses on Sinai (Exod. 20; Deut. 5). Christians, saved by the Cross, are dead to the law of Moses (Rom. 7:4-7).

In the first century some former Jews, filled with nostalgia for the Mosaic code, attempted to undermine Christianity by “*laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works*” (Heb. 6:1; cf. Gal. 3:24). Those Judaizers could not believe that they were dead to the law of Moses with its doctrines of washing, works, and laying on of hands, which were the **arkees** (first or leading) principles of Christ (Heb. 6:1; cf. Gal. 3:24). The law of Moses had pointed to Christ, not back to the law (Heb. 10:5; Rom. 10:4).

Suppose one had re-entered the Mosaic system? First, he would find no Savior and no Cross (Heb.

6:6). There would be the impossibility of renewing one to repentance without the Cross (Heb. 6:4). In fact, to reestablish the Mosaic order is to “sin willfully” and to return to a system where there remained no sacrifice for sin (Heb. 10:26). To add to the Christian system the Jewish code is to tread on the Christ and to reject the Cross (Heb. 10:29).

Those who teach that Jews today can be saved without Christ make the Cross of none effect. And, those who teach that Christ will one day save every Jew on masse dilute the message of the Cross and denigrate the Christ. Those who use the Mosaic code for authority for Sabbath keeping, instrumental music in worship, an elevated priesthood, holy days, etcetera are all guilty of ignoring the message of the Cross. **No man** can come to the Father except through Christ and Christ nailed the Mosaic code to His Cross (Col. 2:11-14; John 14:6)!

The Cross And The Blood Of Christ

Modern man, generally, recoils at the thought of blood; but to the ancients, blood was an everyday substance. They killed their sheep and chickens with knives before feasting, but moderns select meats in wrapped packages drained of blood and any reminders of the slaughter. In fact, the term, “*washed in the blood,*” has no correspondent in today’s world. One uses water, detergent, and scouring pads to clean; but blood stains and soils and one tries to scrub off the blood, not cleanse with it! But, the Bible teaches that the life is in the blood and if no blood is shed there is no remission of sin

(Gen. 9:4; Lev. 17:14; Heb. 9:22). The blood of Christ is inseparably linked to the Cross (Matt. 26:28) and those who never contact the blood of Christ are without the benefit of salvation.

The symbol of blood with its specific quality of cleansing appears throughout God’s Word. For example, leprosy was to be treated with bird’s blood (Lev. 14:33ff.). New Testament writers quote Jesus as instituting the “*blood of the new testament*” which “*cleanses*” and “*washes*” (Matt. 26:28; I John 1:7; Rev. 7:14). Do these first-century references indicate that primitive Christianity was misunderstood? No. Modern medical science has shown that blood is, in fact, a cleansing agent. Cellular impurities, such as carbon dioxide, flow through one’s veins, are cleaned by the blood, and flow back through the arteries with life-giving oxygen. Presumably, the Bible writers did not know this fact, but God chose a theological symbol with an exact analog in the medical world. The blood cleanses!

The Cross is the once-for-all blood sacrifice for sins (Heb. 9:23-28). Christ’s blood was shed in His death (John 19:33-34). The benefits of the death of Christ are reached when one’s faith in Jesus as deity leads to repentance (Acts 17:30); confession of His deity (I Tim. 6:12); and immersion for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). The act of immersion is the point at which God “*circumcises*” the heart and places one in Christ (Col. 2:11-12). The beloved apostle Paul reminded Christians that they were not only baptized (immersed) **into** Jesus Christ but “...were

baptized into his death” (Rom. 6:3). Since the blood was shed at Jesus’ death, the conclusion one must reach from Paul’s statement that at baptism one accesses Christ’s death is that one also appropriates the benefits of the blood of Christ at the same moment. Those not baptized (immersed) **into** Christ have rejected the Cross. It is of none effect to them for there is no blood to cover their sins.

There is also no justification for one must be “*justified by his blood*” (Rom. 5:9) nor is there sanctification:

Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate (Heb. 13:12).

Also, since worship requires priesthood (Heb. 9:1ff) and one not under the blood is not a priest (Rev. 1:5-6), one cannot praise God in worship. The Cross is, therefore, a meaningless symbol in buildings where people gather to worship who claim Christ but who have **never** contacted the Cross (i.e. the blood).

One is washed in the blood (Rev. 1:5), purchased by the blood as the body of Christ (Acts 20:28), redeemed by the blood, made near to God by the blood, (Eph. 2:13), given a way into heaven by the blood (Heb. 10:19), cleansed of an evil conscience by the blood, and overcomes sin, evil and guilt by the blood (Eph. 1:7; Heb. 9:26; Rev. 12:11). However, as above, one not in Christ has no relationship to the Cross and has made the crucifixion meaningless for one’s life. Surely, the Cross is of no effect to those not covered by the blood.

The Cross And Unsound Teaching

Those whose lives and teaching do not parallel the life and teaching of Christ make the Cross of none effect. *“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ”* (Phil. 3:18).

According to Young there are only twenty-eight times that the term, “*cross*,” is found in the New Testament.⁵ The original meant “*stake*.”⁶ To discover so few references to the central theme of the Bible seems peculiar until one realizes that the term refers to all that God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit did in order to provide the way for man’s salvation (cf. I John 5:1). The usage of “*cross*” by Paul found in Philippians 3:18 is parallel in usage to “*walk by the same rule*” (Phil. 3:16). Those who follow another rule (Greek-canon), who teach another system differing from the New Testament pattern make the cross of none effect. In fact, such teachers are enemies of the Christ and His Cross.

Paul commanded that Christians follow his example and mark others who do not (Phil. 3:17)). The early church “*continued steadfastly in the apostle’s doctrine*” (Acts 2:42) and those who leave that pattern have not God (Luke 10:16; II John 9-11). The apostles were directly led into **all** truth and passed the truth to every succeeding generation (John 16:13; I Tim. 4:6; II Peter 3:1-2). Those today denying a pattern for faith and the practice of faith are, in reality, making the Cross of none effect! In Paul’s day there were “*dogs*,” “*evil workers*,” and

Judaizers (Phil. 3:2). Some today think that as long as a man claims to be a gospel preacher that man can never do or be wrong. The test of the Cross is does that preacher “*walk by the same rule?*”

The Cross And The Self-Righteous

In a discussion with a group of Pharisees whose hypocrisy manifested itself in criticism of Christ’s eating with publicans and sinners, Jesus admonished those ancient egoists with:

... They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what **that** meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (Matt. 9:10-13).

Whether the Pharisees ever went and learned the meaning of “*mercy and not sacrifice*” is not stated, but when Hosea wrote these words that ancient prophets referred to a people who were **self-righteous** (Hosea 6:6). The Israelites (north and south) had become ritualistic in worship by merely offering without the heart and without obedience (Hosea 6:7-11). Jesus applied Hosea’s message to those who were “*whole*” and “*righteous*” and not “*sick*” and “*sinners.*” Obviously, the Lord meant that the Pharisees though they were whole and thought they were righteous and would never see their need for a “*physician*” (i.e., a Savior).

Such self-righteousness seems to have been typical of the Jews. Paul declared of them that,

... they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s

righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God (Rom. 10:2-3).

The Jews had sought God ritualistically but they missed the Cross in doing so, for it is the gospel, and only the gospel, which reveals God’s righteousness (Rom. 1:16-17). The Jews’ theory of justification was “*keep the law of Moses*” without consideration that the law was only a tutor whose goal was Christ (Gal. 3:24-25; Rom. 10:4). The Jews had left trusting, obedient from the heart, faith out of their thinking—and missed salvation (Hab. 2:4). They did not submit (**hupetageesan**, middle voice, did not subject themselves—Rom. 10:3) to the Cross. Their self-righteousness had made the Cross of none effect.

What process of intellectualizing leads to self-righteousness? Paul personifies the “*righteousness of the law*” by quoting Moses: “*That the man which doeth those things shall live by them*” (Rom. 10:5 from Lev. 18:5). Since Paul has already indicated that trying to be righteous under the Mosaic system was self-righteousness (Rom. 10:3), not that all Jews did not keep that law and have faith for some did (cf. Luke 1:6), he must be describing an impossibility (Rom. 10:5). The law of Moses could not be the instrument of righteousness for there was no provision for justification once a person sinned. That one would be told he was a sinner and forgiven in prospect of the Cross, as a Jew (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 9:15), but could not, by those ancient rituals, be

righteous. Yet, the Jews tried to maintain the ancient ways and ignored the Cross! Why? Because to accept the Christ meant that they must deny self, their familiar religion, and all they held dear!

The self-righteous Jews also had a false concept of God. They thought of Him as hard and impossible to please (cf. Micah 6:1-18; Matt. 25:24-25). They had legalized the law of Moses and created an impossible system of man-made rules designed to indicate who was righteous and who was not (Matt. 15:9, et al). The message of the Cross was foreign to their thinking and did not parallel their legalism. Paul insists that the “*righteousness which is of faith*” speaks differently from the voice of self-righteousness (Rom. 10:6). What does the voice of the Cross say?

... say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above). Or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) (Rom. 10:6b-7).

The Cross does not make salvation a self-righteous impossibility. One need not think that Christ must be returned—such is impossible. Salvation is **near** not **far** (Rom. 10:8). (The ancient Jews spoke of things that were easy as “*nigh*” and things that were hard as “*far*”—cf. Deut. 30:11-14.) The law of Moses had been accessible but justification under it inaccessible. Justification was now accessible in Christ, but the self-righteous approach of legalism would never access righteousness. And those who conceive of salvation as too hard are, according to Paul, self-righteous. Salvation’s source is the gospel

(good news) not self. How “*near*” and how “*easy*” is salvation? It is in one’s mouth and heart (Rom. 10:13) in obedience (Acts 22:16) and relies upon God not self (Rom. 10:11).

The Jews had heard this message of reliance on God not self from their prophets (Rom. 10:14-20). But they did not believe those reports of Isaiah and Moses and others and when Christ came their self-righteousness, their egos, held them back from the Cross and salvation (cf. Matt. 15:7-8). Those today who rely on self rather than a Savior, human effort rather than holy command, are heirs to the condemnation of the ancient Jews. Self-righteousness negates the need for Christ and makes the Cross of none effect. Jesus did not come but to serve and to sacrifice himself (Matt. 10:28). His followers must deny selves of pride and submit their souls to service (Matt. 16:24-26).

Those who are advocating “*grace only*” among churches of Christ are using the problem many have of thinking “*they never do enough*” for God and are magnifying this thinking by accusing faithful gospel preachers and Bible teachers of legalism because, the latter proclaim that men must obey God (cf. I John 5:3). If faithful Christians will conceive of the source of their salvation as from God and not from works, the “*grace only*” advocates will not dissuade the faithful from the Cross. However, if one believes that God cannot be pleased and that God is too hard (as the Jews and one-talent man thought), then one is susceptible to a “*grace only*” approach. For, one

cannot imagine how to do enough to “*get*” God to save that one!

But, one’s salvation **is** near one. It is in faith expressed not in self-righteousness (Rom. 10:9-10). And, God can be trusted to forgive those who so express their faith from obedient hearts (I John 1:9; cf. Rom. 6:16-18). The grace-only teachers have had a field day destroying the faith of good men and women who simply had focused attention on self rather than God. In order to make the Cross effective, let all Christians place their trust in Christ to forgive their imperfections (sins) and let all Christians realize that one **can** attain to righteousness. One **can** obey when one realizes that his sin-sickness needs a physician. And, when one is ready to take the medicine, the Cross, then grace and obedience meet and God is glorified and man is saved!

The Cross And Reconciliation

Of all the New Testament writers only Paul calls redemption **katallagee** (in the sense of reconciliation). (See II Cor. 5:18-21; Rom. 5:10-11; 11:15.) Before reconciliation both parties are at odds; they are enemies or separated—the secular term would be **estranged**. Through the Cross, “*though we were enemies,*” Christians are now reconciled (Rom. 5:10) and made one (Eph. 2:14). The Colossians were told:

And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your own mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his

flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouable in his sight (Col. 1:21-22).

Immediately following the above is the little word, “*if!*” “*If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard...*” (Col. 1:23a). The Cross of reconciliation is of none effect to those not willing to continue in the faith.

Another needed understanding about reconciliation is that this term does **not** describe the diminution of the wrath of God through some soothing action, e.g. the death of Jesus. Where the term, reconciliation is used in the New Testament, it is never said that God is reconciled. Man receives reconciliation (Rom. 5:11) and man is reconciled **to** God (II Cor. 5:18-20).

The special meaning of reconciliation is “*to make other*” or “*to renew*” (katallasso). The relationship between God and man is changed; a Christian is no longer God’s “*enemy*” (Rom. 5:10). The idea of reconciliation is stronger than that of justification for a Christian is now God’s friend and appears as if sinless before God (Col. 1:20-22; II Cor. 5:17). Without the Cross all men are enemies for reconciliation takes place only through Christ (II Cor. 5:21).

But, if one is reconciled to God only to be some lone individual, that one has made the Cross of none effect. A Christian is redeemed for community—for the church, the body of the Lord (Col. 1:18; 2:19, Eph. 1:23). One is to love this brotherhood as Christ

loved (John 13:33ff; I Peter 2:17). Brethren in Christ are reconciled to a household of faith where service, brotherly love, and edification coincide with preaching to the world (I Peter 5:9; Matt. 28:18-20). Those not involved in these aspects of Christian living are denigrating the Cross and diluting the Cross's effect.

Conclusion

The deity of Christ, His shed blood, His doctrine, the Old Testament's fulfillment, one's attitude toward righteousness and reconciliation, along with the myriad of other New Testament subjects are all tied to the efficacy of the Cross. The Cross is God's wisdom (I Cor. 1:18-21). Those who have not the Cross have not the Son and have not life (I John 5:12). How sad to think that the greatest event in history has had and has no effect for so many.

Endnotes

1 For some insight into this philosophy see Robert G. Olson, **An Introduction to Existentialism** (New York: Dover Pub. Inc., 1962). Also see John Baille, **Our Knowledge Of God** (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959). and Martin Rediker, **Schleiermacher: Life and Thought** (Philadelphia: Fortreess Press, 1973).

2 See Edward Schillebeeckx, **Christ: The Experience of Jesus as Lord** (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 762ff. Schillebeeckx suggest that "the person of Jesus ... remains unknown" (Ibid, 435).

3 The Jehovah's Witnesses hold this view. See their publication **Life Everlasting in Freedom of the Sons of God** (New York: Watchtower, 1966), 73-74.

4 See Barton W. Stone, "To James Blythe, D.D.,"

Christian Messenger 3 (September 1829): 269-77. See also “A Short Method with Unitarians,” **Christian Messenger** 4 (July 1830): 181-85.

5 Robert Young, “Cross,” in **Analytical Concordance to the Bible** (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1973), 211.

6 Ibid.

7 Edward Schillebeeckx, 483.

Chapter 13

The Re-Crucifixion Of Jesus Christ

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It is both amazing and ironic that *“the more things change, the more they remain the same.”* The spiritual problems with which contemporary people grapple are the problems that challenged people in the first century. That is one reason why the Bible is always relevant. God’s Word addresses the issues which have always plagued the souls of people.

To be specific; during the first century our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified on the cross at Golgotha. There is no polite way to *“tone down”* the humiliation, suffering, agony, and shame of crucifixion.

Most of us have seen people die. Probably none of us have by visual perception seen a human being hanging on a cross with nails in the hands and feet in a position where the body may be preyed upon by insects while the brain is being pierced with excruciating pain. One may laboriously inhale, but

to exhale demands pressure on the feet with the corresponding spears of intense pain hurled at the brain. Slowly, but surely, carbon dioxide builds in the victim’s body.

Perhaps this is the time to ask a very personal question: would you have helped the Roman soldiers drive the nails into the hands and feet of God’s Son? Once that was done, would you have helped them lift the cross and drop it into the ground? Would you have joined the crowd who gathered like vultures at the cross to scorn, ridicule, and condemn the suffering Jesus? Honestly, could you have participated in the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth? Aren’t you more sensitive to suffering, even the suffering of an animal, than we see shown by those who gathered about the cross of Christ?

The Answer In Demonstration

Could you, would you, have helped crucify the Lord Jesus? Some of our brethren in the first century would have to answer with an emphatic “yes!” In reality, they participated in a repeat crucifixion of the Lord.

The book of Hebrews was written to people who were having trouble with their faith. They were having difficulty being full of faith or faithful. Therefore, the burden of this inspired document is: Jesus Christ is worthy of your faith; Believe in Him; Believe Him because He is greater than the angels (Heb. 1); He is a greater lawgiver than Moses (Heb. 3); a greater rest-provider than Joshua (Heb. 4); and a greater High Priest than Aaron (Heb. 4:15–

10:12).

However, there were those who were turning away from the Lord. Therefore, the admonitions are significant: *“we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard,”* namely, *“the great salvation first spoken by the Lord”* (Heb. 2:1-3). In turning away from the Lord Jesus Christ, one in reality *“departs from the living God”* (Heb. 3:12-13). In becoming unfaithful to Christ, one *“sins willfully”* and trods *“under foot the Son of God”* (Heb. 10:26-29). He falls away from the Lord (Heb. 6:6). By giving in to sin and/or false doctrine and giving up on the Savior, one *“crucifies the Son of God afresh, and puts Him to an open shame”* (Heb. 6:6).

Perhaps these people were not really aware of the seriousness of their unfaithfulness. Maybe they rationalized their choice with: *“Well, a lot of people do this,”* or, *“It isn’t easy to live the Christian life.”* Or, *“If God really loved me, He would not have let my child die, my husband or wife leave me,”* or whatever explanation people may give for their decision to leave the Lord Jesus. But unfaithfulness to the Lord means that one is involved in **crucifying God’s Son** and this is serious!

Did He Deserve A Crucifixion?

The religious leaders thought Jesus deserved to be crucified. When the Roman governor, Pilate, asked the religious leaders, *“What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?”* they all said, *“Let him be crucified.”* Pilate then asked, *“Why, what evil hath he done?”* (Matt. 27:22-23).

When the people insisted that Jesus be crucified, the governor, in a gesture of declaring his innocence washed his hands before the multitude and said, “*I am innocent of the blood of this just person*” (Matt. 27:24).

One of the people crucified the same time that Jesus was being put to death, said, “...*we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss*” (Luke 23:41).

The apostle Peter, giving a summary of the life of Christ, said that Jesus “*went about doing good*” (Acts 10:38).

Did Jesus deserve to die? Did He deserve a crucifixion? Through the ages, sincere hearts and honest minds have answered with an emphatic “**NO!**”

Although the loving Son of God did not deserve to die, He was crucified nonetheless.

Did He Deserve To Be Crucified Now?

What had the Lord Jesus done for the people who were crucifying Him again? Did He deserve that kind of treatment? Had He abused them? Had He ignored them? Had He hurt them?

Let us consider what He had done. He had “*purged*” their sins (Heb. 1:3). He had left His honored position in glory and “*was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death*” (Heb. 2:9). He had destroyed the power of death so the people could be delivered from bondage (Heb. 2:14-15). He had made reconciliation to God possible for these people (Heb. 2:17). He was a succor, support,

or strength to people who were tempted (Heb. 2:18). He had given people access to God's throne of grace (Heb. 4:14-16). He was their Savior (Heb. 5:8-9). He was their effective High Priest (Heb. 7:25). He had given them the confidence that they could go to heaven (Heb. 10:19-20).

Examine the list and see what He had done to deserve a crucifixion. Let us examine some specific blessings from our Lord in the context of Hebrews 6:6.

First, we have been **enlightened** (Heb. 6:4). People live in sin because of ignorance often described by the metaphor "*darkness*." Paul explained the moral depravity of the first century as originating in ignorance (Eph. 4:17-19). Peter explained why people live lives controlled by lust.

As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance (I Peter 1:14).

In case you imagine that this is totally unrelated to our day in an "*enlightened age*" of a technological revolution, let me introduce to you the conclusion of the Thomas Jefferson Research Institute:

It is our opinion, based upon hundreds of thousands of hours of research, that a basic cause of our society's exploding problems is personal and organizational irresponsibility ... The world is littered with the ruins of societies destroyed by irresponsibility. We cannot succeed by trying to treat the symptoms – crime, anger, hostility, poverty, and war. We must seek the root causes and deal with them. What causes

irresponsible human behavior? **Moral ignorance!** (emphasis mine, TH).

