

What Do You Think of the Cross of Christ?

Sunday, August 19th, 1984

John 19:17-18

“And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.”

My subject today is entitled: “WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE CROSS OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST?”

I’m reading from John 19: 17 and 18. The Scripture says, *“And He bearing His cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha, where they crucified Him.”*

Now, our Lord Jesus Christ was in the Garden with His disciples praying when a band of men and officers led by Judas came and arrested Him. They had been sent to arrest Him by the high priest.

They took the Master to Ananias first of all, who was the father-in-law of the high priest. There He was questioned, mocked, and ridiculed. Ananias sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

From there, our Lord Jesus Christ was taken to Pilate and the judgment hall. Pilate turned him over to the soldiers to be scourged. You have read many times how the Master was beaten, how He was spit upon and how He was mocked by the soldiers. They put a crown of thorns on His head, a reed in His hand, and mocked Him as the King of the Jews.

Then, they brought Him back to Pilate. Pilate was willing to release Him. The Jews said two things:

First of all: They said, *“He made Himself the Son of God.”*

This frightened Pilate. He took the Lord Jesus back into the judgment hall and asked Him; *“who are you and where did you come from?”* The Master would not answer him.

Pilate brought Him back out before the people. Again, he was willing to release Him. The people said something else. Secondly, they said, *“This man made himself King and if you release him you are not the friend of Caesar.”*

The Scripture says, *“Then delivered he him therefore unto them.”* That is, Pilate then delivered Christ into the hands of the multitude to be crucified. They took Jesus and led Him away to a place called *“Golgotha.”* There, they crucified Him between two thieves.

I ask you this today and this is my question, what do you think of all of this? What do you personally think of the cross of Jesus Christ, of the death of Jesus Christ? What do you personally think about all that transpired on this hill called *“Calvary?”*

I’m not asking you if you have respect for the Bible, most people do. I’m not even asking you if you believe the Bible because most people believe much of the Bible today.

I’m not asking you today if you attend a place of worship, some of you do and some of you do not. Some of you attend regularly. Some of you attend once in awhile.

I’m not asking you if you have made a profession of faith and been baptized or if you are a church member, most people are.

I’m not asking you today if you live a good moral life, but I am asking you one question. I want you to face it; I want you to consider it, and I want you to do something about it. I am asking you, What do you personally think of the cross of Jesus Christ?

Let’s isolate our minds and our thoughts on this one thing, the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. What do you think of the cross of Jesus Christ, of the death of Jesus Christ? What do you think about it?

Paul said in 1st Corinthians 1:18 of which the world is divided on this question; *“The preaching of the cross of Jesus Christ is to them who are perishing foolishness, (sheer nonsense). But, unto us who are being saved, the preaching of the cross is both the wisdom of God and the power of God.”*

Way back in the Old Testament, the prophet Jeremiah speaking by divine inspiration speaks for a God, for Christ, and asks this question; *“is it nothing to you (what is it to you) all ye that pass by and behold my sorrow and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow which is done unto me wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger?”*

That is the question that Jeremiah is asking, “*what is it to you?*” What is all this to you? What do you think of the cross of Jesus Christ? Believe me, this is the most important question you can face in your entire lifetime.

The cross of Jesus Christ is not mere religious tradition and ceremony. The cross of Jesus Christ is not merely a point where men may agree or disagree. The cross of Jesus Christ is not just the death of another religious martyr such as Buddha, Confucius, Muhammad or some other fellow.

According to the Word of God, according to the Scriptures, the cross of Jesus Christ and what you feel about it and what your opinion is concerning it, what your relationship is with this person on this cross, spells the difference between forgiveness and condemnation.

“He that hath the Son of God hath life. He that hath not the Son of God shall not see life.” The cross of Jesus Christ spells the difference between eternal life and eternal damnation. *“He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life. He that believeth not the Son of God shall not see life but the wrath of God abideth on him.”*

The cross of Jesus Christ spells the difference between blessings and cursing. *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be damned.”* The Scripture says in 1st John 5:12; *“this is the record; God hath given us eternal life and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life. He that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”*

In Hebrews 9:22, the Scripture plainly declares; *“without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.”* So, this is the most important message that I can possibly present to you today. This is the most important question that you can deal with and consider; what do you think of the cross of Jesus Christ?

