

The Cross

- *Galatians 6:14*

- **Of all the revolting & torturous forms of execution in the world, the crucifixion stands as the most brutal & demoralizing deaths throughout the history of time.**
 - Not only was it a extremely painful way to die,
 - The beating that a person would suffer before hand was enough to kill some.
 - Then you had to endure the pain of spikes being driven into your hands & feet,
 - Then the scourging & the beating while hanging on the cross.
 - It was a drawn out way to die.
 - Typically you did not die as a result of blood loss or the beating or the pain of the crucifixion,
 - You would die many times from suffocation & being unable to give enough air into your lungs with your arms hanging above your head.
 - You were exploited in front of everyone as you took your final breaths.
 - Family, friends, and the accusers would gather round & watch them suffer as the paid the ultimate price for the crimes they had committed ... or in the case of One, the crimes He had NOT committed.
- **The cross that Jesus gave his life on was no different than any other cross that thousands of criminals gave their life on. The wood was no special wood, the same rusty nails had been used of many before Him. And to many gathered that day, this took on the appearance of just another crucifixion. This was just an ordinary cross.**
- **But when Jesus laid His body on that cross, from that moment forward, nothing about that cross would ever be ordinary again.**
 - Many had given their life in this fashion, but none like Jesus.
 - The blood had shed on Golgotha's hill on many occasions; but none more precious than the blood that Jesus gave.
- **There are several characteristics of the cross I want us to look at this morning.**

I. It Is Revealing

a. It Reveals The Depths of Man's Sin & The Price Paid

- i. It is no secret that Jesus died b/c of the sin of man; but to make it more personal, He died for the sins in your life as well.
 - 1. Sin had been introduced through Adam & Eve in the Garden of Eden & continued on as generations passed.
- ii. At one point, God had enough & decided to destroy the earth b/c of their sin & their wickedness, but this did not destroy sin, for the Bible reminds us that sin was passed upon ALL men.
- iii. As history was played out, God would bless & punish based on the obedience of His people; but ultimately, there had to be a sacrifice that would cover all the sins of mankind.
 - 1. This sacrifice would not come in the form of a sheep or a goat, it would require a much more personal sacrifice that could only come from God Himself.
 - 2. It would require His Only Begotten Son to leave the throne of Heaven, be born as a man, be tempted in all point as we are (yet without sin), and the Sinless One became sin so that you & I might be set free.
- iv. The sins that you committed this week had to have a sacrifice, and no sacrifice that we could present would be sufficient for God to forgive us.
- v. But Jesus Christ willingly gave of His life so that you & I could be forgiven & a Holy God would be able to see us as righteous.

1. The price for our sins carried a significantly high price, and for that reason, it should cause us to consider this sacrifice before choosing to sin against God.

b. It Reveals God's Justice

- i. Many have asked the question, "Why did Jesus have to die?" The simple answer is, there was no other way!
- ii. God is certainly a loving God, a patient God, a caring God ... but above all, He is a righteous God.
- iii. And though He loves us & cares for us & is not willing that any should perish, there still is the issue at hand of right & wrong that must be dealt with.
 1. God has never, nor will He ever justify or condone the sins of mankind.
 - a. We have a hard time sometimes seeing or recognizing our sin, but God sees our sin, He even knows the intent of our heart.
 - b. And because He knows & He sees, He demands that justice be carried out.
 2. Our sins demand payment. We may brush them under the rug, but God cannot. And thanks be unto God, He has provided a way for our judgment to handed over to our Substitute, His Son, Jesus Christ through His death on the cross.