People are ignorant about the enslaving capacity of a sinful life. They are ignorant of the consequences of sinful living. They do not know that they will either die in Christ or die in sin to face an eternal death!

Second, because of Jesus, God’s people have “*tasted of the heavenly gift*” (Heb. 6:4). Salvation for man on earth comes to him/her from heaven! It is in heaven where our “*sins and iniquities are remembered no more*” (Heb. 8:12). The joy of being forgiven, the peace of replacing guilt in the conscience, the sense of being right with God, the expectation of eternally being with God, how real and sweet were these blessings. They were to the soul like a delicate food to excite the taste of the mouth.

Third, God’s people have been partakers of the Holy Spirit of God. The promise of the gift of the Spirit was made when the apostle Peter declared the terms by which people could receive remission of sins in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38). Although one cannot ascertain from the original text if the expression “*gift of the Holy Spirit*” is the Holy Spirit as a gift or what the Holy Spirit gives, a comparison with a parallel text, Acts 3:19, indicates that the gift is what is given, namely, “*seasons of refreshing*” which come from the presence of the Lord. Peter used the expression, “*the gift of God*” (Acts 8:20) to identify what God gives.

The Holy Spirit gives to God’s people “*seasons*”

of refreshing.” The souls of a penitent believer who is baptized by the authority of Jesus Christ is refreshed by a sense of pardon and forgiveness. The condemnation is removed. The guilt is taken out of the conscience. There is joy instead of guilt. There is peace instead of fear. There is hope instead of futility. There is now purpose for life, meaning for living, and hope that cannot be destroyed by death.

Remember the joy, the excitement, the peace that you experienced when you were baptized into Christ? These were blessings of God’s Holy Spirit. Partaking of the Holy Spirit is one of the great rewards of becoming a child of God.

Fourth, we “*tasted the good word of God*” (Heb. 6:5). God’s Word is a fascinating thing. It is a living, dynamic revelation (Heb. 4:12). It is a critic to sit in judgment on our confused and even destructive thinking (Heb. 4:12). It makes known to us the way of the great salvation (Heb. 2:1-2). It is a guide for life (Psm. 119:105). God’s Word gives us many great and precious promises relative to life now and eternally (II Peter 1:3).

Once we really “*taste*” the Word and have our lives blessed by God’s revelation, we want more of God’s eternal truth. In becoming God’s child we “*tasted the good word*” then as new Christians we were told to desire or long for the “*sincere milk*” of God’s Word that we might be spiritually nourished by God’s good Word (I Peter 2:1-3).

Indeed, we were enlightened by the light of God’s Word and we had a light to keep us seeing

the clear path to follow in life and one who continues in the light will not crucify the Son of God.

Do you remember the words of the song, “*Holy Bible, book divine, precious treasure thou art mine*”?

Fifth, we have tasted “*the powers of the world to come*” (Heb. 6:5). Life on earth is not the totality of our existence. On being enlightened and tasting God’s good Word we knew in ourselves that we had “*in heaven a better and an enduring substance*” (Heb. 10:34). We indeed look for “*a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God*” (Heb. 11:10). As God’s children, we have an inheritance reserved in heaven for us. This inheritance, in contrast to earthly inheritances, is incorruptible, undefiled, and shall never fade away (I Peter 1:3-4). We really can sing, “*I am bound for the promised land*” and, “*heaven holds all to me.*”

So in anticipation of inevitable death (Heb. 9:27) we know that death is not termination, but separation of our spirits from our bodies (James 2:26). Death is not going into nothingness but going to be with the Lord (Phil. 1:23). Therefore, our souls are endowed with hope.

These five great, precious, and real blessings we have as God’s people all because the Lord Jesus was “*made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death*” (Heb. 2:9). He died once so we might live forever. He has shown nothing but love for us, why should He receive rejection from us?

Why Do People Crucify Him Today?

What has the Lord Jesus done for His people today? What He had done and was doing for His people in the first century is what He has done for His people today. So why do some decide to crucify Him?

Some may crucify Him because they do not realize the seriousness of their behavior. After all, did not Jesus say about those who first crucified Him, *“they know not what they do”* (Luke 23:34)? It is hard to imagine that people so blessed by the Lord Jesus would turn on Him and viciously crucify Him.

When you talk to people who have become unfaithful to the Lord and His church and as you listen to their explanations and excuses, do you not get the impression that they are not aware of the seriousness of their actions? Trivial statements, *“Well, I just got out of the habit of going to church,”* or *“I am so busy with my profession, or business.”* Or, *“I have a home situation where I get no encouragement,”* or, *“I went to college and just got caught up in the social whirl of college life.”*

People who crucify Christ now, just don't seem to see the seriousness of what they are doing to the Son of God.

Christ is crucified again by people who let something happen to their faith (Heb. 3:12). When one examines the cases recorded in Scripture of people who became unfaithful to Christ, he soon observes that the heart of the problem is a problem

with the heart. For example, the first recorded sin in the church, the sin of Ananias and Sapphira. Didn't Peter ask Ananias, “*Why hath Satan filled **thine heart** to lie to the Holy Ghost?*” (Acts 5:3). Didn't Peter say to Simon who had believed and had been baptized but afterward went astray, “*for **thy heart** is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of **thine heart** may be forgiven thee*” (Acts 8:21-22).

What is unbelief? It is evil! (Heb. 3:12). Unbelief rejects the testimony of God (I John 5:10). John very pointedly declared, “*he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.*”

What causes believers to become unbelievers? What happens to the faith of people? For some, it may be neglect. The faith is not fed the faith producing and faith strengthening Word of God (Rom. 10:17; John 20:30-31).

Others may listen to the loud voices of unbelievers in telecasts, lecture halls, classrooms, or in private conversations, and begin to believe them in preference to God.

Some people may get so mesmerized by the pleasure of sin that they prefer the thrill of sin instead of the pain of suffering as a Christian. Sin is deceitful (Heb. 3:13). The pleasure of sin is for the moment (Heb. 11:24-25). Sin offers what it cannot give, but sin gives what it does not offer. Sin's wages far surpass sins pleasures (Rom.

6:23).

Some may be led away from the Lord and His church by the power of false religion. The gospel of Christ may be perverted (Gal. 1:6-9). The Lord warned about the danger of false prophets (Matt. 7:15). The apostle John declared that "*many false prophets are gone out into the world*" (I John 4:1). No wonder the book of Hebrews would have the admonition: "*be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines*" (Heb. 13:9).

It is possible that some people may leave the Lord because of a bitterness of soul which comes from a failure to properly identify the source of the troubles, hurts, and the disappointments of life. Who brought all the suffering and sorrow to Job? Who did Peter identify as the author of afflictions (I Peter 5:8-9)? How did James tell God's people to react to the trials of life (James 1:2)?

Those who do not know that Satan is the one responsible for opening the "*pandora's box*" of pain, suffering, trials, and even death, may lay the blame on God. Perhaps in view of possible suffering and loss, they fervently sought God's help and because the relief did not seem to forthcome, they concluded that God did not care, or worse yet, "*God was not even there.*"

Job was a godly man on whom Satan brought much suffering (Job 1-3). But Job was patient. He held on, he went on, and he saw the "*end of the Lord,*" that is, he experienced the victory that people know who never give up on God. James, by

inspiration, wrote, “*you have heard of the patience of Job and have seen the end of the Lord...*” (James 5:10-11).

Identity Of The Crucifiers

On the day of Pentecost following the death, burial, and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the apostle Peter plainly and pointedly identified those responsible for the Lord’s first crucifixion. “*You,*” Peter declared, “*have by wicked hands crucified him*” (Acts 2:23).

The realization of what they had done so moved these people that they were “*cut to the heart*” (Acts 2:37, ASV) and wanted to know what to do (Acts 2:38-40).

Let us hope that the true identity of those who now crucify Jesus will so move them that they will also deeply desire to know what they must do in order to have the blood of Jesus washed from their hands.

When the Hebrews writer talks about those who “*crucify the Son of God afresh,*” he is talking about those who “**depart from God,**” (Heb. 3:12-13); those who **sin willfully** (Heb. 10:26); those who “**fall away**” (Heb. 6:6). He is not talking about God’s children who **fall short**, but God’s children who **fall away**.

Bruce has this helpful explanation:

...the Hebrews (writer) himself distinguishes (as did the Old Testament law) between inadvertent sin and wilful sin, and the context here shows

plainly that the wilful sin which he has in mind **is deliberate apostasy** (emphasis mine, TH). People who commit this sin, he says, cannot be brought back to repentance; by **renouncing Christ** (emphasis mine, TH), they put themselves in the position of those who, deliberately refusing his claim to be the Son of God, had him crucified and exposed to public shame. Those who **repudiate the salvation** (emphasis mine, TH), procured by Christ will find none anywhere else.³

When a person turns away from the Lord and embraces the world's values, pleasures, pride, and power, that individual crucifies the Son of God afresh!

When one turns away from the body of Christ, His church (Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:22-23), and accepts denominationalism, mysticism, oriental religions, or what have you, that person has crucified the Son of God afresh!

When one who pretends to be a faithful child of God, chooses to live in sin, that person "*crucifies the Son of God afresh.*"

The text in Hebrews is very emphatic. "***They crucify to themselves***" the Son of God. This means that they themselves crucify Jesus and they do this to their own harm.⁴

Jesus is being crucified in large cities of the world. Jesus is being crucified in small towns and even in rural areas as people who once were the recipients of great spiritual blessings from the Son of God have turned away from Him and by their lives have proclaimed to a scoffing world, 'There's not that much to the Christian

life. I became a Christian but I find more fulfillment in the world than in the Lord's church. I find more satisfaction living the way children of the devil live than I found in serving Jesus Christ.' You want to think about something serious? Crucifying Jesus Christ is serious!

Honestly, do you think He deserves to be crucified again? Do you really think He deserves to be put to shame in the eyes of a skeptical world? Really now, do you want to help crucify the loving Son of the Living God?

If you had been present at Golgotha would you have been the one holding the nails to be driven with sickening blows piercing the flesh, the nerves, and fastening His innocent hands to a piece of wood, or would you have been wielding the hammer, pounding away, ignoring the muffled cries of pain coming from His sinless lips, and with a cold, even sadist glee, inflicting as much pain as you possibly could? For heaven's sake – stop it!

Do you not realize what your unfaithfulness is doing now to the Son of God? Do you not care that in rejecting Him you become a part of the howling mob, jeering, condemning, and even nailing Him to the cross? Do you think He deserves this kind of treatment from you? Don't you think it would be more appropriate to crawl back to Him, if need be, to plead before Him for forgiveness for the fornication, adultery, the pursuit of material things, dishonesty, involvement with worldly entertainment, or whatever has taken you away from faithfully living the Christian life? It is past time that you stop crucifying the Son of God afresh. It is past time that you stopped putting Him to an

open shame in the office, in the classrooms, in the factory, in the home, in the military, or wherever you may be as an unfaithful, wandering child of God whose drinking, profanity, adultery, indifference, or obsession with expensive houses, clothes, automobiles, or whatever is proving so important to your life that you have stopped faithfully worshipping the Lord with His people (Heb. 10:25). You no longer are living a pure, holy, godly life.⁵

Is There Any Hope?

Is there any action more serious than crucifying the Son of God? It is so serious that some have taken this passage to mean that it is impossible to restore those who have so treated the Lord.

Erasmus of the 16th century softened the word “*impossible*” by translating it “*difficult*.”

The marginal note in the American Standard Version says that it is impossible to renew them again to repentance “*while they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh*.”

If the people who first crucified Jesus could be forgiven (see Acts 2:22-41), it seems strange to argue that there is no forgiveness for those now who crucify Him.

Certainly there is no hope for those who continue to crucify the Son of God. However, people can by **repentance** stop crucifying Him! They can change their minds and return to the Lord praying for His forgiveness (I John 1:7-9; James 5:16).

The words of a powerful hymn seem appropriate for the conclusion of this lesson:

*Shall I crucify my Savior,
When for me He bore such loss?
Shall I put to shame my Savior?
Can I nail Him to the cross?*

*Shall I crucify my Savior?
Crucify my Lord again?
Once, O once I crucified Him:
Shall I crucify Him again?*

Endnotes

- 1 Frank Goble, “*Newcomer On Campus*,” **U. S. News And World Report**, (Sept. 29, 1975).
- 2 Thomas H. Holland, **The Ways of Wanderers**, (Brentwood, TN: Penmann Press, 1990), pp. 63-66.
- 3 F. F. Bruce, **The Epistle To The Hebrews**, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1990), pp. 148,149.
- 4 Neil R. Lightfoot, **Jesus Christ Today (A Commentary On The Book Of Hebrews)**, (Abilene, TX: Bible Guides, 1976), p. 127.
- 5 Holland, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68.
- 6 Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, pp 125,126.

Chapter 14

Take Up His Cross And Follow Him

John W. Barcus



John W. Barcus presently serves as minister of the Kibby Street Church of Christ in Lima, Ohio, where he has labored for eighteen years • John attended Memphis School of Preaching and Alabama School of Religion • Bro. Barcus is a powerful preacher and has been involved in numerous lectureship programs across the brotherhood • John and Otha (White) have two children.

In our study, we will see that Jesus presents the doctrine of the cross; the terms of discipleship are expressed in Matthew 16:24:

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

If the disciple follows the Master, he must endure what his Master endures; he must travel the same road and bear the same burdens. The disciples of Jesus do not take up the cross of Jesus, but must take their own crosses and bear them.

Today, as we live in a world that is ever striving for the attention of the mind of humanity, it is needful for us to determine who we will follow, Christ or man. Those who have already chosen to follow the Lord must be reminded of the course to which they have committed themselves. It would either be God or mammon (Luke 16:13). Neither would it be the self-serving course, considered by many. The

followers of Jesus will go willingly in the direction Jesus goes; otherwise he is not a follower of Christ. Jesus had emptied Himself of the glories of heaven to obey His Father’s will. He had given Himself day after day and without thought of self-advantage, to compassionate service, even to those who were undeserving and ungrateful (Rom. 5:8). The trials we face day after day, we accept because we belong to Christ. These are the crosses of which the Lord spoke.

This call to take up the cross and follow, simply consists in doing our duty. Let the people of the world think of it or speak of it as they may. It does not consist in making trouble for ourselves, nor doing things merely to be opposed; it is doing just what is required of us in the scriptures and let it produce whatever shame, disgrace, or pain it may. Thus every follower of Jesus is required to do, and will do so willingly, without murmuring. However, before these crosses can be taken up, we must get self out of the way.

Taking up our cross and following the Lord is widely misunderstood.¹ It is not old age, poverty, taxes, illness, bad weather, or any other discomfort of life that comes unavoidably into the lives of men. These things would have been in our lot even had we not been Christians. Again, it is the acceptance, for the sake of the will of God, of some burden or burdens, otherwise avoidable, but which are undertaken out of a pure desire to fulfill the Master’s purpose. It is taken up voluntarily; it is in our power to refuse to touch it.

We bear it not because we cannot escape, but because it is a consequence of our following Christ; and the good of bearing it is that we cannot otherwise closely follow Him. He is the true Christian who will bear any cross and endure any hardship that is involved in loyally following the Lord and Master.

Jesus well knew what He was asking of His disciples, when He said, “take up the cross and follow me.”² He would have been familiar with the history of Judas the Galilaeen, who had led a rebellion against Rome. He had raided the royal armory at Sepphoris, which was only four miles from Nazareth. The Roman vengeance was swift and sudden. Sepphoris was burned to the ground; its inhabitants were sold into slavery; and two thousand of the rebels were crucified on the crosses which were set in lines along the roadside that they might be a dreadful warning to others tempted to rebel.

Thus, to take up the cross means to be prepared to face things like that for loyalty to Jesus; it means to be ready to endure the worst that man can do to us for the sake of being true to Him. Surely, the Lord knew what He was asking of His followers, when He said, “take up the cross and follow me.”

Just as our Lord voluntarily took up the cross, for His Father’s sake, we too must take up our cross and follow Him. We can please the Lord best by taking up our cross of TRUE Discipleship. That is, we are to be learners, pupils, and then, followers of the Lord. We sometimes sing the following song, “I’ll Go Where You Want Me To Go.”

I'll SAY what you want me to say, dear Lord,
I'll BE what you want me to be.
I'll GO where you want me to go, dear Lord,
over mountain or plain or sea.

As disciples we are to take the principles, the ideals of Christ and make them our own principles and ideals, and from now on our lives will be under the control of these principles and ideals. One cannot walk in opposite directions at the same time. To be a true disciple of Christ is to forsake everything that Christ cannot approve, and that does not honor His name.

Why was it that the early disciples of Christ immediately, picked up their crosses, left their nets and followed Christ? These men had come to the conclusion that Christ was the Saviour they needed; that everything He said was true; that any command He gave was so right that to disobey it would mean personal loss; and that if they were faithful to Christ, He would use them to bring truth, liberty, light, and hope to lost men everywhere. They believed in the Great Commission which stated:

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen (Matt. 28:18-20).

Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is

baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:15-16).

As true disciples of Christ we are the salt of the earth, for Christ (Matt. 5:13). As salt for the Lord we are able to be the custodians of moral health, and the natural enemies of moral disease. Whenever anything in the life of the community is in danger of corruption, the Master’s disciples must be there to stop the foul invasion. The salt for Christ must ever engage itself in the conflict with rottenness, in our land and congregations. Such corruptions must be confronted in politics, business, sports, the crowded streets, and in the quiet ways of our communities, where corruption and rottenness prevails. The true disciples of Jesus have the antidote to overcome and destroy such sin and corruption.

The true disciples of the Lord Jesus must take pains to keep their lights burning, as Paul would say,

... in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation,
among whom ye shine as lights in the world
(Phil. 2:15).

All that true disciples are to do is to feed the lamp and tend it, just tend the light. Let it shine, live your Christianity, and it will be seen (Matt. 5:16).

Remember, candles are not lit to be looked at. Candles are lit that something else may be seen by them. Many will see the Lord and His Word through our conduct, who never would have beheld Him otherwise. Let us take up the cross of true

discipleship. As such we have deliberately nailed His colors to our mast and defiantly proclaimed that no one shall take them down. Paul meant this, in Romans 8:38-39 when he said:

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:38-39).

Not only must we take up the cross of true discipleship, we must also take up our cross, in every way, as did our Lord and Master. Jesus bore His cross, **physically** and **spiritually**.

Jesus took up the cross physically, as He went to the scourging post, bareing His back to the whip of the Roman soldiers. Where often prisoners were whipped almost to the point of death, and yet the scourger would leave enough life for the cross.

Imagine the Lord removed from the scourging area, where He would be nailed to the cross. As the cross would be raised and placed in the hole in the ground, the strains and pains that our Lord must have suffered would have been unbearable.

Also, imagine being on the cross in the heat of the day, face and body caked with His own blood as the flies would be attracted, to His wounded body on the cross. Soon the breathing of our Lord would become more and more impaired. As His throat would become dry, parched from thirst; He would be given vinegar to drink. Then there would be the

thorn of humiliation placed upon His head.

Finally, our Lord was pierced in the side, from which flowed blood and water. Truly Jesus bore His cross physically.

All of this was due to the spiritual works that He was called to do for the Father (cf. Matt. 20:28; John 4:34; 9:4; 17:4). Truly Jesus was Isaiah’s suffering Saviour (Isa. 53). The cross He bore was of a voluntary nature, Jesus said:

Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father (John 10:17-18).

He could have come down, but this was His cross and He had to remain there, the cross was His to bear. It would be the means by which men would be “drawn unto him” (John 12:32).

In like manner, we too must take up our crosses physically, as we are called to suffer as a Christian. The Lord calls us to rest in our labors which, at times, does involve physical as well as spiritual works, in His kingdom (cf. Matt. 11:28-30; 28:18-20; I Cor. 11:23-28).

As we seek to expand the borders of the Lord’s kingdom we too must involve ourselves in the great works of the Lord. Let it never be said by those who would take up the cross of Christ, that he or she has nothing to do. “There is much to do, there is work on every hand.” Isaiah said, “Here am I Lord, send me” (Isa. 6:8).

Jesus also took His cross **mentally** and **emotionally**. Even from the cross Jesus’ life was tied up in us, both mentally and emotionally. Looking down from the cross at sinful humanity around the cross, He could still say, “Father forgive them” (Luke 23:34). He had earlier said:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not (Matt. 23:37)!