This is where it all is; that is the difference between forgiveness and condemnation. It is the difference between life and damnation. It is the difference between blessing and cursing.

What I am asking is this; what do you think personally of the cross of Jesus Christ? I’m not talking about what your church, pastor, or denomination thinks, but what do you personally think of the cross of Jesus Christ?

The apostle Paul, who was the apostle to us Gentiles, was sent of God to bear God's message of redemption to you and me. This man was a man who was responsible for the writing of 12 or 13 of the 27 Books of the New Testament.

This is the man whom God used to found many churches. This is the man whom God used as an apostle, one of the 12 apostles. *"He was one born out of due time."*

He said in 1st Corinthians 1:17; *"For Christ sent me not to baptize."* He is not discounting the importance of baptism nor is he discounting the blessings of baptism. He is simply saying that God did not send him to organize or to promote.

God sent him on a mission. That mission was to preach the Gospel, *"not with wisdom of words lest the cross of Christ be made of none effect."* He said, "I have got to preach in such a way that the cross of Christ shall be prominent, that it shall be lifted up, that it shall be the main topic. In no way is the cross of Christ to be set aside as an afterthought or as a part of our message; it is our message."

He said again in 1st Corinthians 2:2; *"I am determined."* He is speaking here to the city of Corinth. He is speaking to this great city of wealth, philosophy, and education. He says, *"I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified,"* the cross of Christ.

Galatians 6:14, listen to Paul again; *"but God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by which the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world. God forbid that I should glory, (boast, or take pride in or exalt anything). God forbid that I should exalt anything."*

What could Paul have gloried in? Well, he could have gloried in his ancestry. Paul was a Jew, *"a Hebrew of Hebrews. He was born of the tribe of Benjamin."*

He could have boasted in his education. He was a most highly educated man. In other words, one of the leaders said to him one day; *"much learning hath made you mad."* They said that he had studied too much and had lost his mind.

He might have gloried in his position. He was after all, an apostle. He might have gloried in his gifts; He said, *"I speak with tongues more than you all."* He was a man who healed folks. He had great power and God gave him great gifts and ability.

He might have boasted in his office and he might have boasted in his revelations. He was a man who not only wrote Scripture inspired by the Holy Spirit but had been taken into the third heaven; *“he saw things which were not lawful or possible for him to utter.”*

But no, he said; *“God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* When we say that we preach the cross of Christ, what do we mean? When we say that we glory in the cross of Christ, what are we talking about? When I ask you today, what do you think of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, what actually am I asking you? What is this cross?

Sometimes in the Bible, the word “*cross*” means the tree on which Christ was crucified. I will give you two or three examples:

First of all: In Philippians 2: it says, *“He became obedient unto death even the death of the cross.”*

This is talking about the type of death, the ignominious, humiliating, death of shame of Christ on a Roman tree; that is the cross in that Scripture.

Again, it says, *“And He bearing His cross went forth to a place called the place of the skull, which is Golgotha. That is the cross that He bore. Sometimes the Scripture uses the word “cross” in referring to that cross on the hill. That is not what I am talking about today.*

Secondly: Sometimes the word “*cross*” means trials and afflictions of believers.

The Scripture says, *“Take up your cross and follow Christ.”* I am not supposed to take a wooden cross and drag it around the street like I have seen people do.

That is not what I am talking about. The word “*cross*” is talking about trials, burdens, and afflictions. *“In this world ye shall have tribulation.”*

Paul said, *“I glory in the cross of Jesus Christ.”* Paul also said, *“The preaching of the cross is to them who are perishing, foolishness; to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”*

When I ask you what do you think of the cross of Jesus Christ; I mean this, (now listen to me and be quiet); I mean that the atonement was made by Christ when He suffered on that tree. I am talking about the atonement, the atonement of the Master.

I am talking about the sacrifice and the sin-offering which He accomplished on that tree. I am talking about the all-sufficient, redeeming work of our Lord Jesus Christ. He took the place of, died in the stead of, bore the sins of, and suffered under the affliction of the wrath of God for believers. That is what I am talking about.