c. It Reveals God's Love

- i. I have heard people often cry out in exasperation, "I thought God loved me!"
 1. Friend, let me tell you something this morning, no one has ever or will ever love you like God does.
- ii. Do you want me to tell you how much God loves you this morning? I think I can & I will use Scripture to back up my argument.
 1. Think right now of the worst thing you have ever done, or if you cant narrow it down, think of at least the worst thing this week.
 2. Now as awful & terrible as that sin is & as far away from God as you thought you were, take your Bibles & turn to Romans 5:20.
 - a. "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:"
 3. Did You get that? As deep as you & I went into sin in our lives, listen, God went deeper than that through His love to pull you out! Isn't that amazing!
 - a. "I want to be saved, but you don't know the wrong I've done." That's the beauty of this verse, it doesn't really matter b/c the love of God will reach you no matter where you are.
- iii. Not only that, He loved us so much that He made your sin, His sin and our punishment became His punishment as He took your sin & it was nailed forever to that cross. Because Christ loved us, He bore our sin, our shame & our suffering.

II. It Is Powerful

a. It Draws Men To Christ

- i. No man could count the stories, the songs, the paintings & the art that have depicted the sacrifice that was made on Calvary's cross.
- ii. Many have been drawn to Christ from every facet of life.
 1. Rich & the poor.
 2. High and the low.
 3. The red man, yellow man, black man, brown man & the white man.
 4. The educated & the un-educated.
 5. The good & the evil, God has drawn them from their sin.
 6. All have come from all walks of life b/c the Bible says that God loved the world.

- a. I am thankful for the convicting power & the drawing power that saved my soul from hell.
 - b. Listen, some of us He just had to tug a little bit & it seems like some of you He had to literally drag out of sin.
 - c. But nonetheless, thank God if you know Him today, the cross saved your soul.
- iii. Yet, even though the cross draws all men, not every one that is drawn receives the cross.
 - 1. You see, even though God desires that the world would receive this offer of salvation, He will make no one take it against their will.
 - 2. This is important for you to understand this morning.
 - a. Some religions teach that God has selected who will go to Heaven & if you are of the chosen, you are basically going whether you want to or not.
 - i. We don't believe in that b/c if that were the case, then why did Jesus have to die?
 - b. Some say, "But God loves us all, surely He would never send us to hell."
 - i. Though He loves, He has provided the ONLY way & if we reject God's way, then we are condemning our own soul, not God.
- b. **It Saves Men**
 - i. You see the truth is, it is only through the cross that anyone can be saved from their sins, their judgment & their eternity.
 - ii. The bottom line is this, the cross made a difference for me, Amen? But not only for me, but for many others.
 - 1. What about Saul as he traveled on the Damascus Road. After his encounter with God, there was a drastic change in his life.
 - 2. Look at the woman at the well. Jesus spilled the beans on all her sins, how she had been married 5 different times & the man she was living with was not even her husband; yet after she met Jesus, she went running back into town to tell her family. A change had taken place in her life.
 - 3. What about you David? Dan what about you? Church, what about the change in your life? How did that change come to pass? It is only b/c of the cross.
 - iii. The cross not only saves us, but it changes us, both now & for eternity.

III. It Is Promising

- o **What does the cross promise for you & I today?**
 - That our sins have been forgiven.
 - That our penalty has been paid.
 - That we can stand before God spotless & without blemish.
 - That we can enjoy the peace of God in our lives.
 - But also that we can have the promise of Heaven.
- o **The story is told of Dwight Moody who was holding a meeting in Boston.**
 - The place was packed out & literally there was no more room for people to sit, even the governor was turned away.
 - But then a man came to through the line & said, "Could you tell Dwight that his brother George is here."
 - Without hesitation, Dwight called for his brother to not only come in, but to come to the platform & a seat was made for his brother George.

- Now church, if Dwight considered his brother that important, came you imagine the day when we stand before God?
 - A good life will not be enough.
 - A good name will not be enough.
 - But when we show that the blood of Jesus Christ has been applied to our lives, not only will we be allowed into Heaven, but we will sit at the King's table and enjoy a feast that only Satan can watch us enjoy.
 - How I long for that day. Are you prepared to meet Jesus Christ? Have your sins been washed by the blood of the Lamb? Are those in your house prepared to stand before God?