Truly, Jesus was mentally and emotionally involved in the lives of sinful humanity. We too must take up the cross in like manner. Let us not be as the shepherd, in the days of Ezekiel, who had little or no compassion for the flock of their day. Ezekiel said of them:

The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them (Ezek. 34:4-6).

Our attitudes must be more like the emotional and mental involvement of the apostle Paul for

Israel, when he said:

I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh (Rom. 9:1-3).

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved (Rom. 10:1). (cf. Gal. 6:1; 6:10; Heb. 10:25).

Do we take up the cross mentally and emotionally, are we compassionately concerned about the lives of those in and out of the church? Has it become a cross to bear for us?

In every way Jesus took up His cross and bore it willingly. We must also, as true disciples bear our crosses in every way as did our Master. We do not come to the real strength of the “gospel of Christ” until we can come to the hour of bearing our own cross, not because we want, but for Christ's sake.

Conclusion

Every individual has his own cross. We all have to say, again and again, “Things will not be according to my mind.” Becoming a Christian may alter our crosses, but it is pretty certain to multiply them. The more active and enterprising we are as Christians, the more, the weightier, will be our crosses. They will always be marked by their demand on the Christian to do what he ought rather than what he likes. A cross is that which puts a man on self-restraints and self-denials.

All of us are revealed by the way in which we deal with our cross. We may spurn it, leave it, or we may lift it, but we are disloyal if we spurn it, negligent if we leave it. We are true-hearted if we choose to lift it. Cross bearing is considered by some as the “highway of holiness.”

For Jesus it was more than merely carrying a wooden cross, but the burden of dying for the sins of the world. **No child having obeyed is too young, no person is too old, no one is too great, not to take up his cross.**

Endnotes

1 Burton Coffman, **Commentary on Luke** (Austin, TX: Firm Foundation Publishing, 1968), p. 257.

2 William Barclay, **The Gospel of Luke** (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press), p. 121.

Enemies OfTheCross

Chapter 15

Disciples Following Afar – Then And Now

Dub McClish



H. W. (Dub) McClish, Jr received his formal education at Freed-Hardeman College and Abilene Christian College • He had worked with congregations in Idaho, Alabama, Kentucky, and New Mexico • Dub has extensive experience in radio preaching • For over ten years Dub worked with the Pearl Street church in Denton, TX, and continues to live in Denton and assist in their annual lectureship • Dub and Lavonne have three children.

When our Lord was betrayed by the traitor-apostle, Judas, He was in the Garden of Gethsemane with the remaining eleven. After Peter cut off the right ear of Malchus (John 18:10) and the Lord had put it back on (one of His most amazing miracles!—Luke 22:51), He rebuked Peter for using his sword in a futile attempt to deliver Him from His enemies. After all, He had innumerable angels at His disposal, just waiting for His summons. No, this was not the hour of His own deliverance, for how then could the Scriptures be fulfilled that had for so long and so frequently foretold His coming and the purpose of it? This was the hour of His submission and sacrifice that mankind might be delivered from death and the devil (Heb. 2:14-15).

Upon seeing that the Lord placed Himself in the hands of His enemies, *“Then all the disciples left him, and fled”* (Matt. 26:56b). At this moment

the fear for their own lives overcame their love and loyalty for their Master. Perhaps the Lord did not even expect them to stay with Him as He went to His trials which He knew would lead to Calvary. He suggested to the officers who came to arrest Him that since they had Him in custody, they should allow the eleven to “*go their way*” rather than detaining or arresting them (John 18:8). (Even in His hour of great agony and personal danger, with the foreboding shadow of the cross falling rapidly over Him now, He was still thinking of others rather than of Himself. This should not surprise us. Only because of such utter selflessness did He ever leave Heaven to begin with and would He ever have subjected Himself to the cruel death He was about to die [Phil. 2:3-8].)

DISCIPLES WHO FOLLOWED THE LORD AFAR – THEN

Peter

Although all of the eleven initially fled, two of them had second thoughts about doing so. John wrote: “*And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple*” (John 18:15—John is generally believed to have been the “*other disciple*”). Peter (and perhaps John) followed Jesus all right, but he “*followed him afar off*” (Matt. 26:58; Mark 14:54; Luke 22:54). How strange that this would be said of Simon Peter! He was one of the first two disciples of the Lord (John 1:40; Matt. 4:18). He had “*left all, and followed him*” (Luke 5:11; Matt. 19:27) and had done so closely and faithfully. He was one who boldly

confessed Jesus to be “*the Christ, the Son of the living God*” near Caesarea Philippi (Matt. 16:16). Was he not one of the “*inner circle*” of the apostles (Matt. 17:1; Mark 5:37; 13:3; 14:33)? Is it possible that He made Peter’s home His home (Luke 4:38-39). Among the Twelve only John was closer to the Christ than Peter. It is sad to see a man so close to Christ flee in the hour of danger and then begin following at a “*safe*” distance.

Some have opined that he decided to attend the trials of Jesus because his loyalty to the Christ got the better of him. We get at least a glimpse of a less noble motivation from Matthew, however: He entered into the house of Caiaphas and mingled with the officers “*to see the end*” (Matt. 26:58). Curiosity rather than conscience caused him to follow; fear forced him to keep his distance. He thus turned back and followed at what he considered to be a safe position, perhaps stealing along in the shadows of the night so as not to be seen. Perhaps the very best that can be said about Peter in this matter is that he followed at all, for whatever reason. This was more than any of the others did, save John. At this point, he appeared to have just enough religion to be perfectly miserable! Contrast his lurking in the shadows lest he be discovered and arrested, with his boast of only a few hours before that he would go to prison or even die for the Lord (Luke 22:33).

That he was not following “*afar off*” in spatial terms only becomes apparent when we observe his behavior upon arriving at Caiaphas’ house. When he was allowed to enter the court of the house (by

the intervention of John, John 18:15-16), he did not even try to go to the side of his Lord. Obviously, he was not there either for His support or defense. Rather, he seemingly tried to lose himself in the crowd of officers and others who were gathered around the fire (Mark 14:54, 67). While Peter failed the Lord in a most significant way on this occasion, Bible students know that Peter later repented with bitter weeping (Luke 22:62). Thereafter, he became the early principal prophet of the Gospel. The first twelve chapters of Acts revolve to a great degree around his faithful and courageous activities as a follower of Christ. He possessed and used in a powerful way the miraculous gifts with which the Holy Spirit endowed all of the apostles. However, several years after Pentecost when he was visiting the church in Antioch of Syria, he once more drew back from following the Christ closely and Paul had to rebuke him publicly (Gal. 2:11ff). Again, he apparently repented and once more walked with the Lord.

Note here some significant principles: (1) Regardless of how faithful one becomes as a follower of Christ, he is never so strong as to be beyond temptation. (2) The very attitude which caused him to follow “afar off” resulted in his seeking anonymity among the Lord’s enemies at first and ultimately disowning Him at last. This pattern has been repeated countless times through the centuries. (3) One reveals both spiritual weakness and cowardice when he tries to hide his identity with Christ,

whether for fear of harm, for financial gain, for the sake of popularity, or any other reason. (4) A child of God does not suddenly and inexplicably get up one morning and decide to deny Christ. He reaches that point only because he has sometime before begun following Christ “*afar off*.” (5) One who follows Christ from afar can become a close follower of His once again. (6) Although one is a seasoned Gospel preacher and an elder or even an apostle (Peter was possibly all three at the same time of his sin at Antioch), one can still fall far behind the Lord instead of keeping step with Him.

While Peter is the only New Testament character who is described as literally following the Christ “*afar off*,” others certainly did so in a figurative fashion.

Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea

Nicodemus is introduced to us as a “*ruler of the Jews*” (a member of the Sanhedrin Court, John 7:45-52), a Pharisee who had concluded that no one could do the signs the Lord did except He be from God (3:1-2). It was this same Nicodemus that had a part in the burial of the body of our Lord (19:39). John mentioned twice that he came to Jesus at night (3:2; 19:39). In one particular setting, Nicodemus was practically asked by his fellow-rulers if he were a disciple of Jesus and Nicodemus apparently answered not at all (7:50-52).

Joseph of Arimathaea is mentioned in all four Gospel accounts as the “*councillor*” of the Jews who asked of Pilate the body of Jesus that he might

properly bury it. His request was granted and he, with the assistance of Nicodemus, buried the Lord's body in the new tomb he had prepared for himself (Matt. 27:60). At the time he asked for Jesus' body he was described as “*Jesus' disciple*” (v. 57), one who was “*looking for the kingdom*” (Mark 15:43; Luke 23:51), and “*a good and righteous man*” who “*had not consented to their counsel and deed*” (Luke 23:50-51). Furthermore, when he asked Pilate for the body of Jesus he did so “*boldly*” (Mark 15:43). However, he had not always been so bold! John tells us that he was “*a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews*” (19:38).

How do we explain this paradox? Which was he, a fearful disciple who followed “*afar off*” or a good and righteous man who boldly took the body of Jesus and buried it? The truth is, he was apparently both. I infer from this that until the Lord's trials and crucifixion Joseph was that fearful, secret disciple who had not declared himself. However, when he beheld the terrible scenes of the unjust trials, the mob screaming for His innocent blood, and at last, the awful spectacle of crucifixion, he could be silent no more. He was willing to risk it all to be identified as a disciple. So also was Nicodemus, who joined him in tenderly embalming and entombing the Lord's lifeless remains. Until that time, however, both of these men, though believers in their hearts, followed “*afar off.*” I believe it is highly likely that they were among those John described:

Nevertheless even of the rulers many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God (12:42-43).

Obviously, there were more than just Joseph and Nicodemus, for those two could hardly constitute “*many*.” However, so far as we know, all of the rest continued to follow “*afar off*.” It is heartening to observe that some who at one time may lack the courage to follow the Lord closely can sometimes later be moved to take a stand for Him as did Nicodemus and Joseph.

An Unnamed Disciple

In Matthew 8:21 an unnamed disciple addressed Jesus as follows: “*And another of the disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.*” We need to understand what is the antecedent of “*first*.” In verse 19 a scribe had told the Lord he would follow Him wherever He might go. Thus, the unnamed disciple of verse 21 was saying he was prepared to do the same thing, only he must first return home and bury his father. This at first seems innocent enough, even commendable, that one would have such family loyalty and concern. However, the Lord put the man’s statement in a different perspective for us in His reply: “*Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their dead.*”

This passage is not only interesting from the standpoint of the message Jesus conveyed to the disciple. The words He used are interesting. He made

a play on the word “*dead*,” using it both literally and figuratively in very close proximity. The obvious meaning is, “*Leave the dead* (figuratively, i.e., those dead in sin or spiritually dead) *to bury their dead* (literally, i.e., those who no longer have physical life).” What Jesus said to this man indicates that Jesus knew the man would likely never be a “*disciple indeed*” (John 8:31, KJV) if he went back home. Jesus was not saying that family responsibilities are unimportant. In fact, they are central to being a faithful disciple (I Tim. 5:8; et al.). One should never misuse the Lord’s answer to this disciple as an excuse to neglect one’s family. However, Jesus taught this man and all of us, that where the good and the best duties, the secondary and the primary principles, come in conflict, we must make the former yield to the latter. Peter learned this principle and applied it in his powerful statement before the threatening Sanhedrin: “*We must obey God rather than men*” (Acts 5:29).

Did this man go back home never to follow the Christ at all, as Jesus feared he might? Did he go back home and continue to believe in Him, but never to follow Him closely? Did he stay with the Christ and follow Him wherever He went? Matthew does not tell us (nor does Luke in the parallel passage, Luke 9:59-60). My guess is that he went back home and never fulfilled his resolution to follow the Lord faithfully. Had he done so we would likely have been given his name and some record of his work. Let us learn from this that while we must be faithful to

our family responsibilities, at the same time, we must not allow loyalty to any other person or responsibility to come before fidelity to the Lord. If we do, we will follow him “*afar off*” if at all.

Ananias and Sapphira

We read the story of brother and sister Ananias (better know as Ananias and Sapphira) in Acts 5:1-11. They were members of the church in Jerusalem in its early and exciting days. They were also people of some wealth. They were disciples, but surely disciples who followed the Master “*afar off.*” Many members of the Jerusalem Church did not have the necessities of life. Consequently, in a noble demonstration of selfless compassion, members who possessed real estate sold their properties and brought the money to the apostles for distribution to the helpless (Acts 4:34-35). Barnabas is singled out for commendation in this regard (Acts 5:36-37).

However, not every saint in Jerusalem was so genuinely unselfish. Apparently, Ananias and Sapphira saw the commendation and praise that was being given those generous souls and they wanted to get in on it. However, they were not ready to part with all of the money they received when they sold their property. They thought they could “*have their cake and eat it*” at the same time. Their scheme was to sell their land and bring only part of its price to the apostles, claiming it was the whole amount. This, they thought, would allow them to get the glory of men for the gift and at the same time allow them to improve their cash flow. How

wrong they were! They were so filled with the desire for vain glory that they could not even go as one to present their gift. They went at different times, perhaps hoping to make it appear that they were giving more by giving two gifts. They would thus receive twice as much applause of their brethren while giving only some of their money! After all, who would know but themselves?

When Ananias came first with his gift, Peter charged him with lying to the Holy Spirit about it. The sin was not in keeping some back. In fact, no one forced him either to sell the property or to give all or any of it away (Acts 5:4). The sin was in lying about it and the lie was not merely to men, but to God. Upon these words, Ananias died on the spot. Some three hours later Sapphira came in with the same story, the same intent, and the same gift. She blatantly lied about the amount of the gift and Peter scolded her for conspiring with Ananias in their plot. He then told her that Ananias was dead. However, she did not have to grieve very long, for she died immediately and was buried beside her husband.

Note the three motives that caused this couple to follow the Lord “*afar off*”: (1) Envy—they wanted the praise and commendation others were receiving. (2) Covetousness—materialism, the love of money, got the best of them. (3) Pride—they desired the praise, popularity, the applause of men. Actually, Satan got them through every form of temptation he has: “*the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*” (I John 2:16). Even one of these evil

motives will keep one from following the Christ closely and they succumbed to all three!

Simon the Sorcerer

Simon was a man of great influence in Samaria when Philip came there to preach (Acts 8:4-24). His power rested upon his deception of people with black magic. Magical tricks are not wrong in themselves, but Simon convinced people that he did his tricks by supernatural power. He must have been good at what he did. When Philip preached the Gospel of the kingdom and the name of Christ in Samaria, strange as it may seem, Simon was one of those who believed the message and was baptized. I conclude that the thing that convinced Simon, the counterfeit miracle-worker, that Philip was speaking the Truth of God was that he knew that Philip was working real signs and miracles (Acts 8:12-13). Now, he who had formerly amazed others with mere tricks, was himself amazed at the genuine powers of Philip.

Simon at first was apparently content to merely observe the gifts Philip demonstrated. However, when Peter and John came down from Jerusalem, he saw them lay their hands on certain brethren (perhaps even on Simon?), enabling them to do the signs Philip had done among them. Simon did not ask for the power to perform the real miracles (perhaps he had already been given that power by Peter and John). He realized that the real power resided in the ability to confer those gifts on others. He did not ask Philip for this power because it was

obvious he did not have it. He asked the only ones who could impart the gifts (the apostles) for that same power, offering to buy the power from them.

All of this shows that while Simon had begun following the Lord (we have no reason to doubt the sincerity of his faith nor the genuineness of his baptism), he was not yet following him very closely. What got in his way? I believe the major problem with Simon was his power-hungry ego. It had formerly been fed by his adeptness at sleight of hand tricks. Now the temptation was just too great for this babe in Christ. Upon seeing what he thought was a possibility of not only performing genuine miracles, but of gaining the power to confer upon or withhold from others these gifts, his imagination concerning the potentials overwhelmed him. There might have been just a bit of avarice in Simon, also. Surely it crossed his mind that almost anyone would pay a handsome price for the power to impart the gifts to others. Once more we see a man at some distance from His Lord due to the pursuit of power, popularity, and wealth. There is no hope of following Him closely when these forces rule our hearts and lives.

Simon's story does not end in separation from the Lord, but in reunion with Him. Peter severely rebuked Simon for his ill-begotten proposal. He told Simon he was (in his present condition of heart) going to perish along with his money with which he would have bought the "*gift of God*" (it was a gift given by God only to those of His choosing; it was

not for sale). Peter also told him that he had “*neither part nor lot*” in the power to confer spiritual gifts to others. (Incidentally, this is a powerful statement of the fact that none but the apostles were given the conferring power; no others ever had “part or lot” in it!) Finally, Peter told Simon that his heart was not right before God. (There is not a more powerful passage than this to expose the error and folly of the Calvinistic doctrine of “*perseverance of the saints*.”)

Peter then told Simon the remedy for his sin. He was to repent of his wickedness and pray for God’s forgiveness. This was his only way to escape the bitter iniquity that bound him. We rejoice that Simon did not turn away in rebellion, never to follow the Lord further. Rather, he implored Peter to intercede for him to the Lord that he might be forgiven and rescued from the certain awful fate awaiting him in his lost condition. This occurrence sets before us what we commonly refer to as God’s “*second law of pardon*,” whereby one who has obeyed God’s “*first law of pardon*,” but begins following the Lord “*afar off*,” may be forgiven and restored to following Him closely once more.

While there are others in the Bible record who at one time or another followed the Lord from afar (e.g. John Mark [Acts 15:37-38], the Galatians, the recipients of the Hebrews epistle, Diotrefes [III John 9-10] et al.), the examples I have set forth will suffice to demonstrate: (1) Those who once followed the Lord closely can cease to do so. (2) There are

various motivations (fear, pride, covetousness, etc.) which may cause one to follow “*afar off*.” (3) One who follows from afar will be lost if he does not repent. (4) God offers His merciful forgiveness, which, if we will accept it through repentance and prayer, allows us to walk closely with the Christ once more.

DISCIPLES WHO FOLLOW THE LORD AFAR – NOW

As it was in days long ago, so it remains: Many who were once faithful servants and followers have for various reasons fallen back into the distant shadows and others have ceased making any pretense at following the One they once confessed as Lord and Master. There is little need to rehearse the motives that cause men and women of our day to keep their distance from the One they once confessed as Master, although I will observe some of these in passing. They have changed little or none through the centuries. I want to spend the balance of this chapter on some of the ways in which disciples of the Lord are currently following Him at a distance.

“Rank And File” Christians

By this description I refer to members of local congregations in general. There are always the committed few in every congregation. These are the ones who will be present every time the church comes together. They can be counted on when it is time to advertise a meeting, make a visit, help the

helpless, work on the building and grounds, stuff envelopes, study the Bible with a sinner, and whatever else needs to be done. They are ready with their generous financial contributions each Lord’s day and at other times they give yet more for special needs. They are neither easily offended nor are they ever intentionally offensive toward others. They keep their lives pure. They love the truth and they are serious about sound doctrine and correct practice. They are the backbone, the very strength (from the human standpoint), of the local church. Sadly, they are almost always the few, as opposed to the many, who are otherwise.

Those who cease walking pace for pace with the Lord may be found at various distances from Him. To one degree or another, they all follow “*afar off*” and cripple the good work the congregation could and should be doing. It matters not what the Bible teaches about dedication, faithfulness, and loyalty to the Lamb of God. They are not moved from their lethargy regardless of how forcefully the preacher or elders exhort and instruct from the Word. They will be there on Sunday morning for worship most of the time, and may even loudly sing, “*Oh Master, Let Me Walk With Thee,*” but when Sunday night or Wednesday night or Bible classes next Sunday morning, or a gospel meeting, or lectureship comes around, they care not about walking with Him. They, in fact, follow so far off that they cannot be seen at all!

These are they who are content to let others do

most of the work and the giving of money to accomplish the work of the Lord. These are they who would shock us if we stumbled upon them reading the Bible during the week. Ironically, these are also often the ones who are the first to murmur, complain, criticize, and become easily offended. Their indifference, neglect, and apathy toward all things spiritual is evident to all who have the least bit of discernment. If the existence of the local congregation depended upon them it would fold up overnight. Oh, how badly the Lord needs complete commitment that makes each one of His disciples walk closely with Him in this wicked world!

