

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE CROSS?

GALATIANS 6:14 • TV211B

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Galatians 6:14

“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.”

I’m speaking to you today, on the subject “**THE CROSS.**” Last Sunday morning I brought a message on “**The Gospel,**” this morning on the “**CROSS;**” I am dealing with vital issues, issues that concern you and concern me.

I want to read to you from **Galatians 6: verse 14.** The Scripture says, “*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.*”

Now, I have been asking you questions. I spent last Sunday morning asking some questions about the Gospel, if you have ever heard the Gospel, if you know the Gospel and if you believe the Gospel.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE CROSS?

GALATIANS 6:14 • HENRY T. MAHAN

Well, allow me to ask you one question, and this is the question; what do you think, personally? I'm talking to you now, individually. I'm not talking to everybody as they say in "television land;" I'm talking to you. What do you personally think of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Now, that is the question that I want to ask, straight forward, what do you think of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Exactly, what is your opinion of the cross of Jesus Christ? What do you really feel when someone mentions the cross, when you read in the Bible about the cross; what do you feel about the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Somebody might say, "Well, I live in a Christian nation." Well, that's not the question; that is not the question at all. I am not dealing with the Christianity or the lack of Christianity in America; I am talking about the cross.

Somebody else might say, "Well, I attend church occasionally." Somebody else might say, "Well, I attend church on a regular basis; I am a member of such and such a church." That is not the question; the question is what do you think about the cross?

Somebody else says, "Well, I do believe the Bible; I believe the Bible is a good Book. I do believe that there is life after death. I believe that man will live again. I believe in the resurrection. I believe that there is a man called Jesus who lived on this earth."

That is not the question. It is all well and good. You are saying more than most people in this world can say who have no interest in the church, the Bible, the Gospel, or anything else.

But, my question; I want you to answer this question; what do you believe, what do you feel, and what do you think about the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ?

I'm going to tell you what I feel. This is my opinion and these are my thoughts about the cross of Jesus Christ.

First of all: This is my hope. I have no other hope.

**"My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and His righteousness.
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But I wholly and completely lean on Jesus name.**

**His oath, His covenant, His blood
Support me in the whelming flood,
When all around my soul gives way
He then is my only hope and stay."**

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE CROSS?

GALATIANS 6:14 • HENRY T. MAHAN

Christ is my hope. This is not only my hope but this is my song. Christ died for my sins. I sing it in my heart; I sing it in my mind; I sing it in my soul and I sing it with my lips. I love songs about the blood:

“What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.”

“There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel’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 my sins away.”

It’s my song and not only that but this is my religion. I have no other religion. My religion is Christ. My religion is Christ’s death. My religion is Christ’s substitutionary death for my sin. My religion is summed up in one thing; “*Christ died for my sins according to the Scriptures.*”

Somebody said, “Are you saved?” I ask this question; is Jesus Christ still at the right hand of God? They say, “Well, certainly He is.” Then I am saved because Christ died for me; He rose for me; He ascended and is seated at the right hand of God and there He intercedes for me.

If He ever quits calling my name and quits interceding for me, ever quits pleading His blood and His wounds never stand for me, then I am lost; that’s all my religion.

It’s wrapped up in one thing; Christ died for my sins. That is my message. When you have heard me preach one time, you have heard me preach, because I am going to preach it the next time you hear me preach. Christ died for our sins. That is the sinner’s Gospel.

That is the only hope that a sinner has. This was Paul’s message. He went to the great city of Corinth with all of its philosophy, all of its wisdom, and all of its learning and education. He said, “*I am determined to know nothing among you, (even among you Corinthians). I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified.*”

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE CROSS?

GALATIANS 6:14 • HENRY T. MAHAN

If you don't want to hear about Christ crucified, then you don't want to hear from me. If you don't want to hear about Christ and His cross, then you don't want to hear my message because that is my message.

I play a one-string-fiddle; it is Christ and Him crucified. That is the sinner's message; that is the sinner's hope and that is the sinner's Gospel. To a real sinner, that is what he wants to hear.

Not only that but this is my refuge; I rest in the fact that Christ died for my sins.

I like what that old singer years ago use to sing on the radio; he says:

**“I was once lost
But now I'm found
By God's grace
I'm heaven bound
My only hope, my only plea
Is that when Christ died, He died for me.”**

I trust in nothing (listen to this), I'm still telling you what I think of the cross. This is my opinion and I hope it is yours. I trust in nothing but Christ and Him crucified for the pardon of my sins, for the sanctification of my soul, and for the salvation of this sinner, nothing, nothing at all.