Listen to some Scripture: In Ephesians 1:7, it says; *“In whom we have redemption through his blood, (through His death, through the blood of His cross), the forgiveness of sin.”* What do you think about that?

In Ephesians 2:16, it says; *“He might reconcile both unto God in one body by His cross. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself”* on that cross. That is what I am talking about. What do you think of that?

Colossians 1:20 says, *“And having made peace with God, (peace between the sinner and God), having made peace through the blood of His cross;”* that is what I am talking about.

Isaiah 53:4 says; *“But He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him. By His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way. The Lord hath laid on Him (on that cross), the iniquity of us all.”*

That is what I am talking about! I’m not talking about a cross that you hang from your Bible, wear from your lapel, wear around your neck, or a cross that you stick on the steeple of your church. I’m not talking about trials, afflictions and burdens, which men bear.

When I say, “What do you think of the cross?” I am talking about the cross. I am talking about the atoning work, the sacrificial work, the satisfying work, and the substituting work of Christ.

I am talking about the sufficient work, the redeeming work, and the effectual work of Jesus Christ which He accomplished on that cross when He died in the room of, in the place of, in the stead of, those who believe. That is what I am talking about; what is your opinion of that cross?

Let me sound a warning; (this is so important); beware my friend, of any religion, no matter how beautiful it looks, or how sweet it sounds, beware of any religion, if the central theme of that religion, is not *“Christ and Him crucified.”*

You may read the Bible; you may study theology. You may approve of the law and you may do good works. You may talk of peace and love but I am telling you this; redemption is through the cross of Jesus Christ. Redemption is by the blood of the Son of God, without which, *“there is no forgiveness.”*

“I need no other argument;
I need no other plea;
It is enough that Jesus Christ died
And that He died for me.”

Peter said, *“We are redeemed, not with corruptible things such as silver and gold from our vain conversation received by tradition from our fathers, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ as a lamb without spot or blemish.”* It couldn't be stated any clearer. It couldn't be made any plainer.

Let me sound another warning: beware of the error of the Galatians. You may say, “Preacher, what is the error of the Galatians?” It is when you are trying to mix your human works with the blood of Christ.

It is when you are trying to mix law, circumcision and ceremony with the cross of Christ; it cannot be done. Salvation is by what He did and not by what you do. It is by His blood and not by your works; *“by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified.”*

There are thousands of churches today with crosses on their steeples but no cross in their pulpit. There are thousands of sermons preached every day in which there is no Christ crucified.

I warn you; do not listen; do not follow; do not support any religion if Christ crucified is not the central theme because that is where redemption is accomplished.

Let me tell you something else; (let me sound you another warning); beware of any hope, (no matter how sweet it is), however precious it is to you; beware of any experience or any hope of acceptance with God, or for that matter, any relationship with God apart from the person and work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

I say to you my friend; all religions have their laws and moral precepts. There is not a religion on this earth that doesn't have strict laws and moral precepts. All religions have their forms and ceremonies. They are very impressive; most of them are great and impressive ceremonies.

All religions have their rewards and their punishments, their future life and their future damnation. Only the Gospel of Jesus Christ has a crucified, risen, exalted, and ascended Redeemer. Only the Gospel has a Redeemer.

In every other religion, you are your own saviour; you are your own redeemer. Christ is a Substitute. Without Christ crucified, of which I am sounding a warning to all who will hear; without Christ crucified, the church is only a well without water. It has no cause for existence.

What do you do with a well if it has no water? You plug it up; pen it up; it has no cause to exist; it is nothing but a dangerous place that children fall into.

Without Christ crucified, the church is a stove without a fire; it is of no value. Without Christ crucified the church is a lighthouse with no light; it is only a mocking symbol. It is a comfort to the Devil and an offense to God Almighty.

He told His disciples when He sent them out; *“go into all the world and preach the Gospel.”* What is the Gospel? The Gospel is concerning His Son.

Without Christ crucified, you call on a God who will not hear. He will only hear through one Mediator, Christ Jesus. Christ Jesus, by His death, bought that right. He is the only High Priest and by His death He secured that sacrifice and that sin-offering which He brings to God.