Preachers

Thirty years ago one could walk into a building almost anywhere with “*Church of Christ*” on it and know that one would hear a Scripture-filled, true-to-the-Book lesson in the Bible class and from the pulpit. That day is long since passed. It is sad to see some, such as Rubel Shelly, who were once in the forefront of the fight for the faith now doing all they can to tear down the truth they once championed. Even older preachers, some of whom were once considered “*war horses*” in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s were largely silent when the onslaught of liberalism among us began in earnest in the 1970s. When strong and steady words from their voices and pens could have really made a difference in the direction of several congregations and individuals, they were dumbstruck and paralyzed. Some of those same men have now

compromised so long and so much that they have gone over to the enemy.

Many of “*our*” preachers seem determined to preach almost anything as long as it has no distinctive ring to it or as long as it contains nothing that could ever possibly be offensive to the vilest sinner or the most erroneous sectarian. They despise and belittle the gospel plan of salvation as if it were some ill-begotten human scheme. “*Concordance*” preaching (their term for book-chapter-verse preaching) is despised and mocked by them. How ironic that the very ones who have the charge to “*preach the word*” and reprove and rebuke all error have in case after case become the ones who disdain the Word and openly advocate error! The course of these turncoat prophets is not to follow the Lord, even at a distance. It is to run to the left or ahead of Him – or both.

Their agenda is iconoclastic; it is image-oriented, culture-oriented, and popularity-oriented. They are determined to uproot and tear down even the fundamentals of the faith to achieve their end. They rail against what they perceive to be “*tradition*” in our doctrine and practice, which includes almost everything that makes the church of the Lord distinctive. They praise the denominations to the heavens and join in with them freely and frequently at a level of fellowship, encouragement, and endorsement. In fact, their attitude toward them is far more “*irenic*,” congenial, and complimentary than toward their obtuse, negative, stick-in-the-mud,

behind-the-times, Neanderthal Bible-loving brethren (in case you missed it, these terms describe us). They pretend to be sweeter than honey till they are challenged and exposed by one of us, then they suddenly turn into bees with their stingers fully extended.

They now occupy the pulpits of most of the large congregations in metropolitan areas. (We may as well face the fact that these large city churches are lost to the cause and they cannot be turned back.) The Jubilee planners and speakers, the Tulsa workshop planners and speakers, and most of “*our*” university lectureship planners and speakers are composed of the same crowd. Some of these fellows have dropped so far behind the Lord that they are not only out of His sight – they have veered to the left and are on a totally different road.

We cannot know for sure what the demons are that drive these men, but we suspect what several may be. I am willing to grant that some are sincere and have been convinced that what they are doing is right. However, it is apparent that some are not. Some have manifested huge egos that must be stroked and fed by the praise of liberal, wealthy pseudo-intellectuals. Some have lost their faith by going off to infidel institutions of higher learning and have been educated beyond their intelligence. They step into the pulpit or classroom fully convinced that they should have no limits placed on them since they are so obviously superior. Some cannot bear the restraints of Biblical doctrine. They have joined

the sectarians in rejecting at least three of the seven “ones” of Ephesians 4:4-6 (particularly “one body,” “one faith,” and “one baptism”) as too narrow and judgmental. They have adopted strange meanings to those terms. Some cannot bear the restraints of Biblical morals and so they preach a loophole theology on marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Some seem to delight in leading a revolution. They view themselves as reincarnations of Moses who must lead a helpless people out of the slavery of tradition, nineteenth and twentieth century cultural influences, and outmoded principles of Biblical hermeneutics. Some have huge salaries (as much as \$120,000 per year) and to preach the truth on any number of subjects would mean immediate dismissal.

Whatever motivates these men, it has moved them to follow the Lord from so far back that they follow Him not at all.

Editors, Journals, Publishers, And Booksellers

There have always been renegade editors who either publish their own journals or who are supported by one of their own kind. We probably give them an undeserved dignity by even suggesting that they follow the Christ, even “afar off.” Nonetheless, I want to give them some attention. In the nineteenth century it was Isaac Errett with his *Christian Standard* and J. H. Garrison with his *Christian-Evangelist* who carried the banner of liberalism through their respective papers. Various journals have aided and abetted the liberal cause in

more modern times. *Mission* first appeared in the 1960s. It was liberal even before liberal was “cool.” It ceased publication in the 1980s, but undoubtedly succeeded in poisoning many, especially the young. Reuel Lemmons was editor of the stalwart *Firm Foundation* for several decades. He began showing his liberal colors in his editorials as early as the mid 1960s by defending Pat Boone’s Pentecostalism, Don Finto and Belmont’s hippyism-Pentecostalism, and the Campus Evangelism movement (forerunner of the Crossroads Movement). Thank God Bill Cline and Buster Dobbs rescued the paper in 1983 from the slow death it was dying due to Lemmons’ liberalism by purchasing it from the Showalter family. It has been a strong voice for the truth once more since that time. It was not long before Lemmons and Alton Howard of West Monroe, Louisiana conspired to start *Image Magazine*, which Lemmons edited till his death a few years ago. It began and continues (under its present editor, Denny Boultinghouse) to spew forth its damnable heresy each month. Awful was not enough for Rubel Shelly, however. He and his partner in religious crime, Mike Cope, launched their *Wineskins* paper a couple of years ago. As repulsive and rotten as *Image* is, *Wineskins* is actually worse, although it is somewhat like comparing the stench of a two-week old dog carcass to that of a three-week old dog carcass – there is not much difference! The *Christian Chronicle* is not far behind in being willing to publish, promote, and endorse almost every liberal effort, institution, and person among us.

Some publishers publish error and false doctrine for the sake of promoting that ideology, even at personal sacrifice. They are crusaders and I understand why they do it (although they are defying God in the process). Then there are those who are not dyed-in-the-wool liberal themselves, but they will publish anything which they think will make money, be it the truth or not. These deny any responsibility for that which they publish, although their names are on these materials as publisher. They apparently care not about the souls that may be damned by that which comes from their presses, as long as the book sells well. I think of such publishers as ACU Press, Howard Publishing Co., and Star Bible Publications for starters, all of which belong in one category or the other. How far behind the Lord such unconscionable men are!

Right behind such publishers are booksellers who will sell whatever will bring in the money. The commercial “*bottom line*” is all that matters to them. I get advertisements from several bookstores operated by brethren. The Shelly books, Lucado books, other books by liberals among us are regularly featured in bookstore advertisements of Gospel Advocate, Freed-Hardeman University, Mars Hill Academy, as well as others. I hope none of these brethren ever go into the restaurant business. By the principles they follow in the book business, they would kill all of their customers on their first visit. But which is worse, poison for the mind or poison for the body? Those who traffic in whatever will

turn a profit, regardless of its harmful nature, cannot be following the Lord very closely.

School Trustees, Administrators, And Faculty

We may as well face it, brethren, we have already lost some of “*our*” universities which were founded to uphold the gospel and to train men to sound forth the plea for restoration of primitive Christianity. While I have never been sure that Pepperdine University was even founded for such a purpose, there is no doubt about its direction and emphasis for the past three decades, at least. It has come to symbolize the liberalism that so thoroughly saturates the church in California and its neighboring areas. Abilene Christian University, one of my alma maters, is not very far behind now. It is openly on the offensive with its liberal president and an ever-more-liberal faculty, supported by either a spineless or convictionless board of trustees. It is in a state of denial of its obvious doctrinal aberrations as much as any drunk denies that he has a drinking problem.

You know there are serious problems at Oklahoma Christian University when you consider that the editor of the *Christian Chronicle* and the head of the Bible department are one and the same. Harding University continues to shield its share of false teachers and to stack its lectureship and training programs with them year after year. They can hardly have a campus event without bringing in Jeff Walling. Harding Graduate School has

produced a high percentage of graduates with serious doctrinal glitches the past few years. David Lipscomb University has so closely associated itself with Shellyism since Harold Hazelip was anointed president that it has no credibility with lovers of truth. Even the strongest of our schools still all too frequently turn a wolf loose on the lambs that we entrust to them. The truth of the matter is that the only ones who are able to gain the ear of most of our school administrators are the ones who approach them with a fat checkbook and ready pen in hand. If history repeats itself, we will lose all of the schools to the liberals before the current digression has run its course. Let it be on the record that all of these men who have the responsibility for leading the schools have dropped far behind the steps of the Savior.

Elders

If there is one group above all others that must be blamed for the drift and eventual destruction of the Lord's congregations, it is elderships in the local congregations. These men, more than any others, have both the opportunity and obligation to prevent false doctrine and practice from invading their respective flocks and to silence false doctrine and to correct false practice when they do occur (Acts 20:28-31). It is weak or liberal elders who have allowed preachers (and sometimes under-taught and over-zealous “*youth directors*”) to continue month after month and year after year to spew out their false doctrine and to lead brethren, young and old, into

unauthorized practices, when these men should have been sent packing long before.

Elders are supposed to be “*mouth-stoppers*” of such men (Titus 1:10-14), but sadly, many of them are “*mouth-supporters*” of them! (Ironically, it is the man who is determined to preach only and all of the Bible without fear or favor who is most often run out of town nowadays.) Many elderships have become so numbers-happy that they are willing to allow almost anything to be taught or practiced if it will draw the crowds or keep certain ones (and their money) from leaving. If elders had kept their pulpits closed to false teachers from the mid-1960s to the present, as they had consistently done through the six previous decades, the church would not be wallowing in a sea of error today.

Elders could do more to clean up the mess on the university and college campuses than any other one group by employing the following simple steps: (1) Warn parents of college age young people in their congregations about “*our*” schools and discourage them from sending their children to them till they clean them up. (2) Refuse to encourage their congregations to attend lectureships, teacher training programs, and such like sponsored by the school, nor even announce them, until the schools quit loading them with unsound preachers and teachers. (3) Discourage people from supporting such schools with their money (a form of endorsement which makes the contributor guilty of supporting error, II John 9-10). (4) Tell the trustees and administrators

that such actions will continue to be taken till they come back to solid ground doctrinally.

Elders could also do much toward drying up such blasphemous journals as *Image* and *Wineskins* if they would but warn their congregations about them and take a firm stand against all such papers which are subversive to the truth. They could also help stem the tide in their local congregations by subscribing to good, solid papers that warn of and expose error, while teaching truth forthrightly without apology (e.g., *Truth In Love*, *Contending For The Faith*, *Firm Foundation*, *Spiritual Sword*, et al.).

Elders who are nonchalant about what the flock they help oversee is receiving from the pulpit, from the classroom, and from printed materials and who will not rise up to either correct or silence error and its proponents are in the far distance behind the Christ.

Conclusion

Members of the church who have time for everything but the religion of Christ and for everyone but the Lord are kidding themselves if they think they are His true disciples. The liberal preachers occupy pulpits for the most part that represent the victories of loyal combatants of the truth of years gone by and they steal them away without conscience. Trustees of schools who prostitute the purpose for which the schools were founded and sacrificed for are basically dishonest and should be tried for fraud. Elders who carelessly let the church

they oversee be stolen by false teachers are guilty of a neglect that will haunt them through eternity. All such citizens in the kingdom are guilty of spiritual high treason and like Peter of old, they follow the Lord from a great distance. In fact, they are so far behind, they have completely lost sight of Him!

Endnote

1 American Standard Version used throughout unless otherwise noted.

Chapter 16

Enemies Of The Cross: False Doctrines Taught

Wayne Coats



Wayne has been preaching the gospel for 50 years • He owns Mt. Juliet Funeral Home • He is the author of several books, such as: “*Death Brings Hurt And Help,*” “*Tell Us Plainly,*” and several which review and expose the false doctrines and ways that trouble our brotherhood • Wayne is a prolific writer, a strong defender of the faith, a true lover of the truth • Wayne and Elaine have been married 47 years and have four children.

The assigned subject assumes that there is such a thing as false doctrine. It also infers that one can know that which is false. We have the solemn responsibility to discern between truth and error.

The early church was troubled by false teachers concerning whom the Holy Spirit gave constant warnings. The church at Corinth had a number of contentious, carnally-minded members. Paul informs us that he received information relative to those troubles by way of the household of Chloe (I Cor. 1:11).

Galatia was infested with false teachers. Other congregations were beset with false brethren. Among the eight perils which Paul experienced, he mentions the peril of false brethren:

In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city,

in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea,
in perils among false brethren (II Cor. 11:26).

We must understand that the ancient heretic was not ignored nor was he given aid, comfort and support by faithful brethren.

We Have Seen Truth Set Aside With Respect To Identifying False Teachers And False Doctrines

I hear many speeches, listen to about as many tapes as time permits, and read numerous periodicals. It disturbs me no little to know that there is so much **uncertainty** upon the part of so many of our brethren. Articles and speeches are filled with that which “*a certain brother said.*” We might hear about, “*A certain brother who goes over the country speaking on issues.*” Or we might even read about “*certain ones who have gone astray.*” I have never known any people in all history who have been so uncertain about “*certain brethren.*” It is somewhat like the wind that blows. We hear the sound thereof – “*but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth*” (John 3:8).

All that uncertainty about those certain brethren leaves me very uncertain because I cannot ask a tape player to identify some false teacher. I wonder why a “*certain brother*” would bother to speak about “*a certain brother*” if the matter is to be left dangling in mystery.

It boggles my mind to think that a certain brother would deem it important to mention some false doctrine but refuse to identify the persons who

espouse false doctrines. That makes as much sense as getting before an audience and mentioning the names of six people, identifying them as heretics of the deepest dye, but say nothing as to what false doctrines they teach.

One of the crutches being used in an effort to deter exposure is to cite Matthew 18:15-17. I am told that I must not answer a false teacher until I go see him. There are damnable heresies (II Peter 2:1-3). These heresies must never be answered until the heretic is visited, so we are told. The false teacher might live in another continent and spread his theological garbage all over the world by periodicals and television. Must I remain mum? Does Matthew 18:15-17 actually require us to dispense with our brains? Was the Master a sort of moron? Must we lay aside common sense when we pick up the Bible?

In every field under the sun, misfits, derelicts, traitors, criminals, outlaws, rebels and dim-wits can be identified, exposed, and opposed. There are now two exceptions as we all know. Homosexuals in the military must not be exposed and the lunatic left among the liberals in the church of Christ must not be identified. It seems so sweet to just refer to them as *“certain brethren.”*

Down through the years the older preachers have understood that our Lord expressed the ideas inherent in Matthew 18:15-17 as a matter of resolving personal differences between two brethren. One can research the commentaries all day long and

the conclusions will agree. Jesus did not muzzle the teacher of truth.

The Holy Spirit declared,

Now I beseech you, brethren, **mark them** which cause divisions and offences **contrary to the doctrine** which ye have learned; and avoid them (Rom. 16:17).

Another Divine mandate is given when we are told,

And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them (Eph. 5:11).

Contrary to what “*certain brethren*” say about “*certain brethren*,” the Holy Spirit informed individuals and congregations as to the identity of certain false teachers. Some of those culprits were Alexander, Hymenaeus, Phygellus, Hermogenes, Demas and Diotrephes. Faithful brethren could be prepared for those false teachers and could deal with them as directed. Let us be more certain with respect to false doctrines and never be too fearful to oppose false teachers.

The False Doctrine Of Not Judging

Equally abhorrent with the notion that one cannot identify false teachers is the aberrant idea that, “***we must not judge.***” We need not discuss any false system regardless of its consequences until we first dispense with the foolish concept that, “***we must not judge.***”

An entire generation of wackos has been reared to the tune of, “***we cannot judge.***” What this means is that, every brother is imperfect, we all make

mistakes, and we must *“cut each other some slack.”* It amounts to a garbled batch of sleazy rhetoric without meaning.

If there is any utterance on earth that might give credence to the idea that man is some sort of developing monkey, it would be the senseless chatter that, ***“we cannot judge.”*** Do you suppose a person can actually be so dumb as to not realize that one is judging when one declares that ***“we must not judge.”***

A lady had listened as I spoke on an assigned subject at a lectureship. She accosted me for judging and let me know how terrible it is to judge. I smiled and asked her if she realized that she was judging. I never did get her to see the blunder she was making.

Can we not discern? Is everything relative? Are there no absolutes? Can we never be sure about the truth? If I cannot judge, then how can I judge that I cannot judge? To say that I cannot is to judge that I cannot. Reduced to its final absurdity, such a concept would lead to the ultimate conclusion that there could be no such thing as sin. There has to be some judging in order for sin to exist.

Every careful student knows what our Lord said about judging. He never said it was wrong to judge. He did warn against judging wrongfully. Please note that Jesus said,

Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again (Matt. 7:1-2).

To illustrate the matter, Jesus related the story of the mote and the beam. Even simple illustrations are not sufficient for some. Does a husband not have the right to judge when his wife decides to paint the town red? Can a wife not judge when her husband goes into a far country with harlots?

Luke’s account reads,

Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven (Luke 6:37).

When a person desires to never be called in question about matters, he may find comfort in saying we must not judge.

We must realize that every Christian needs all the help, support, exhortation, reproof and rebuking possible in order to get to heaven. We should appreciate our brethren exercising judgment in our behalf.

Upon one occasion Jesus asked,

Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right? (Luke 12:57).

Our Lord said,

Judge not according to the appearance, but **judge righteous judgment** (John 7:24).

If there is a fornicator in a congregation such as was the case in Corinth, can we observe Paul’s directive to “...*put away from among yourselves that wicked person*” (I Cor. 5:12-13)?

The apostle asked,

...are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge

angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? (1Cor. 6:2-3).

When Lydia was baptized, was it proper to judge her to be faithful (Acts 16:15)? If such were possible, by the same token it would be possible to judge someone to be unfaithful.

It is my judgment that there is no modern heresy more damnable as the charge in attitude toward error which is expressed in saying, ***“we cannot judge.”***

The False Doctrine That The Church Has Not Been Restored

No heresy within the church can have more deleterious and damaging effects than to get a large segment of the church saturated with the foolish notion that the church has not been restored. This has become a real sugar stick among the left-wing lunatic fringe in the church.

The purpose behind such warped ideas is exceedingly clear. If the New Testament church has been restored, then a man appears to be a fool when he presumes to alter, change, restructure, and revamp that which has been given by Jehovah.

If the church has not been restored as the liberals claim, then they can utilize all kinds of experiments and create whatever monstrosity will suit their fancy.

Take note of the fact that one liberal element declaims that it has no interest in restoring the church. Another segment proclaims that restoring the church is a most worthy goal and should be an

on-going process. Truthfully, the liberals are not concerned about the church.

May we be able to tell if the church exists at any given point on the earth? No one claims that the Divine pattern exists at every point upon the earth. It would be foolish to claim that the Divine pattern actually exists at every place where a “*Church of Christ*” sign is seen.

Did Jesus fulfill His promise when He said, “*I will build my church*” (Matt. 16:18). If He did not build the church, then Jesus was a fraud. If Jesus only built a half-way house, then He did not finish His work.

The old Baptist debaters used to say that Jesus just added to, built on and embellished what John started. The babblers among us are saying that “*Restoration is an on-going process.*” Pray tell what is the difference?

If we entertained some fuzzy notion about the church not having been restored we would of necessity have to know what the original was like. I have a 1929 Model A Ford automobile. Can I restore the car without having a pattern, design or guide to follow? When someone speaks about “*Restoration – An Ongoing Process,*” he assumes the position of knowing just exactly what the original church was like. It is extremely silly to talk about restoring the church if one has no idea about the ancient order of things. If one can know how things used to be, can one preach the truth about these things? It seems reasonable to think that those who

talk about the “*on-going process*” should be able to:

1. Tell us what the church was like originally.
2. Tell us exactly what has been restored.
3. Tell us what has not been restored.

The above matters should forever pose insurmountable problems for the liberal teachers in today’s church who prattle that the church has not been restored. I feel confident that all of the false teachers would gladly admit that giving has been restored.

If indeed one single thing relative to the church has been restored, then I would ask how it came to be restored? Would that mean that one would know what the original item looked like?

Looking at the third component as given above, what needs to be but has not yet been restored? If one has enjoyed intelligence to affirm that some things have been restored and can explain how they came to be restored then I have every right to insist that the same amount of intelligence be utilized and explain what has not been restored and why. When the liberal preachers get together and ridicule the concept of restoration, among other things, we see a wedding of ignorance and arrogance.

When some left-wing wacko gets on his soap box and ridicules the fact of restoration, that means that he knows all about that which exists in every nook and cranny of the universe. The atheist claims to know that God does not exist. Is there some place the atheist and the liberal has not been? Are they everywhere at the same time? How can liberals be

so brilliant? Ah, but the liberal assumes to know every single place on earth where two or three are gathered together in the name of Christ. Liberals get right jolly when displaying their ignorance about the church.

Does the fellow who speaks about “*Restoration – An On-Going Process*” know all there is to know? Is he omniscient? Is there a tid-bit of information which exists at one point on earth that the false teachers do not know? If there is one piece of evidence at some place in the world that the church changers do not know it could very well be that the church in that place had been restored.

The Bible dismisses the atheist as a fool (Psm. 14:1). Liberals who deny that the church has been restored need to be dismissed in several respects.

Rubel Shelly has declared that he isn’t interested in restoring the church. He has flip-flopped which is normative behavior for him.

Just the opposite of the Shelly prattle are some who sound a bit like they might possibly agree to be in favor of having a restored church somewhere out in the wild blue yonder. Not now to be sure, but maybe in the sweet by and by when all the liberals get through with their wrecking crews and renewal agents.

Milton Sewell came up from Freed-Hardeman and spoke on the 1993 Lipscomb lectureship. His topic was, “*Restoration: An On-Going Process.*” Brother Sewell said just exactly what the Lipscomb liberals expected him to say. They knew what he

would say when they assigned the subject. Such a view leaves the door wide open to affect whatever changes might suit the whims of the speakers. If there is a restored pattern, then we are bound by that pattern. Whatever has not been restored, the theologians can cut, paste, saw and shape the pieces as they please and when they cease, the church is about as pure as the air down wind from the city garbage dump.

False Doctrines About Spiritual Gifts

A few years ago there emerged a very disturbing problem in the church which came to be known as Neo-Pentecostalism. Sound editors and preachers refused to play the silent game with this insidious evil. The false arguments which many of us had to meet when faced with the Holy Roller preachers of yesterday, are being made by any number of liberal brethren today.

During the 1992 Nashville Jubilee, Lindsey Garmon spoke of *“Identifying and Employing Spiritual Gifts.”* He identified spiritual gifts as, *“skills, talents, and abilities.”* He taught that there are spiritual gifts which God is giving today.

In the 1993 Nashville Jubilee, Steve Flatt spoke on *“Spiritual Gifts”* and he firmly stated that skills and abilities are spiritual gifts but *talents are not.* He declared that we are born with talents. I find it unbelievable that two Holy Spirit filled brothers who both claim to possess spiritual gifts would be completely opposite in their views about spiritual gifts. Contradictions, inconsistencies, oppositeness,

disagreement, counter positions, conflicts, and negatory statements pose no problems for Holy Spirit filled Jubilee babblers.

Please note carefully that brother Flatt declared:

1. “The Holy Spirits’ work is not limited to the Word of God.”
2. “He leads us but not exclusively through the Word.”
3. “We are led by the Word but He goes beyond this.”
4. “I believe He does it through the Word but He doesn’t do it only through the Word.”
5. The Holy Spirits’ work in this day and time is not limited to the Word of God.”

If the above assertions do not result in discrediting the written Word of God, then language has no meaning. Brother Flatt apparently has no problem while teaching his brand of Holy Rollerism. So many church members are too ignorant to know the difference in truth and error and a great segment simply do not care.

The False Doctrine That Everything We Do Is Worship

It makes for a most convenient system when the church changers can get people to believe that everything we do is worship. Of course, such radicals as are parroting such ridiculous statements have never attempted to offer one iota of proof for such insanities. Can you imagine a very sick member of the church having to vomit day after day and then hear some liberal blockhead say that these horrendous paroxysms are expressions of worship?

The liberals are well known for having their brains on the doorstep – especially when they get ready to talk about worship.

We hear such men as Randy Harris of Lipscomb as he says, *“There is a sense in which everything we do is worship.”* There is a sense wherein what seems to be sense becomes nonsense.

We recall when the inspired apostle declared,

Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship (Acts 24:11).

That one passage forever settles the matter.

Let a false teacher make up his own definitions for worship and then every innovation that man can devise will become a part of worship.

We Need A Renewal For The Sisters

One of the new fads being advocated by false brethren is the assignment of broad responsibilities for the sisters in the church. This may range all the way from leading public prayers, testifying in the assembly, singing solos, and even preaching. All of these practices are being borrowed from the sects. Please observe how the liberal elements has pure contempt for the concept of unity. They will split every church in the brotherhood, destroy peace and harmony, and consign legions to hell in order to have their way.

Also please note how such cowardly characters devise to get their ungodly schemes into the churches. It is by the system of here a little and there a little. It is by the brainwashing method as

every honest person can know.

What shall we do? What shall we say? I believe we should have the attitude of Paul toward false brethren. He wrote,

And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, **no, not for an hour**; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you (Gal. 2:4-5).

If we will be thus disposed, all of our false brethren will vanish as with the dryrot.

Chapter 17

Enemies Of Cross From Within The Church

Curtis A. Cates



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The only begotten Son of God (John 3:16) was forsaken by the multitudes, not only by those of His own people whom He came to save (the Jews, John 1:11-12), but also by many of His professed friends. His agony on the cross was exacerbated and made much more difficult to bear because of the denial and/or abandonment of even His dearest companions.

Our Lord increased in "*favour with God and man*" (Luke 2:52) and was trained and recognized to work hard as a carpenter (Mark 6:3), being the "*son*" of a respected Nazareth carpenter (Matt. 13:55) and evidently well-favored Himself. But, when He later went into the synagogue in Nazareth, His home town, "*where he had been brought up,*" and spoke of His being the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah (Isa. 61:1-2), and stated, "*This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears,*" those in the synagogue "*were*

filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust him out of the city” (Luke 4:16-29).

Jesus’ own people not only refused to accept Him as the Messiah, but when their leaders “*set at nought*” Christ, the chief corner stone, and put Him to death on the cross (Acts 4:8-12), His own nation cried out, “*Crucify him, crucify him*” (Luke 23:21). Joining in with the heathen, they murdered the Christ (Psm. 2:1-3; Acts 2:23).

Christ’s own disciples abandoned Him; yes, even the apostles. When many of Christ’s disciples forsook Him, to their credit the twelve did not turn back; only the Lord had “*the words of eternal life,*” Peter responded (John 6:66-68). However, when Christ was arrested, John Mark records, “*And they all forsook Him, and fled*” (Mark 14:50). What a time to flee, when Jesus could have used their encouragement and loyalty the most! Just think of it – when the Messiah “*offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears*” in Gethsemane, the apostles slept (Mark 14:32-41; Heb. 5:7). Shortly, they would flee and Peter would vehemently deny any knowledge of Christ (Mark 14:66-72). For sure, that was not the last time that Christ had been forsaken by His own disciples.

It has been observed that every person has enemies. Some have more than others. The greater the cause, the greater will be the obstacles, it seems. The Lord’s cause is the greatest ever, for He came “*to seek and save the lost*” (Luke 19:10). He, who “*tasted death for all men*” (Heb. 2:9), would “*have*

all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (I Tim. 2:4). Ultimately, His cause shall triumph (Rev. 11:15), but in the meanwhile, it is **very** unpopular. Most people will reject the Christ and choose to enter the wide gate and travel the broad way (Matt. 7:13-14), following and being a slave to our archenemy, Satan (Matt. 13:39) that adversary who devours as a roaring lion (I Peter 5:8) and hinders the Cause (I Thess. 2:18), and who is the ruler of darkness. How true it is that children of God must “*never underestimate the power of our enemy,*” which vigilance has been followed and practiced by wise and prudent disciples throughout the generation (I Cor. 16:13). How vital was the warning of Christ to the apostle Peter:

And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren (Luke 22:31-32).

Peter, though, thought such could never happen to him. He replied:

And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death (Luke 22:33).

But, the Lord knew the cunning, crafty, and persuasive power of Satan. Jesus knew that even He had been tempted by this notorious adversary (Matt. 4:1-11)! He knew that before the cock would crow, Peter would “*thrice deny that thou knowest me*” (Luke 22:34). Each of us should heed the warning! Is man’s most to be feared enemy the

wild beast, or some natural disaster, or even disease? No! It is Satan and sin! It is to deny the Lord! It is to become an enemy of the cross. Sin brings the greatest tragedy – both in life and in eternity!

ENEMIES OF THE CROSS

Paul wrote the church at Philippi thus:

Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.) For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:17-20).

Though the world abounds with enemies of the cross, there are also many in the church. Paul had earlier described some of them additionally in Philippians 1:15-16:

Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds:

These were evil men, and Paul felt very keenly the responsibility by inspiration to warn the brethren about these enemies, as did the apostle of love (I John 4:1). The very purity and existence of the Lord’s body in Philippi depended upon it. However, such serious, bold, and straightforward warnings were **not** incompatible with Biblical, true, genuine

love. The idea that the servant of God must never be so “*impolite*” and “*unloving*” as to expose the false doctrine and false teachers (even by name) is straight from the depths of the abyss itself. The apostle warned them “*often*” and “*even weeping,*” just as he had warned the Ephesians, “*night and day with tears,*” of grievous wolves who would arise in the church, even within the eldership, “*not sparing the flock*” (Acts 20:28-32). How can any elder and/or preacher fail to “*declare unto you all the counsel of God*” (Acts 20:27) and to stop the mouths of false witnesses (Titus 1:9-11) and yet be pleasing to God? He cannot! In fact, such is a **false pretended love**, loving and respecting neither God (Matt. 22:37), Christ (I Cor. 16:22), the authority of Christ as head of His church (Matt. 28:18; Col. 1:18), the Word of Christ – the doctrine of the apostles (John 16:13; Acts 2:42; Jude 3; Matt. 15:9), the church for which Jesus died (Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:4; 5:22-32; Matt. 15:13), the brethren (Heb. 13:5; I Thess. 4:9; I Peter 1:22-23; II Peter 1:7; James 5:19-20; Ezek. 3:17-21; I Cor. 5:2), nor alien sinners (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:4). In addition, such false and pretended love allows the vicious wolves in sheep’s clothing to remain within the flock unexposed and free to devour, maim, and tear the unsuspecting sheep and lambs (Acts 20:29; Matt. 7:15; II Peter 2:1; Rom. 16:17-18; II Thess. 3:6,14). Such a false teacher/leader is but a hireling, derelict of his duty, “*because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep*” (John 10:12-13).

Be sure of this – many of the most vicious, mean, vindictive, and unloving members of the church **claim** to be the most benevolent, irenic, and humble. Those who are not aware of this fact simply have not crossed them yet! What kind of “love” causes a father and husband to bring a rabid wolf into one’s home to ravage his children or to harbor in his home a rapist who is ravaging his wife, and throw acid into the faces of those who would warn against his being an accomplice to such outrageous atrocities? Paul would not sit idly by and allow such to happen to the beautiful bride of Christ! He repeatedly warned against false teachers and evil people, as did Isaiah (Isa. 1:2-24), Jeremiah (Jer. 2:1-13; 6:15-19; 20:1-6), Ezekiel (Ezek. 3:1-11), Hosea (Hosea 4:1-10); Amos (Amos 7:7-15), and other Old Testament prophets, as did Christ (Matt. 15:1-14; Matt. 23:2-13; et al.), and as did Peter (II Peter 2:1-9), John (I John 4:1-3), Jude (Jude 3-19), et al.

“Cross” Defined

When Paul spoke of “*enemies of the **cross** of Christ,*” against what were they enemies? The cross of Christ is the center and circumference of Christianity and is the very hope of our salvation. Paul was not speaking merely of the tree upon which Christ was crucified, having undergone grievous, indescribable, horrendous torture; they were not enemies merely of the nails driven into the precious hands and feet of our dear Lord.

The “*cross*” has been opposed by Satan ever since God told him that the seed of woman would

bruise his head (Gen. 3:15). The principle of the innocent suffering for the guilty was attacked, for example, by Satan and by Job’s three friends (Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar), through whom Satan spoke. Their thesis was: All suffering is punishment for sin. Job is suffering. Therefore, Job is a sinner. This charge was expressed by Eliphaz when he said:

Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? Or where were the righteous cut off? (Job 4:7).

Of course, immediately comes to mind the innocent Abel, the first murdered person (Gen. 4:1-16). Had Satan been able to prove his charge that only the guilty suffer, such would have undermined and made impossible the innocent Lamb of God, Christ, suffering and tasting death for all men (Heb. 2:9). Christ’s suffering would have proven Him to be guilty of transgression, had Satan been successful in his attack, not able to die for sinful man, the innocent for the guilty.

By metonymy, wherein the part is used for the whole, the **cross** refers to Christ’s sufferings and death **and** to the great blessings resulting therefrom. It is the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Promise (Gen. 12:1-3; Gal. 3:8), Christ being the seed of Abraham through whom all would be blessed.

We “*must needs go home by the way of the cross. There’s no other way but this.*” Since all of the doctrine of Christ depends on and focuses upon the cross, and since the scheme of redemption/the law of Christ is dedicated by the precious shed blood of

the cross, by which we are saved (Eph. 1:7; Matt. 26:28; et al.), one must come to feel very keenly...

1. that utter impossibility for mankind to save itself,
2. that the only hope for man’s redemption is through the sacrifice of the only begotten Son of God (John 3:16; 1:29),
3. that the only means of access to forgiveness is through obedient faith in Christ (Luke 6:46; Matt. 7:21-23; James 2:24-26; Heb. 5:8-9; et al.),
4. that the mediatorial work of Christ is the one way in which to gain and maintain fellowship with God,
5. that the cross is the sole object in which we can glory (Gal. 6:14), and
6. that those who are enemies of the message of the cross are enemies of Christ.

The cross is a stumbling-block to countless sinners. To the Jew, to die by means of the cross was shameful – “*Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree*” (Gal. 3:13; Deut. 21:23). They were ashamed of the gospel of the cross (Rom. 1:16). To the “*intellectuals*” of Corinth in Paul’s day, the preaching of the cross was foolishness (I Cor. 1:18-21). Paul was sent “*to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words [as perceived and proclaimed by the Grecian philosophers], lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect*” (I Cor. 1:17).

How do we know that to preach the cross is to preach the gospel, the doctrine of Christ, the steps

of obedience, the kingdom/church of Christ, the necessity of adhering to the Scriptures? The preaching of the cross included preaching the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord as well as the necessity of receiving and standing (continuing) in the Word (I Cor. 15:1-4). When Paul testified to the Corinthians that Jesus is the Christ (Acts 18:5; Rom. 1:4; Acts 2:36), they obeyed the gospel by which they were saved (I Cor. 15:2); “...*many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized*” (Acts 18:8). Otherwise, the cross would have been made of none effect. Paul warned the Galatians against moving from the grace of Christ (the message of the cross and of salvation) “*unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.*” Not even an angel, or any other person, had a right to teach the perverted doctrines of men (Gal. 1:6-9). Paul refused to know or speak anything except Christ and Him crucified. Did what Paul preach include strictly and only the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ? No! He declared the whole counsel of God, the apostle’s doctrine, the Divine pattern.

Enemies From Within

Not all of the enemies of the cross are from without the church. Many former Christians have abandoned the cross, having little or no room in their hearts and lives for Christ. Many people and even congregations are lukewarm (Rev. 3:16), and others have shut Christ out of their midst (Rev. 3:14-22). No longer for Christ, the cross, and the message

of the cross, they have become His enemies (Matt. 12:30). Who are some enemies of the cross within the Church?

In the first place, those who no longer accept the Bible as the inerrant, infallible, plenary, verbally inspired Word of God are enemies of the cross. They are, in short, modernists. Having once been enlightened by the Word, they now deny the truth of God – the message of the cross. How can anyone know of the cross and of its efficacy without Divine revelation? One cannot! The inspired writers of the Word (II Peter 1:20-21) are now looked upon by the atheists, infidels, or skeptics as unlearned, ignorant men, who but took scraps of uninspired writings from here and there and took various religious ideas which had evolved through merely human reason (theistic evolution) and produced the Bible. Thus, the Scriptures abound with scientific, historical, and theological inaccuracies. Certainly, they aver, the ignorant writers and editors who came with the Biblical account of creation, the temptation and fall of Adam and Eve, the universal flood, etc., could not have gotten it right, by any stretch of one’s imagination. They did not have benefit of modern science. Thus, their affirmation is that Genesis tells the “*who*” of creation but not the “*how*.” Very sad it is, though, that the “*god of this world*,” Satan, had blinded their eyes to the fact that a rejection of the Genesis account is a rejection of the very foundation of the scheme of human redemption through the cross

(Gen. 3:15; Gal. 4:4, et al.). If one denies that God created in six twenty-four hour periods, solar days, let us hear the modernist affirm that Christ arose from the dead the third day! If words mean nothing in Genesis, they mean nothing in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John! If Jonah did not come forth alive from the fish’s belly after three days, let us hear the skeptic affirm that Christ arose bodily from the tomb the third day. If Adam was not the first man, let us hear the liberal affirm that Christ is the second Adam who brings spiritual life, and let us hear this enemy of the Lord tell us who was the first real, historical person in Christ’s genealogy! Let us hear the infidels tell us why the cross is at all significant, if indeed it is an actual event of history. In view of the above, such an affirmation by these enemies is **absurd!**

No one can reject the inspired Word (as the Bible defines inspiration) without rejecting Christ and the cross. The Scriptures are the revelation of God, His very Words (II Tim. 3:16-17; II Cor. 2:10-13). They produce faith in Christ, without which no one can be saved (John 20:30-31; Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:6; et al.). The one who rejects the Scriptures will be judged by those words, for they will have rejected Christ Himself (John 12:48). And, having been guided into all truth, the apostles’ doctrine must not be rejected (John 14:26; 16:13; Acts 2:42). Paul affirmed that everything he taught is “the commandment of the Lord” (I Cor. 14:37).

In the second place, those who teach that

one can do enough “good works,” obey enough of the law of Christ to “earn” his salvation, apart from the cross, are enemies of the cross. Man has *never* been saved merely by carrying out in his life a certain number of works, whether those concocted in his own mind or those commanded by God, either in the Patriarchal, Mosaic, or Christian dispensation. The works of disobedience to God’s law, in whatever dispensation, have always had to be tied by faith to the cross in order for God’s grace of forgiveness to flow. For example, were Adam and Eve saved by offering sacrifices (works of deliverance) apart from faith in the promise of God found in Genesis 3:15? Absolutely not! Adam showed faith in the promise of the Messiah when he *“called his wife’s name Eve; because she was the mother of all living (spiritually)”* (Gen. 3:20). Adam thought by faith that Eve might be the very woman who would bring forth the child who would bruise the serpent’s head. Eve showed that same faith when she *“bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord”* (Gen. 4:1).

Was Noah saved by works of obedience apart from faith (Gen. 6:22)? No, for his obedience was through faith (Heb. 11:7), enabling him to become *“heir of the righteousness which is by faith.”* That is, he *“found grace in the eyes of the Lord”* (Gen. 6:8).

Question: Would Adam and Eve have been saved by obedience apart from faith? Would Noah have been saved by obedience to God’s command apart

from faith? Such would have been legalism, and no one has ever been saved by mere obedience to God’s commands apart from faith. Such would have been salvation by works, by a law of works. Thus, they would have been saved apart from the blood of the cross, an utter impossibility. “...*without the shedding of blood is no remission*” (Heb. 9:22). Indeed, without the shedding of **Christ’s** blood there is no remission of sins (Heb. 10:4). No one has ever been saved by a “*law of works.*”

This principle is true also as it relates to the law of Moses, by which no one could be saved apart from faith. The Pharisees and many other Jews attempted to make the law of Moses a law of works, which it was not. Such made them legalists. Unfortunately, most people, even many brethren – especially liberals – do not even know what constitutes legalism. It is an attempt to be saved by keeping the commandments of God’s law *apart from faith* in the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, through whom we have redemption. In other words, I can do enough to merit, or earn, salvation apart from the death and atoning blood of Christ – that is legalism. To charge, on the other hand, that obedience to God’s commands is legalism and that those who teach and preach obedience are legalists is to charge falsely, as will be observed later.