Without the Lamb there is no coming to God. Without Christ crucified you stand under a law that has been broken and defiled. *“Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”*

Without Christ crucified you come to a judgment without any plea and without any hope. *“It is appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgment.”* If we don't have a Mediator, if we don't have an Advocate, we come to the judgment without a plea.

Without Christ crucified you talk about a heaven which does not exist because in glory, in God's heaven, the theme of heaven, the song of heaven and the glory of heaven, is under *“Him who loved us and washed us from our sin in His own precious blood. Unto Him be glory both now and forever.”*

That is the song! The population of heaven is those who have washed their robes and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb. I can't make it any plainer. I am presenting to you that which is essential, that which is absolutely necessary.

They said in glory; *"Who are these and which came they?"* The elders said, *"You know these are they which came out of great tribulation and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."*

These are not they that worked, strived, served, gave, offered, and walked. They are they that *"washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."*

"There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Emanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day,
And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all our sins away.

Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed church of God
Be saved to sin no more."

What do you think of the cross of Christ? What do you personally think of the cross of Christ? *"What is it to you all ye that pass by and behold my sorrow? See if there is any sorrow like the sorrow in which the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger."*

What do you think about? I am going to tell you what I think. I like to use the words of the apostle Paul in Galatians 6:14 in which I read before; *"God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Jesus Christ."*

I see some things in the cross of Christ and I will give them to you briefly in closing:

First of all: I see in the death of my Substitute on Calvary's cross, the Lamb of God. I see the eternal purpose of God fulfilled in the death of Christ.

Do you know what God says about His Lamb? He says, *“His Lamb is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”* He says, *“His Surety is the surety of an everlasting covenant.”* The blood that cleanses, the blood that atones, is the blood of an everlasting covenant.

This is no new thought. This is no new expression; this is the ancient Gospel. This is the Gospel of God which He decreed, purposed, and provided, before the foundation of the world.

I can see that in that Lamb dying on the tree, God’s Lamb as He designated, decreed, anointed, provided and ordained, before the foundation of the world.

Secondly: I see in Christ crucified all of the Old Testament promises, all of the Old Testament prophecies, and all of the Old Testament types fulfilled in Christ.

“He is our Passover.” It plainly says that in the Book of Corinthians; *“Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.”*

It plainly says *“that rock which followed them in the wilderness is Christ. That rock was smitten by Moses.* That rock that gave forth cleansing, refreshing, thirst-quenching water was Christ.

I see Him smitten of God on the tree and coming forth from His side, blood and water, to justify and sanctify His people.

I see in Christ on the cross the *“brazen serpent lifted up,”* The Scripture says, *“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so, must the son of man be lifted up that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life.”*

In Christ crucified, I see every lamb in Old Testament Scripture sacrificed. I see every turtledove, every goat, and every heifer, slain. I see all the blood which was poured out on Jewish altars. I see it fulfilled and coming to a halt in the death of God’s Lamb on the cross.

I see in Christ crucified, God’s love for sinners; *“For God commended his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly.”*

I see in Christ crucified, God’s justice and righteousness fulfilled. *“God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. Christ died and gave His Son as the propitiation for*

our sins that He might be just and justify those that believe on Christ.” I see the Law honored and justice satisfied.

I see in Christ crucified, the sin-debt fully paid. The Scripture says, *“The blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanseth us from all sin. Their sins and iniquities, I will remember no more. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died.”*

“Jesus paid it all
All the debt I owe
Sin has left a crimson stain
He washed it white as snow.”

With Christ being crucified I see hope for all who will believe. There is no hope except in Christ.

Oh my friend; what a hope there is in Christ. In John Chapter 20:31, it says; *“But these things are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ; He is the Son of God and that believing you might have life through His name.”*

Jew or Gentile, bond or free, old or young, male or female, whoever you are or wherever you are, whatever your sins are; He is the Saviour of sinners. His death on the cross is able to justify and *“save to the uttermost, them that come to God by Him.”*

1st John 5:20 says; *“And we know that the Son of God is come and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true, even his Son.*

This, my friend; *“is the true God and eternal life.”* What do you think of the cross of Jesus Christ?