Notice the problem of the Jews. They failed to attain to righteousness, though they followed after “*the [a, ASV] law of righteousness,*” the law of Moses, whereas the Gentiles, who followed not after the

law of Moses, did attain to righteousness. Why did the Jews not attain to righteousness? It was “*because they sought it not by [through] faith, but as it were by works*” (Rom. 9:30-32). In other words, they treated the law of Moses as a law of works by which they could earn salvation by works alone, apart from faith in the coming Messiah.

They stumbled at the stone of stumbling; even as it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling [Christ] and a rock of offence: And he that believeth on him shall not be put to shame (Rom. 9:32-33).

Paul states that “*apart from us they [those in the Old Testament] should not be made perfect*” (Heb. 11:40), that is, apart from the sacrifice of Christ, and yet, countless Jews had no faith in Christ. Though they had a zeal for God, that zeal was...

...not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness [wilfully ignorant, refusing to see the end of the law of Moses, which pointed to salvation through Christ by faith], and going about to establish their own righteousness [through a supposed law of works and apart from the Messiah], have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end [purpose] of the law [of Moses] for righteousness to every one that **believeth** (Rom. 10:1-4).

Even under the law of Christ, some it seems, unfortunately, have attempted to “*do enough*” and to be “*good enough*” to merit God’s grace *apart from* and *not dependent upon* the forgiveness of sins through the cross, and thus their obedience of the

gospel of Christ is not by faith. Let us not forget that one cannot be saved by obedience apart from faith; such is legalism, an attempt to make the law of Christ, as the Jews did the law of Moses, a law of works instead of a law of faith. However, when one’s obedience out of a heart of love is tied by faith to the cross of Christ, that allows God’s grace to flow. Is that not the message of Paul in Romans 4:16, where he says,

Therefore it [our obedience to God’s law] is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law [of Moses], but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all (Rom. 4:16).

Where is the person who was ever saved by a law of works, apart from the faith and apart from the shedding of Christ’s blood? That person does not exist. Legalism, as the Bible defines it, does not save, nor has it ever saved!

In the third place, those who assert that one is saved by grace alone, without one’s “contributing one whit to his salvation,” are enemies of the cross. Without faith, one’s salvation is impossible (Heb. 11:6). However, saving faith is that faith which obeys. James affirmed that Abraham was “*justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon that altar.*” He continued, “*Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect [perfected]?*” Applying the principle to us, he continued, “*Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not*

by faith only” (James 2:17-26). A faith which does not obey is as lifeless as a corpse, as far as bringing salvation is concerned. Even the demons had that kind of “*faith*” and even trembled. A dead (non-obedient) faith can no more enable a person to be saved than could the dead works of the unbelieving Jews. What kind of faith characterized the faithful in Hebrews 11? Every one of them obeyed the commands of God. They did indeed contribute to their own salvation, just as Peter urged the Pentecostians, “*Save yourselves from this untoward generation*” (Acts 2:40). Paul urged, “*...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*” (Phil. 2:12).

Our Lord spoke of the relationship between the obedience of faith and grace when He said,

So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do (Luke 17:10).

Saving faith includes both joyful trust and obedience (John 3:15,16,34, ASV) and those who do nothing more than exhibit mere consent that Christ is the only begotten Son of God cannot be saved (Luke 6:46; Matt. 7:21-23; John 12:42,43,48; Heb. 5:8-9; Rom. 10:16; et al.). Their faith is not made complete in obedience, and thus God’s grace is unable to flow to them (see again Rom. 4:16). No one was ever saved by grace alone and/or by faith alone!

In the fourth place, those who teach that human beings are under grace but not under law are enemies of the cross. Often, John 1:17, “*For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth*

came by Jesus Christ,” is taught thus: We are not under law today but rather under grace, since we are not under the law of Moses. It is very true that we are not under the law of Moses (Rom. 7:1-4; II Cor. 3; Col. 2:14-16; Gal. 4:21-31); however, that does not exclude us being under law, the law of Christ. If we are not under law, since the law came by Moses, but are under grace, does that mean that there was no grace under the law of Moses? Was there no truth under the law of Moses? Christ simply used the term “*law*” to refer to the Mosaic law and the terms “*grace*” and “*faith*” to refer to Christ’s law. But, that does not mean that those faithful before the cross were not saved by grace and by obedience to truth. So likewise does it not rule out law in the Christian dispensation. Christ was simply using the figure of speech called *metonymy*, “*the use of the name of one thing for that of another of which it is an attribute or with which it is associated*” (Webster).

If we are not under law today, which law would go forth from Jerusalem in the church age (Isa. 2:2-3)? What “*law*” made us free from the “*law of sin and death*” (Rom. 8:2)? Why did Paul say we are “under law to Christ” (I Cor. 9:21)? Why did James urge men to look into the “*perfect law of liberty*” (James 1:25), and warn us of being “*judged by a law of liberty*” (James 2:12), and commend us for fulfilling the “*royal law*” (James 2:8)? How could we “*fulfill the law of Christ,*” if we are not under law (Gal. 6:2)? What laws are placed on our hearts in the church age (Heb. 10:16)? And, if there is no law

to violate today, why is it not true that we are all sinlessly perfect (Rom. 4:15)? The truth is this – The change of the priesthood brought about “*of necessity a change also of the law*” (Heb. 7:12), not an abolishing of all law. Those who deny that we are under the law of the high priest, Christ, are enemies of the cross, which suffering and death enabled Him to serve as our high priest (Heb. 7:18-28). We are saved by grace, law, love, faith, and works of gospel obedience. Not one of these elements can be omitted without opposing the cross of Christ! Antinomianism is infidelity.

In the fifth place, those who fail to declare the whole counsel of God are enemies of the cross. Some say, “*Preach the man [Christ] not the plan [the doctrine of Christ].*” In this way, many think they can receive all the benefits of the cross without having to deny themselves and bear the cross (Matt. 16:24). Mankind would like to go to heaven but wants to be independent, having no rules, no constraints, no responsibilities, and no judgment to come (unless it is that God’s grace will automatically erase and cover all sin). However, the cross preaches that sin is terrible, that it calls forth grievous punishment, and that to be saved, it must be deposed from one’s life and forgiven through Christ’s blood. Christ’s grace can save no one who is unwilling to bring himself into conformity with Christ’s Divine plan. Yes, self must be denied!

Did the apostles always preach Christ – not the doctrine of Christ? Did Paul not often preach the

authority (name) of Christ, the kingdom of Christ, the plan of salvation, the work and the worship of the church, et al.? How can one preach Christ without preaching how to become a Christian, how to live the Christian life, how to teach others, how to refute error, etc., etc.? What does being a good soldier of Christ entail? Can one preach Christ without warning against failing to obey Him (II Thess. 1:6-9), or live for Christ outside of His body (Col. 1:18; Eph. 3:21; Acts 2:47), or serve as a faithful part of Christ’s bride without becoming married to Christ and learning the virtues of faithful service (Eph. 5:22-31; Rom. 7:4; et al.), or preach Christ without speaking “*as the oracles of God*” (I Peter 4:11; Gal. 1:6-9; II John 9-11)? Would Paul have pleased his Master had he failed to preach the whole truth (Acts 20:26-27)? Is the preacher who wants only what is convenient and “*safe*” and inoffensive true to his trust (II Tim. 4:2ff)? What about those who compromise toward religious error (Gal. 2:4-5) or refuse to expose error (Titus 1:9-11)? Preach the truth in *love*, brethren, but preach the *truth*, the *whole truth*, and *nothing but the truth*. (Note: Some heretics of the day have arbitrarily decided that the gospel is limited to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, including, I take it, His Deity. Some include baptism. Not only are they claiming this to be the whole counsel of God, but they charge that to preach more than this is to add to the truth of the gospel. So, to preach the one church, the Divinely appointed and prescribed worship, et al.,

is to depart from the truth and to sin. Thus, to oppose mechanical instrumental music, choirs and solos, women having dominion in religious matters, the Lord’s Supper on Thursday nights, premillennialism, pie suppers to raise money for the church, drama, etc., is to sin grievously. Further, what limits that places on the “*all truth*” into which the apostles were guided, the “*apostles doctrine*” (Acts 2:42), the “*whole counsel of God,*” the “*pattern of sound words*” (II Tim. 1:13), “*the faith once delivered*” (Jude 3), and the “*all things that pertain to life and godliness*” (II Peter 1:3), etc.!).

In the sixth place, those who bring innovations into the Lord’s church and compromise with religious error (denominationalism) are enemies of the cross. First, Christ’s blood was shed to purchase His church, which He promised to build (Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28). There is but one body (Eph. 4:4), the church (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23), the family of God (I Tim. 3:14-15), the beautiful bride of Christ (Eph. 5:22-31). Though the liberals insist on preaching Christ, not His church, one must preach the church or be an enemy of the cross. Did the prophets prophecy of an unimportant church/kingdom (Isa. 2:2-3; Dan. 2:44; et al.)? Is the Lord going to return for an unimportant body? Is the supper of the Lord offered only in an unimportant house, the church (Luke 14:15-24)? Was Christ’s blood shed to purchase an insignificant people? Anticipating the heresy which would defend denominationalism and the idea of

“sincere, knowledgeable, devout Christians in all the denominations,” Christ warned, *“Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up”* (Matt. 15:13), clearly referring to man-made denominational churches.

It is the law of Christ, the New Testament, which is dedicated by the blood of the cross. Paul wrote,

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him (Col. 3:17).

We must do God’s will (Matt. 7:21; Luke 6:46), not man’s (Matt. 15:9). When men presume to teach and practice that which is unauthorized, and thus religiously wrong, they profane the name of Christ as well as the cross of Christ (Psm. 139:20; Exod. 20:7; Ezek. 13:1-23). We must serve and worship God in truth (Josh. 24:14; John 4:24; 17:17). God refuses to place His name where His law is not followed (II Chron. 7:14; Exod. 20:24; Ezek. 1:10-11). People can outwardly sing of their loyalty and obedience to God and wear Christ’s name on the building and yet desecrate and profane His holy sanctuary (the church) by bringing in every innovation of which the sectarian world can dream. It takes more than the empty claims to constitute the true church! The spirit of lawlessness and of digression is to oppose the gospel of the cross. It is to do mere lip service to the Lord while mutilating the Lord’s body and leaving it writhing in its death throes in various locations.

In the seventh place, those who change the

purpose of the Lord’s church are enemies of the cross. The purpose of the kingdom is the same as that which brought Christ to this earth, to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). The drawing power is the message of the cross of Christ (John 12:32). No one comes to God except through that message (John 6:44-45), which is to be carried to every creature on earth (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). When every gimmick, trick, entertainment, etc., imaginable is used to attract the world, the cross and its message are profaned, and the power of the gospel is belittled (Rom. 1:16).

The next step is to talk about the direct workings of the Holy Spirit and the experiencing of an encounter. What greater enemy could exist within the church than one who thus, in hypocrisy, claims to preach Christ and the cross! To them, the cross is no longer sufficient, and its way no longer leads home! The “*steps*” of obedience are no longer valid but are ridiculed! Jesus had no such plan of conversion. The great commission is moot; what is not significant is the “*personal experience*.” But, is not the great commission seen in John 3:16? Those who call upon the name of the Lord and are thereby saved must have heard the message of the cross (Rom. 10:14-17; I Cor. 2:1-5; 15:1-5). No experience and/or encounter can substitute for the Word, the sole way through which the Holy Spirit influences the heart of man (Eph. 6:17; II Thess. 2:14; Luke 8:11; et al.).

In the eighth place, those who question the

necessity of baptism for the remission of sins are enemies of the cross. It is only in baptism that the penitent believer can contact the blood of Christ, which cleanses one from alien sins (Eph. 1:7; Rev. 1:5; Matt. 26:28). The “*blood of the new testament*” was shed in the death of Christ (John 19:34). Thus, one sees the significance of being immersed into the death of Christ (Rom. 6:3-4). It is for the remission of sins, for it is there that the “*blood is applied,*” as it were, as the song says, “*at the cross*” (Heb. 10:22). It is the washing of regeneration (Titus 3:5). It is through faith (the ability to see the unseen) that the obedient sinner is able to see the act of the cutting of the sins away from the soul at baptism, which is accomplished by the precious blood of the cross (Col. 2:11-13). One must be taught the message of the cross and the truth about baptism in order to visualize being forgiven by the Father.

In the ninth place, those who return to a life of sin are enemies of the cross. The worldly, sensual, materialistic life is that from which the cross enables us to be delivered.

Again to be entangled therein is a repudiation of the cross of Christ (II Peter 2:18-22). The child of God becomes again defiled by sin (Matt. 15:19-20; 5:28; I John 3:15). Their “*god is their belly*” (Phil. 3:19), and they gloat in it, “*...whose glory is in their shame*” (Phil. 3:19). These apostates and degenerates engage in the very things which hung Christ on the cross and brought Him shame, but they are

unashamed. Very regrettably, their end is destruction, as will be the case of all enemies of the cross (Phil. 3:19).

Conclusion

From the beginning of time, the cause of truth has had its enemies, both from within and from without the people of God. Many other categories of enemies from within could be discussed, such as those who fail to defend the truth against error, those who affirm that one cannot understand or obey the truth, those who try to restructure the church, those who practice unity in diversity, those who defend a woman’s taking leadership roles in the church, those who aver that hell is not eternal, etc., but time does not permit.

Brother H. Leo Boles, on June 27, 1940, warned the brethren of a “*fifth column*” in the church of Christ.

Nearly every righteous cause and elect group has had its enemies within its own ranks. But this article has to do with the “*fifth column*” in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ (**Gospel Advocate**, p. 605).

Brother Boles identified several groups, such as worldly church members, infidels, disgressives, and premillennialists. The problem is compounded today, as noted in this study. A “*fifth column*” is “*a clandestine subversive organization working within a given country to further an invading enemy’s military and political aims*” (**The American Heritage Dictionary of The English Language**,

p. 489). **Webster’s Third New International Dictionary**, p. 847, says they “*engage in espionage, sabotage, and other subversive activities within the defense lines or borders of a nation.*” God’s archenemy certainly has a “*fifth column*” within the borders of His church, working overtly and deceptively in an attempt to destroy her pristine beauty. In countless places, congregations with “Church of Christ” on the building no longer resemble, at all, the primitive New Testament church; the message taught is no longer the old Jerusalem gospel. Will that happen where you work and worship, dear reader? Are your children beginning to hear a perverted message? Will your grandchildren hold membership in a man-made religious group, sectarian and corrupted to the core? What are you doing to preserve the truth for successive generations?

Chapter 18

Enemies Of The Cross: From Without The Church

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It is important for children of God to realize that we are never going to be accepted by those in the world. They are going the way of the world. We go the way of Christ. We believe that Jesus Christ went to His cross, died for all mankind, and was raised from the dead. This forever separates the child of God from the man of the world.

This dichotomy is made plain by Scripture in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians:

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the

Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men (I Cor. 1:18-25).

No one who believes in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ will be counted by the world as wise. The world opposes the wisdom of God, especially as it is manifested in the Scheme of Redemption. Sometimes that opposition is passive. But more often these days that opposition is very active. It is thus correct to say that the Cross of Christ (meaning all the ideas associated with the scheme of redemption that relate to the sacrifice of Christ) has its enemies in the world, that is, from without the church.

According to Paul the foundation of the problem that the world has with the Cross is that kind of wisdom that begins and ends in man himself. For us today the bedrock and primary manifestation of all that is wrong with the way the world thinks is something known as “*Moral Relativism.*” Moral Relativism is simply the idea that nothing is really right or wrong, and that truth is always subjective and never objective in nature. We must note that subjectivists never use “*always*” or “*never*” except to deny the objective real nature of truth. The essential point is that we can never know anything for sure. These concepts have been around for a very long

time and have manifested themselves in many forms. Today the philosophy of Moral Relativism pervades the social, academic, and media culture of much of the west, including the United States.

We have suggested that Moral Relativism is the problem. Let us now consider how things got the way they are in our society. A compelling analysis of this situation is available in a remarkable book, **Modern Times**, by Paul Johnson (Harper and Row, New York, 1983). In his first chapter, “*A Relativistic World*,” he writes of the brilliant work of Albert Einstein which came to be known as “*the Special Theory of Relativity*.” The impact of Einstein’s work was incredible. People sought to understand it. Johnson says that “*Einstein himself summed it up thus: ‘The Principle of Relativity’ in its widest sense is contained in the statement: The totality of physical phenomena is of such a character that it gives no basis for the introduction of the concept of **absolute motion**; or, shorter but less precise: There is no absolute motion*” (Johnson, 3). Essentially, Newtonian physics, with its straight lines and intuitively understandable concepts was thrown out in connection with bodies in space. Motion was thus not straight, absolute and predictable, but curvilinear and “*relative*.” As a result of all of this, Johnson says that “*At the beginning of the 1920s the belief began to circulate, for the first time at a popular level, that there were no longer any absolutes: of time and space, of good and evil, of knowledge, above all of value. Mistakenly but perhaps inevitably,*

relativity became confused with relativism” (Johnson, 4). It must be noted that Einstein was very disturbed by this “*public misapprehension.*” Johnson says: “*He (Einstein) lived to see moral relativism, to him a disease, become a social pandemic, just as he lived to see his equation bring into existence nuclear warfare. There were times, he said at the end of his life, when he wished he had been a simple watchmaker*” (Johnson, 4).

Out of these nascent ideas of moral relativism have come a number of nefarious manifestations of worldly wisdom that stand against God and His redemptive plan. Johnson navigates through the intellectual mazes of Darwin, Freud, Marx and the fraudulent politicians given impetus by their differing applications of the ideas of relativism. The result of all of this, “*an unguided world adrift in a relativistic universe*” (Johnson, 48) is what we have today.

It is not difficult to see how the ideas of Moral Relativism stand against God’s redemptive will. The Cross of Christ makes man face certain things. When the centurion faced the Cross he said, “*Truly this was the Son of God*” (Matt. 27:54). When we face the Cross we see death that was brought about because of sin. We know that the sins that sent Jesus to the Cross were not His but ours (Heb. 2:9; Rom. 3:10,23). We deserve to die for the sins we have committed. A Christian must never forget how much he deserves to die and go to eternal condemnation (Rom. 6:23). And we must always

remember that it was the redeeming death of the Savior that made possible our own salvation when we obey the Gospel of Christ.

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him (Heb. 5:8-9).

And yet, if there is not real right or wrong, how can we talk about sin, and guilt, and salvation, and Heaven, and Hell? Moral Relativism negates the need for God because it negates sin.

Our culture, our society is paying the price daily for the reign of moral relativism. The removal of the shame of sin has brought fear to the streets. What is one life in comparison to another? “*Nothing*” says the relativist. Thus we kill, maim and destroy with moral impunity. The worldly dolt shouts “*I must do my own will!*” And we all pay for it. Moral Relativism is responsible for abortion, increased divorce rates, rampant fornication among young people, adultery among the married, thefts, envying and lies. Moral relativism is responsible for our crumbling schools and obscene welfare state. Moral relativism is responsible for the filth we endure on television and in the movies. All manner of evil can be laid at its feet. But we must understand that Moral Relativism is but the foundation on which three operative aspects of worldly wisdom rest. These are Materialism, Hedonism, and the Lust for Power.

The relationship between materialism and Moral Relativism is easy to see. If there are no moral

absolutes, no absolute right or wrong, and thus no spiritual verities in life, then life must only be measured in terms of material existence. We soon learn under a system like this to love money and the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil (I Tim. 6:10). **Things** become most important in life. My house, my car, my bank balance, my possessions come to define me, if I am a materialist. Jesus taught that materialism is “*against*” the redemptive plan of God in Luke 8:14 where the significance of the parabolic seed (“*The seed is the word of God*” Luke 8:11) that fell among thorns is then explained: “*And that which fell among thorns are they, which when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.*” Materialism opposes the Cross by obscuring the redemptive with the mundane.

Materialism also keeps too many Christians from enjoying their own Christianity. We get caught up in concerns of this life and forget what is really important. When we do this we are forgetting what Jesus did for us on the cross. Giving, or the lack thereof, is a potent example of the impact of materialism on a Christian’s life. We need that new car, or boat, or stereo system. The orthodontist needs to be paid. The den would look much better with some new furniture. And that suit I saw the other day is just the thing I “*need.*” And I really should pay off that credit card balance this month. And as soon as I can get that note at the bank paid the better off I’ll be. And we’ve got this trip to Disney

World planned that will cost a bundle. But then the Lord’s Day comes and what do we give back to Him? He often is the recipient of the leftovers and many organize their finances so that there is precious little even in the way of leftovers. This is materialism as an enemy of the Cross in the life of a Christian.

And how silly it is for the child of God to give in to materialism. We ought to know better. Jesus said,

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth nor rust doth not corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal; For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also ... But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you (Matt. 6:19-21, 33).

The folly of investing all of life’s significance in “*things*” is described by the Apostle Peter. He said in II Peter 3:9-11:

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.

Indeed! How ought we to live considering that not a single **thing** shall be left at the end of time when Jesus comes? This is not a picture of a changed world. This is a picture of the absolute end of any and all earthly material existence. The elements will be dissolved. We thought of Einstein earlier. We know he said that matter has energy; we remember learning the formula, $E=mc^2$. Whatever the truth of Einstein’s work, it is enough for us to know what Peter has said, that material existence will cease when God says it is time. Relativity will no longer be significant. There will be nothing here or in the universe before us for any one to relate to, nor will there be any matter to possess energy. All **things** will be gone. There will only be the fruit of the resurrection: men and women. The only important thing then will be the Cross and whether we have lived to advantage ourselves with the redemptive plan of God.

Materialism is not the only operative aspect of Moral Relativism. Hedonism is another and it is also enjoying tremendous popularity in today’s culture. “*Hedonism*” (from a Greek word that means delight or pleasure) is the philosophy which says that pleasure is the factor by which any thought or activity is to be judged either beneficial or detrimental. Hedonism is closely related to materialism because it is centered in the activity of this life alone. Sexual immorality is justified by hedonism because it produces physical pleasure. Here also rests the justification for the use of alcohol

and other drugs. *“It makes me feel good, so I do it!”*

Perhaps the most outstanding example of hedonism in our culture is the practice of abortion. The statistics will break your heart. But it can be best understood as something that also breaks the heart of God. Having a baby does cause people discomfort. There is the inconvenience involved. Perhaps in some cases (though increasingly rare) there may be embarrassment. So, based on the principles of hedonism, the child is aborted. We must always remember that abortion is the murder of an unborn child. It can never be seen as anything less. Any position which in any way mitigates this view is wrong. But the hedonists of the world have no problem using abortion as birth control. We should not be surprised. If there is not to be any absolute right or wrong, why worry about that little baby in the womb. We can call it *“fetal tissue”* and then sell it for research procedures. And while we are at it, why not create an industry wherein the end product will be more and more fetal research tissue. It would be the hedonist, materialist version of Heaven. Pleasure, profit, no worries, just good business! We may be shocked at the idea of such a scheme but things like this have been done before. Hitler has his philosophical relatives in our world today. They are the abortionists and their co-defendants.

Think about our Lord on the Cross. Think of the weight of sin that bore down on Him there. And then think of all the sin wrapped up in an abortion. It may have begun with a couple rebelling against

God’s beautiful plan for the marriage bed (Heb. 13:4) and then, when presented with one called the heritage of God (Psm. 127:3), they decide to kill it, destroy him, erase her life, and do it all for the sake of their convenience and momentary pleasure. How heinous and cruel we as God’s creatures become when we run away from the image in which we were created. God knows children in the womb (Jer. 1:5). Who are we to decide to end the life of one of God’s creation? Abortion is the ultimate crime against God and humanity. There can be here no more innocent a victim than an aborted human being. Can there be a greater enemy of all that the Cross stands for than the host of ideas that result in death for the sake of pleasure?

It is not overstating the case to say that abortion, as an example of hedonism gone wild, is of ultimate importance as a force in our culture against God and His cross. F. LaGard Smith dealt with these matters in terms of the phenomenon of choice in his **When Choice Becomes God** (Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, Oregon, 1990). At the end of that book he said this:

... although abortion undoubtedly is the toughest battle of all, our cultural war is bigger than the issue of abortion alone. We are engaged in a great conflict over our most basic assumptions about life and about the source of our moral values. The war is between Self and others—particularly the Great Other. It is a question of who will be God. Will individual **choice** become our God, or will the God of Creation be our God? (Smith, 270-271).

Lest we run past Jerusalem, we must remember that God has created all things and has designed this world for our use and pleasure. Consider in this light Philippians 4:8-9.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

But pleasure is to be enjoyed within the boundaries set by the Creator, not the creature. A picture of man run amuck his desire for pleasure is provided by Paul:

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature

more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.
Amen (Romans 1:20-25).

I can never seek to have pleasure in anything not so ordained for my use by the Creator. The world, in its wisdom, has forgotten this. The impenitent sinner pays a price. The society without pays a price. Just think of the cost of AIDS, the poor children without parents, the horrible crime, the needless death, and all the terrible sadness sin brings. And the price the Savior paid goes for nothing if we refuse to look to the Cross.

When people are presented with the ideas of self-sacrifice, denied or deferred gratification, or any number of concepts that require a person to deny himself pleasure, disbelief is a typical response. The wisdom of the world says to get all you can, do all you can, live for the moment, and never look back. As a result of this prevailing view we have a culture addicted to a perverse sexuality and addled by whatever substance, legal or otherwise, that is readily available. Our culture needs to remember Moses. The Bible says:

By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season (Heb. 11:24-25).

The people of God gather around the Cross, with their backs turned on momentary pleasures that are actually only a snare for the soul. We do not “*do our own thing*” for pleasure's sake. We would rather do the right thing in light of the Cross.

The last in our list of enemies of the Cross is the Lust for Power. This enemy also rests on the foundation of Moral Relativism. If there is no right or wrong, and if truth is merely subjective and is never objective, what can or should keep one person from exercising dominion over another? We remember the words of John:

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever (1 John 2:15-17).

The “*lust of the flesh*” is hedonism. The “*lust of the eyes*” is materialism. And the “*pride of life*” is that desire for power over others that so often is evident in the advancing years of the life of a worldly man.

This lust for power clearly rests in relativism. Friedrich Nietzsche used the expression “*the Will to Power*” to describe the force that would fill the emptiness left by the effective absence of God from the lives of most people. There must be numbing sadness in the life of a man who knows no meaning for his life but in his ability to keep other human beings in subjection to him.

Dictators and demagogues are examples of those who have the lust for power. And as such the Cross of Christ can have very little appeal for them. The cross is not about power over others. It is about

sacrifice and that, uniquely. Consider that God, as Creator, already has absolute and total power over all that is in the Universe. We must remember that God does not **have** to do anything. His will is **absolute**. He spoke this world into existence and at His word, it will cease to exist. God’s power is beyond man’s power to imagine (Isa. 55:8-9). And yet, even with His great power, He sent His Son to die for us: *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”* (John 3:16). In terms of what the world knows as power, this makes no sense at all. It is, indeed, the *“foolishness of preaching.”* But it is the message of the Cross.

Some say that this aversion to the idea of the supremacy of power is an inherent weakness of Christianity. We can see how this might be argued. A Darwinian or someone of that heritage might say, *“Look at the animal world. The strong survive, and they alone. That’s how it ought to be with humans. You Christians are soft. You have no taste for the power that is needed to make life all it should be. You do not have the will. You rely, as weaklings, on your God!”* We must admit to the truth that Christianity allows for the survival, even the protection, of the weak (I Thess. 5:14). We must admit that we do rely on our God.

And, no, we do not have the will to do the things that worldly wisdom would have us do. If this is Christian weakness, then weak let us be. The

determinism that leads to the choice of abortion can also lead to suicide, then euthanasia, then infanticide, and then parricide. A future ruled by moral relativists bent on gaining as much power as possible ought to be feared.

As an example we need to look further than the realm of biological ethics, where our lust for the use of scientific power has thrust upon us some significant decisions. What if we could determine the intelligence of a child before his birth? What if we could determine the future physical stature, beauty, or athletic endurance of a child before her birth? Would that power affect our decisions? Should it? Would it move us toward or away from doing the will of the God of the Cross? We **do** have the power to look into the womb and determine the sex of an unborn child. If we want a boy, and the child is a girl, should we get rid of it? We **have** the power to do that very thing. That very thing is done every day in China, now!

The lust for power does not know bounds. If that will for power manifests itself in the desire for a super race ... we can remember Adolf Hitler. If that will for power manifests itself in a desire for an economic Utopia ... we can also remember Communism. If that will for power manifests itself in a desire to have one's own way spiritually ... we can remember those who “... *were lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers,*

incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God: having a form of Godliness, but denying the power thereof ...” (II Tim. 3:2-5). Of these categories of men we have many still with us. Their common ground is their opposition to the message of redemption that flows majestically from the Hill of the Cross.

We must also note that there are those Christians whose lives are influenced by the will of power. John wrote of a man named “...*Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence...*” (III John 9). Many if not all of the problems the church experiences today rise out of the fitful egos of men who love the chief seats and enjoy the pitiful trappings of power. God grant them space to repent.

The wisdom of the world will not work. The world’s wisdom is based in Moral Relativism, and is manifested in Materialism (the desire for earthly treasure), Hedonism (the desire for sinful pleasure), and the Lust of Power. We began this essay with a quotation from Paul’s first letter to Corinth. He continued there to say this:

For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should

glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord (I Cor. 1:26-31).

No, the wisdom of the world will not work because the Cross has no place in it. But God’s Way works (John 14:6). The view from the hill of Calvary includes the landscape of Heaven. Let’s stay in the shadow of the Cross (Gal. 2:20).

TheWayOfThe CrossLeadsHome

Chapter 19

The Way Of The Cross Leads Home

Garland Elkins



Garland preached his first sermon in 1949 • He was born in Woodbury, TN • Graduated from Freed-Hardeman College, Middle Tennessee University and University of Tennessee • Co-authored numerous **Spiritual Sword** lectureship volumes • Presently teaches at Memphis School of Preaching, and preaches throughout the brotherhood • Garland and Corinne have three daughters.

It is my persuasion that the cross does not occupy the prominence in modern preaching that it did in the preaching of the first century. Paul said, “*We preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumblingblock, and unto Gentiles foolishness*” (I Cor. 1:23). He also said,

And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified (I Cor. 2:1-2).

The cross was always central in the preaching of the apostles. Paul emphasized the cross in the first chapter to the Corinthians.

The Cross Of Christ Reveals What Man Is

The cross reveals what man is. When one reaches the age of accountability and he chooses to

transgress God’s law, he becomes a sinner.

Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law (I John 3:4).

It then follows since the sinner cannot save himself, he needs a **Savior!** Christ came to save the lost. The angel said to Joseph,

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins (Matt. 1:21).

Christ said of Himself,

For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10).

Paul wrote,

Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth (I Tim. 2:4).

The Cross Reveals What God Is Like

In the cross God showed that He loved sinful man enough to allow His only begotten Son to die for him.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

Paul wrote,

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8).

The Cross Reveals How Terrible Sin Is

We can never appreciate just how awful sin is until we see sinful men killing the Son of God. When Jesus cries, “*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*” (Matt. 27:46), we grasp some idea of how the dark shadow of all the sins of the world shut out for a time the light of God’s countenance.

God’s Justice Required The Cross

Modernists, atheists, and infidels question the necessity of the cross. However, the Bible teaches that the cross was necessary in order that condemned men and women might be saved.

Although the cross is foolishness to some and an offense to others, it is at the very heart of the gospel of Christ which is revealed in the Bible. Paul’s sermon was Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews, folly to Gentiles, but to Christians the power of God and the wisdom of God. He wrote,

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto

the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men (I Cor. 1:18-25).

The cross of Christ was necessary for many reasons. Let us note a few of them.

The Cross Of Christ Was Necessary Because Of The Nature Of God And The Nature Of Sin

God is absolutely perfect, holy, pure, righteous and powerful. The prophet said of God, “*Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil*” (Hab. 1:13). Satan is absolutely evil, totally depraved, a murderer, and a liar. Jesus described the devil in these words,

Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it (John 8:44).

Jesus Voluntarily Went To The Cross Paul wrote,

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and

became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:5-11).

The suffering on the cross was a terrible ordeal indeed, and one that, doubtlessly is beyond our full comprehension. Concerning our Lord’s suffering in Gethsemane the Hebrew writer wrote,

Though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation (Heb. 5:8-9).

In the previous verse he wrote,

Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear (Heb. 5:7).

This passage raises the question of how was Jesus heard, since He fully submitted to His Father’s will. It must be observed that Jesus prayed to God not to save Him from **dying** but to save Him from **death**. Not to save Him from **dying** but to save Him from the **realm of the dead**.

After Jesus had thrice repeated His prayer, He returned to the apostles and found them asleep. He said, *“What, could ye not watch with me one hour?”*

(Matt. 26:40). When He returned the third time and found them asleep He said, “*Sleep on now, and take your rest*” (Matt. 26:45). The opportunity was gone. Never again would they or any other man have this opportunity. Then as He looked up He saw the mob approaching. He said, “*Arise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that betrayeth me*” (Matt. 26:46). The mob was led by a traitor, Judas Iscariot, one of His apostles. It was indeed a motley crowd armed with swords and staves. The leader of the mob was Judas. In familiar language of discipleship he said, “*Hail Rabbi; and kissed him*” (Matt. 26:49). In my judgment none of the indignities suffered by our Lord Jesus Christ pained Him more than the treachery of Judas. Judas had been exalted as an apostle, one who preliminarily had been entrusted with the gospel message, a man who, like the other apostles had been empowered by the Holy Spirit to perform miracles, a man who had been privileged to associate with Jesus, to witness His wonderful miracles, to hear His marvelous teaching, and to observe His perfect life. Yet this man at the crucial hour turned traitor and, in an act of friendship, betrayed his Master. “*Hail, Master,*” he said, “*and kissed Him.*” The word “*kissed*” in the original is in the imperfect tense, the tense of repeated action. Judas kissed Him again and again!

The Cross Of Christ Is God’s Divine Solution For The Sin Question

On the basis of pure justice God would have destroyed men just as He did the wicked during the

flood of Noah’s day. However, as God through His grace saved Noah and his family (Gen. 6:8,22; Heb. 11:7; I Peter 3:20-21), even so, the cross of Christ made salvation possible to all who will obey Him (Heb. 2:9; II Cor. 8:9; I Cor. 15:1-3). Paul affirmed “that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself” (II Cor. 5:19).

The Cross Was Necessary To Demonstrate The Marvelous Love Of God

The cross is a paradox, while it stands for God’s judgment on sin, yet it also shows His mercy to sinners. It marks the greatest victory for Satan, yet it also marks his overwhelming defeat! The cross was a sign of humiliation, Christ turned it into a sign of glory. Paul wrote,

But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me and I unto the world (Gal. 6:14).

While it has been a source of offense to Jews and Gentiles alike (I Cor. 1:23), yet it has been a source of light and salvation to multiplied millions. Some who have understood the fact that the cross was necessary because of God’s **justice** to satisfy God’s righteousness have not seen the marvelous grace and love of God which is in the cross. Christ did not die to win for man the love of God. God always loved man, but Christ died to reveal God’s love.

For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet

peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him (Rom. 5:6-9).

It is no wonder then, that Paul came to Corinth with a cross, and the Christ to preach, instead of philosophy, poetry, economics or politics (I Cor. 1:18-25; 2:1,2).

The Blood Of His Cross

Paul wrote of Christ, His blood, and His cross in these words:

And through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross: through him, I say, whether things upon the earth or things in the heavens (Col. 1:20).

I want to discuss the blood from the standpoint of: (1) Where we cannot contact the blood. (2) Where we do contact the blood. (3) Some of the theories of men concerning the blood. (4) What the blood will not do; and (5) What the blood will do.

The blood of Christ is not contacted in disobedience. Disobedience is rebellion. There are multiplied thousands of people who really believe they have contacted the blood, but they are as rebellious as was Cain or King Saul of the Old Testament. I recall that Jude said;

Woe unto them! For they went in the way of Cain, and ran riotously in the error of Balaam

for hire, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah (Jude 11).

These examples from the Old Testament were given to show us to what disobedience will lead. Paul says in Romans 15:4,

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope.

We learn from the New Testament that the blood is not contacted in disobedience. Several passages will be given later that show this point to be true.

The blood is not contacted in denominationalism. Denominationalism is division. James 3:14-16 states,

But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth. The wisdom is not a wisdom that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed.

Could we hope to contact the blood in confusion and where every vile deed is? Could we hope to contact the blood in denominationalism, division, strife, and all that attend it? Denominationalism is built upon division from the very foundation to the superstructure. Therefore, the blood is not contacted in denominationalism.

The blood is not contacted in faith only. “*Faith only*” is a perversion of the truth. There are not many things, if any at all, that cannot be perverted. Paul says in Titus 3:11 that a man can become

perverted. Others may pervert us, religiously speaking, or we can become self-perverted (Titus 3:10,11; II Thess. 2:10-12). Hear this from James 2:24; *“Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith.”*

We do not contact the blood in repentance only. Repentance alone is insufficient. Thousands of preachers tell their audiences on radio, television, and in the pulpit, that they contact the blood at the point of repentance. There are others who teach that the blood is contacted even before the act of repentance. There are others who teach that the blood is contacted even before the act of repentance. But in both cases this is not true. The Bible teaches that there is something else to do. Repentance is not into Christ, but it is unto salvation. *“And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life”* (Acts 11:18).

We do not contact the blood of Christ at the mourner’s bench. No person ever has, nor ever shall, contact the blood at the mourner’s bench. Paul was a very penitent man. He prayed, was without sight for three days, and neither ate nor drank (Acts 9:9). But Paul did not contact the blood before baptism because his sins, three days later, were still not forgiven. He was told,

And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 22:16).

The blood is not contacted by baptism only.

Baptism is scriptural only when it has been preceded by faith (Heb. 11:6), repentance (Acts 11:18; Acts 17:30), and confession (Matt. 10:32; Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:10). Many times I have heard people say, “*The people in the church of Christ believe that water is the only thing necessary for salvation.*” We do not believe that. There are other conditions in the plan of salvation besides baptism. I have known of boys at the old swimming hole down on the farm when one would say to the other, “*I am going to baptize you.*” Then by force he would push another boy under the water. Of course, that was not baptism, for it did not have the scriptural design and was not preceded by faith, repentance, and confession from the heart. It would be hypocrisy to ignore all of these other conditions and contend only for baptism—and we do not do that. In fact, the New Testament teaches, and therefore we believe it, that faith, repentance, confession, and baptism are equally important.

So, we do not contact the blood in disobedience, denominationalism, faith only, repentance only, baptism only, or at the mourner’s bench (or altar as it is sometimes called).

The blood is contacted in obedience.

But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness (Rom. 6:17-18).

Also, in Romans 6:1-4,

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:1-4).

It is in obedience that we contact the blood.

It is in the body, the church, that we contact the blood. We are reconciled to God, at peace again with God, through Christ our Lord when we obey the gospel and are added to the church. *“And might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby”* (Eph. 2:16).

Sometimes people say, *“Why don’t you preach Christ and leave the church out of it?”* The answer is simply that you cannot preach Christ correctly and leave the church out of it. Paul says they were all baptized into Christ. *“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ”* (Gal. 3:27). And in I Corinthians 12:13, Paul also states,

For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit.

What is that one body into which we are all baptized? Paul answers this question in Ephesians 1:22,23 by saying,

And he put all things in subjection under his

feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

We are baptized into Christ. We also enter the body, the church, by baptism. It is one and the same process. We therefore contact the blood only in the church. Read your New Testament and you will of necessity come to that conclusion (Eph. 5:25).

We contact the blood in our obedience to the truth. Christ said, *“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”* (John 8:32). He said to His Father as recorded in John 17:17, *“Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth.”* Peter states in I Peter 1:22, *“Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently.”* Peter also tells us that it is necessary to be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

We contact the blood of Christ in faith and works. The only time the expression *“faith only”* occurs in the New Testament is in James 2:24 which says, *“Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.”* Many people do not realize that a man is **not** justified by faith only, but James knew that people could understand that fact if they so desire. Yet denominational preachers all over this land say that one is justified by faith only. But note—it takes both faith and works to save. We are justified by faith then it works. *“Thou seest that faith wrought with His works, and by works was faith made perfect”* (James 2:22). One of the best commentaries on the degree of faith that saves is in

Galatians 5:6 where Paul says,

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision
availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith
working through Love.

Faith avails when it is obedient—when it works. It
is at that point we contact the blood.

We contact the blood in baptism. But baptism
must be preceded by faith, repentance, and
confession. Baptism is the turning point for the alien
sinner. One does not turn to the Lord at the point
of faith only, for we read in Acts 11:21,

And the hand of the Lord was with them: and
a great number that believed turned unto the
Lord.

The turning act follows faith.

Repentance is not the turning point for the alien
sinner. In Acts 3:19 we read,

Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your
sins may be blotted out, that so there may come
seasons of refreshing from the presence of the
Lord.

So, there is a turning act following repentance. What
is that turning act? For the alien sinner, the turning
act which follows repentance is given by Peter in
Acts, chapter 2 and 3.

And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be
baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus
Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye
shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts
2:38).

In Acts 3:19 he says, “*Repent ye therefore and turn.*”
And in Acts 2:38 he says, “*Repent ye, and be*

baptized.” Therefore, the final turning act for the alien sinner in his obedience to Christ is baptism.

Faith is unto salvation. *“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness...”* (Rom. 10:10). Repentance is unto salvation.

And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life (Acts 11:18).

Confession is also unto salvation. *“...and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation”* (Rom. 10:10). But notice that baptism is into salvation. *“Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized in to his death”* (Rom. 6:3). Also, *“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ”* (Gal. 3:27).

Remember that faith, repentance, and confession are unto Christ; but baptism is into Christ. It is at the point of baptism that the alien sinner contacts the blood.

I would like to emphasize here that if one has submitted to sprinkling or pouring as substitutes for baptism, he has not been scripturally baptized, for baptism is a burial (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12). Remember that the newness of life comes after baptism, thus showing that baptism is necessary in order to be saved.

Having made contact with Christ’s blood in baptism, we must continue to walk in the light to have access to the blood as a child of God. We read in I John 1:7,

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his son cleanseth us from all sin.

Observe the word “*cleanseth*.” We can see that it is a continuing process. But do you know what it is dependent upon? It is dependent upon our **continuing** to walk in the light.

Let us briefly look at some theories of men concerning the blood of Christ. A large number of religious people today argue that the blood is contacted before obedience. Not many of them will admit that they hold such a theory, but it is true of them nevertheless. Sometimes I hear some member of the church remark that some false teacher is such a fine, lovely fellow. Of course, it would be repulsive to a compromising member to call a false teacher what he is—a false teacher. A false teacher may have a good personality, but if he is using it to deceive people, that makes him even more dangerous. Regardless of whatever good might be said about him, if he teaches that one contacts the blood in disobedience, he is a false teacher of the worst sort. Christ has set the example for us to follow in obedience.

Though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered: and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author eternal salvation (Heb. 5:8-9).

One cannot contact the blood before obedience, and I have already shown that the final act of obedience

on the part of an alien sinner’s becoming a child of God is baptism.

Also, there are those that argue for universal salvation by claiming that everybody has contacted the blood of Christ. They are very definitely wrong, for, though Christ did *“taste death for every man”* (Heb. 2:9), yet he is the *“author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him”* (Heb. 5:9). Christ died for all—but all will not obey Him; therefore, all will not be saved.

The blood of Christ will not make one a member of a denomination. In Corinth, where seeds of division had been sown, the Holy Spirit, through Paul, soundly condemned division. He said,

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul (I Cor. 1:10-13)?

The very beginning of division was condemned, but in later centuries that *“mystery of lawlessness”* which was at work even in Paul’s day culminated in the establishment of the Roman Catholic Church and many other systems of error.

The Lord does not and will not endorse

denominationalism. When the church was referred to as a sect, Paul made it clear that it was done by the enemies of Christianity.

But this I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets (Acts 24:14).

His enemies called the church a “sect.” But Paul, among other things, said, “*Neither can they prove to thee the things whereof they now accuse me*” (Acts 24:13).

The blood will not give one a denominational name. Listen to Acts 4:12,

And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.

We are married to Christ as Christians.

Wherefore, my brethren, ye also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ, that ye should be joined to another, even to him who was raised from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God (Rom. 7:4).

All who are purchased by the blood of Christ are commanded to wear the name “*Christian.*”

But if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in his name (I Peter 4:16).

In spite of these plain statements, denominationalism argues that there is nothing in a name. What is in the name of Christ? Salvation is in the name and we are commanded to wear His

name. Even in material things there is something in a name. There is something in the name of razor blades and soap. Proverbs 22:1 says, “*A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.*”

The following illustrations will serve to show the importance in a name:

No. 1 – A certain woman sought to make a preacher practice what he was preaching. He had preached that there was nothing in a name, so, in a service where he was preaching she arose and said, ‘Glory to Beelzebub.’ The preacher ordered her to sit down but she said, ‘If there is nothing in a name, why is Beelzebub’s name not as good as Christ’s. The preacher apparently did not believe what he preached.

No. 2 – A man decided on one occasion to test a preacher who said that there was nothing in a name. So, when the preacher asked for money, which he often did, the man wrote a check for one hundred dollars and gave it to him. After arriving home, the preacher looked at the check and found that the man had not signed his own name, but had used someone else’s. He called the man and said, ‘Sir, you signed the wrong name to this check.’ The other man replied, ‘No, I did it purposely. You preach that there is nothing in a name, and, if that is true, I am glad to sign another’s name to the check and help you in the amount of one hundred dollars.’

That preacher did not believe what he preached either. In fact, he could easily see that there was something in a name when money was involved. Do

you suppose he considered money more important than salvation? In almost all towns, the majority of religious groups wear names that are not one time mentioned in the scriptures, and the majority of the remainder, though they may wear all or part of a scriptural name, teach the false doctrines of denominationalism.

The blood of Christ will not obligate one to a denominational program. I have talked with preachers who had to admit: *“Well, we must send to headquarters to see what we can do about this matter.”* Paul said in Galatians 5:1,

With freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast
therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke
of bondage.

Some of these people had already gone back to the bondage of the law and others were in danger of doing so. Denominationalism takes people into spiritual bondage.

The blood of Christ will not cleanse one before faith, repentance, and confession. But, when these are followed by baptism, one is saved from past sins. Jesus said in Mark 16:16,

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;
but he that believeth not shall be damned.

People often say, *“Oh, we can’t understand that.”* It is not a matter of being unable to understand it, but rather an unwillingness to believe it.

To illustrate, suppose that a car dealer were to say, *“He that believeth and is baptized shall receive a new car.”* I assure you that everybody would

understand that, and there would be a very long line waiting to be baptized. It is obvious that if people can understand it when a new car is involved, they can also understand it when their soul is involved, unless someone has caused them to misunderstand it, or still worse, to disbelieve and rebel against it. The blood cleanses—but it does not cleanse before faith, repentance, confession, and baptism.

Paul said in II Corinthians 5:17,

Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away, behold, they are become new.

A Christian is in a new relationship. He is a new Creature. He has a new life to live and a new destination.

Jesus Is The Way Home

Jesus is the only way to heaven. *“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me”* (John 14:6). Peter said,

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

Paul wrote,

Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sake, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory (II Tim. 2:10).

Thank God that He wants all men to be saved. *“Who would have all men to be saved, and come to the*

knowledge of the truth” (I Tim. 2:4). Jesus died for every man, *“That he by the grace of God should taste death for every man”* (Heb. 2:9). However, only those who obey Him will be saved.

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him (Heb. 5:8-9).

As Jesus Bore His Cross, We Must Bear Our Cross

Jesus said, *“Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple”* (Luke 14:27). When Jesus was on the way to the cross, in spite of the trials, and abuse that He had suffered at the hands of the Jews, He bore His own cross as long as He could.

They took Jesus therefore: and he went out, bearing the cross for himself, unto the place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha (John 19:17).

Matthew, Mark, and Luke record that then, Simon of Cyrene was forced to carry His cross. *“And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to go with them, that he might bear his cross”* (Matt. 27:32).

And they compel one passing by, Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to go with them, that he might bear his cross (Mark 15:21).

“And when they led him away, they laid hold upon

one Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country, and laid on him the cross, to bear it after Jesus” (Luke 23:26).

Regardless of how disappointed Simon may have been that he was forced to carry the cross of Jesus that day, realizing as he did, that *“cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree”* (Gal. 3:13; Deut. 21:23). There is little doubt that in later times he rejoiced that he had been able to carry the cross for Christ. However, like Simon who was forced to carry His cross, we must voluntarily carry it! *“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man would come after me let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me”* (Matt. 16:24).

Luke informs that to go to heaven, all of us must **deny ourselves** and **take up his cross** on a **daily** basis and **follow** Him. *“And he said unto all, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me”* (Luke 9:23).

Must Jesus bear the cross alone,
 And all the world go free?
 No, there’s a cross for every one,
 And there’s a cross for me.

In the words of another song:

Look away from the Cross,
 To the glittering Crown.

Truly “The Way Of The Cross Leads Home!”

A Lesson For Women

Chapter 20

What The Cross Means To Christian Women

Dietlinde Spears



Dietlinde was born in Cosel, Germany during the Nazi regime • Marrying an American husband in 1961, she became a New Testament Christian • Dietlinde has taught Bible classes for over twenty-five years • Written an autobiography entitled: *Dietlinde* and a second book called: *Dietlinde's Diary* • She has lectured in most of the states in the USA • Dietlinde and Raymond live in Nashville and worship with the Crieve Hall congregation.

When we look at the subject today, three thoughts come to mind:

1. What are the blessings and benefits of the cross?
2. What our actions and reactions should be because of the cross
3. How should we live and conduct ourselves because of the cross?

As women, we have been liberated by Christ and the cross and have been elevated to a position of honor and respect, and made equal in the sight of God. Moreover, in our homes where we influence, guide, love and determine the future of our families, the church, and the country, and where we are responsible for the well-being of the family—we are made to shine, to truly be the husband's queen and help-meet. What thankful hearts we should have because of it! What the cross should mean to us because of it!

Our lives should be lived in thanksgiving and gratitude for such a loving God and Saviour. With humble obedience, we should submit ourselves to the restrictions which God placed upon us in the Church. Even though some of us have great talents in music, speech, organizational skills, etc., we should not rebel against the wisdom of God as to why we can't be songleaders, preachers, elders, etc. The cross means to me to trust the wisdom of God with a thankful heart and gladly submit to the limitations placed upon me.

When we consider our “*limitations*” most of us shall not even see them in that light. Most of us will feel satisfied in our roles and in our places.

The husbands are the spiritual leaders at home, but we are the ones who set the tone, who influence the most. We set the example at home and in the community. Because of it, our lives need to be pure, our conduct Christ-like. The cross, therefore, to me means—first of all, a pure heart. What better way to imitate Christ then by living a pure and holy life and truly desiring and hungering for purity of heart!

May we start our lesson by reading Matthew 5:8? All of us believe that a pure heart is very essential to our spiritual welfare. We also believe that we must be pleasing to God, all the time, and be honest with ourselves and see our “*black heart*,” (secret sin), even though all of our friends—Christian friends, family and others tell us: “*You are so good. You are such a dedicated Christian—you are living such an exemplary life*,” and on and on. Have we

not looked at someone we felt was pure and good and secretly thought, *“In comparison with her, I am so bad!”* What is wrong with that kind of thinking? Because we do **not** pattern our lives after another sister or brother—we pattern our lives after the example of Christ. If we pattern it after another human being, it will be too low—we need to reach for perfection, and only Jesus was perfect. That does not mean that some sister can’t be a good example to men, someone to imitate in good works, dedication, and Christian living, but not to be like her. *“Oh! To be like Thee, blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art ...”* Yes, His image should be stamped on our hearts!

The next time someone tells us how good and pure and wonderful we are, let it serve us to really look deep into our souls and see if we are hiding or nurturing a *“secret sin.”* *“...Keep me from secret sin, reign Thou my soul within, purer in heart, help me to be.”* Only God sees inside. Only He really knows and only He, through Jesus, can help us to overcome our secret and wrong desires. Truly, it’s an encouragement to any of us if someone sees purity and goodness in us, but please, don’t let these compliments cloud our true spiritual condition and keep us from seeing our condition as it really is.

I Samuel 16:7 says,

For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.

Because of this, we need to pray often to God to *“create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a*

steadfast Spirit within me” (Psm. 51:10). Who knows the true thoughts, the true me, besides God? We do, right? Only **you**, and **I** know, truly know, how and who we are inside. Only we know what we think, what we dwell upon, what impurities dwell in our minds. The wrong kind of thoughts are dangerous, because we are familiar with the scripture which says: “*As a man thinketh in his heart, so **is** he*” (Prov. 23:7). Considering this, we need to constantly guard against impurities which will creep in because of greed, lust, evil desires, jealousy, anger, pride, and other human weaknesses. We can even commit adultery in our hearts. As Martin Luther said,

We can't stop the birds from flying over our heads, but we **can** prevent them from building a nest... (in our hair).

(See Matthew 15:11,17-19).

As Christians, we must strive to be pure in thoughts (heart) knowing that we then will be purer in words, and in deeds also. Matthew 5:8 reads: “*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*”

What about abstaining from every form of evil, as I Thessalonians 5:22 says? What about holding fast to what is good (I Thess. 5:21)? Are we testing **all** things? Are we thinking before we start a book, a trip, a visit, a friendship, a phone call ... is this the right thing to do? Will this help me to be “purer in heart?” Or, will it have the appearance of evil? Are we gladly abstaining from the desires of this world in order to keep our hearts pure? That is easy

to say, right? Yes, most of us are struggling with these questions every day, and most of us, including myself, are still working on our failures more times than not, but we are trying, and that pleases God. We must remember not to love the world so much, *“knowing that the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world”* (I John 2:16). How do we discipline ourselves in doing that which is pure and good?

1. Remembering Jesus, and the great price He and God paid for our sins.
2. Remembering the greatness of God (Rom. 11:33-36).
3. Remembering God’s goodness and mercy toward us, sinners.
4. Remembering and desiring to do the will of God and not our own.
5. Remembering Jesus’ perfect example as He prayed three times ‘Not My Will, but thine be done’ (Matt. 26:36-44).

Scriptures like Romans 12:2 will show us how to achieve this.

And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God.

To realize our dependence on God requires tremendous effort on our part. Yet, without turning our wills over to God, we will find it almost impossible to renew our minds and live out Philippians 4:8.

Fix your thoughts on what is true and good and right. Think about things that are pure

and lovely and **dwell on the fine, good things in others.** Think about all you can praise God for, and be glad about it.

Without turning our wills over to God, these adjectives cannot live within us—nor grow. God promises to help us and be with us, **if** we but trust Him, depend on Him, and commit our lives to Him. That is why we can have pure hearts: We are not striving alone. Does this knowledge give us a new purpose to go on? Does it increase our desire for heaven? Without a pure heart, we cannot see God. We need to determine to live our lives free of garbage and with daily determination to hold on, come what may!

Dag Hammarskjold, Secretary General of the United Nations in the mid to late 1950’s, wrote:

You cannot play with the animal in you without becoming wholly animal, play with falsehood without forfeiting your right to truth, play with cruelty without losing your sensitivity of mind. He who want to keep his garden tidy doesn’t reserve a plot for weeds.

(See Proverbs 23:7 again). *“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.”* We are told by James in chapter 4:7-8. *“...therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he **will** flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”* Aren’t we all, from time to time, double-minded?

Purify your hearts! As I mentioned earlier ... this is often much easier said than done. But, Oh! We have Jesus as our perfect example. In Matthew

4:1-11, we see Jesus tempted by the devil. Jesus **always** referred to scriptures “...*it is written, it is written, it is written.*” We may also ask with the Psalmist “...*How can we keep our way pure?*” Psalms 119:11 says,

Your word have I hidden in my heart, that I
might not sin against you.

With the Word of God in our minds, we can withstand trials, temptations, unclean thoughts and desires. By daily reading and meditating on God’s Word, it will help us to keep “*our sensitivity of mind and discern right from wrong*” (Bill McDonough). How do we control the garbage which daily, even hourly, bombards us? Only by replenishing it with that which is pure and good and just. Our minds need to be constantly refreshed, and only the Word of God can give us that kind of refreshing.

When we gratefully remember God’s grace and love toward us, and Jesus’ suffering, we shall have the strength and steadfastness to keep our hearts pure and good and childlike. “*We can be more than conquerors through Him that loved us*” (Rom. 8:37). Jesus was able to say at the cross, “*It is finished.*” We too, must finish, knowing that “*Joy comes in the morning*” (Psm. 30:5). Not only do we need to finish the race ourselves, but we need to teach our children to want to finish, to be conquerors ... because of the cross. By praying words like: “*Dear God and Father of mankind, forgive our foolish ways, reclothe us in our rightful minds, in purer lives Thy service find,*

in deeper reverence, praise,” we can strive toward achieving this goal.

How can we teach our children to look for good and value in everyone? How can we, and they, learn to focus beyond that messy dress, crazy hair-do, smelly body, acne-covered face, foul mouth, inconsiderate behavior, promiscuity, and other deficiencies? By loving them for their souls! Jesus loves them. Jesus died for them ... can we do less? What an opportunity we have as mothers to teach our children to strive toward that perfection! How often have I, and perhaps you too, been guilty of looking at a person and picking out the two or three little “black spots like a fat stomach, crazy laugh, or annoying habits, and failed to see all the other good qualities and the beauty which is there. We could miss great joys and happiness because of it. Some wonderful friendships would have never come to be had we focused on these extreme qualities only.

Why is it so much easier to see the bad rather than the good? Why is the bad on TV, in theaters, and in books, so alluring to us? Why is it easier to be carnally-minded instead of spiritually-minded? Off-color jokes, suggestive advertisements, lustful songs ... all these will not help our children, husbands, nor us, acquire purer hearts; but drive us further and further away from loving that which is pure and holy. How many times do our sons and husbands need to see a questionable scene on TV (nude-like girl with flowing hair, in a pool, advertising a shampoo) before lust sets in their

minds? What can we do to keep our minds from becoming polluted? To a great degree, we as mothers control what our families put in their minds. We can throw out the garbage, the poison, the crime, the obscenity, the nudity, and the profanity from our dens and replace them with that which is good and pure and fun for all. We asked earlier, “*How does the cross affect us as women?*” This is one way we can show how Jesus’ death on the cross makes a difference in our lives. We need to expose nudity, profanity, homosexuality, illicit sex, and pornography as the evils they are ... and take a courageous stand against these things. Our children need to see that kind of a Christian example and action on our part. Let them see us write, phone and protest against these evils wherever they may occur ... be they billboards, TV, movies, magazines, songs, books, and especially the movies we allow our children to rent and bring home to watch. We have the power to turn off the TV, stop the magazine from coming, and say “no” to our children when they try to persuade us that all the other kids are renting these movies and bringing them home to watch. Our TV sponsors listen to us; money is a powerful tool. Our TV stations want our viewing ... they will listen. Our representatives in the Congress are dependent on our votes. Let us use our freedoms to take a stand against the evil in our nation, in our families, and in our own minds. Values have to be taught. Children have to be taught. I believe that a child’s home today and the priorities they have been given

will greatly influence their home tomorrow and determine their eternal home as well. Do our children see us losing our pure heart and becoming worldly? Are we putting too much emphasis on sports activities, school activities and recreation as a whole? Instead, are we failing to emphasize the importance of church activities, Bible lessons and classes, church functions, and Christian friends? Are we rushing our children, especially on Saturdays, from ball game to ball game, without much preparation for Sunday worship? Where is our meditation time for worship? Instead, it is the “*Sunday morning rush hour.*” We arrive at the building and it takes us “*two songs and a prayer*” to calm down. Is this a “*purser in heart*” attitude? Are we “*taking time to be holy?*” I Peter 1:16 teaches “*You shall be holy for I am holy.*” Heavenly qualities give us joy and peace and happiness. A good conscience and a pure heart is what satisfies permanently. Let us resolve that Christian living for Christ shall be real to us ... not a ritual to be followed. Living holy and pure lives shall become a way of life for us, and heaven shall be our goal.

Titus 2:14 says,

Jesus Christ gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

I Timothy 5:22 says, “*nor share in other people’s sins, keep yourself pure,*” and Proverbs 22:11 says, “*He who loves purity of heart and has grace on his lips,*

the King will be his friend.” Even in our day and time a godly life, a pure life, a righteous life is still appreciated by most people ... perhaps because it is a rare thing today!

NOTE: Some thoughts in this lesson I gained from Bro. John Gipson and Bill McDonough in the **Keynote**, Little Rock, Arkansas.