I look not to my works because my works and my righteousness are filthy rags in God's sight. If my works are measured in the light of themselves or in the light of other men's works, they may look fairly good.

My works are measured and evaluated by the holiness of God and by the divine obedience of my eternal Lord. That is when they are “*filthy rags*.” I look not to my merit, not even to my faith; I look to Christ. You see; faith in your faith won't save. Faith is not the object of faith; Christ is the object of faith.

I rest in nothing; I lean on nothing. I build on nothing but Christ and Him crucified. I rejoice in nothing. I have nothing in which to rejoice if Christ didn't die. “*We are of all men most miserable*.” If His bones are in Jerusalem in a grave, “*we are of all men most miserable*.” We have no hope. Our glory is in nothing but Christ and Him crucified.

Let's borrow the words of the apostle Paul and make them our testimony, opinion, and thought. “*God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*.”

I am going to die. When I come to die I am going to die resting in, trusting in, and believing in, the sacrifice of the Son of God on that cross of Calvary.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE CROSS?

GALATIANS 6:14 • HENRY T. MAHAN

So, that is my question and I leave it with you; what do you think of the cross of Jesus Christ?

My friends, I command your attention on this subject. I'm not selling books, I'm not selling records, I'm not bumming money and I'm not building a kingdom. I am not building a school or a hospital; I am preaching the Gospel. I can't command your attention to support my hospital or support my school or program but I can command your attention to the cross of Jesus Christ because it vitally concerns you.

There's no subject of greater importance. Our schools will crumble. Our hospitals will be of no use some day. Our little kingdoms and monuments will not be left standing, one stone upon another.

But the cross is the everlasting theme. It is the everlasting message. I will tell you this; happiness or misery will rest on your thoughts about the cross. I'm talking about eternal happiness or eternal misery, eternal blessing or eternal cursing.

It is not going to rest on whether you were a Baptist, a Methodist, or a Presbyterian. It is not going to rest on whether you are a Calvinist or an Arminian, pre-millennial or post-millennial.

It won't matter if you built a school, a church, or a hospital. Eternal blessing or cursing is going to rest upon what you thought of Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Life and death, heaven or hell, will rest on one thing. It will not be determined by anything in you or me but in Christ Jesus and Him crucified. Do you see what I am saying? That is the reason that I command your attention. That is the reason I am saying that I want you to listen because I am dealing with the salvation of our soul.

I want to know the Gospel. I want to be saved by that Gospel. I want above all things under God's heaven to preach that Gospel because *"it is the power of God unto salvation."*

What do you think of the cross? Let's look at Paul's statement. This man of Tarsus, Saul of Tarsus, who was converted by the grace of God, wrote 13 or 14 books in the New Testament. He was a man who was used mightily of God.

This is a summary of his whole ministry, life, and message. *"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord (and Saviour) Jesus Christ."*

Let's look first of all at what Paul did not glory in. When we talk about glorying in something, we talk about taking delight in it. We are talking about being overly concerned about it. We are talking about that which takes first place in your thoughts, in your life, your work and your vocation, that which is of most importance to you.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE CROSS?

GALATIANS 6:14 • HENRY T. MAHAN

That which you glory in is your delight. It is that which is most important. It is the crisis part of your life. That is what Paul is talking about here.

Now, suppose there are many things in which Paul could have gloried. If there was any man who could have gloried, it was this man. In fact, he said that; “if any of you can take any pleasure or any credit for what you have done in the flesh, I more. If any man, He says, can have confidence in the flesh, then I more.”

So, we might add that word, glorying in something is that in which you delight. It is that in which you have confidence. It is that which is most important. It is that which you are vitally interested in.

The apostle Paul could have gloried in his national privileges. He was a Jew. He said, “I am not a half-breed; I am a Hebrew of Hebrews. My daddy was a Hebrew and my momma was a Hebrew. I am a son of Abraham.”

Now; if you want to glory in your race, the apostle Paul could take many steps beyond you. He said, “I am Jew.” Not only that, he could have gloried in his work; “if any man hath whereof to glory, I more; if any man has anything in the flesh in which he can place his confidence and his glory; I more.”

No man ever served God more faithfully. No man ever worked harder. No man ever suffered more than Paul. No man ever preached more than Paul and no man ever wrote more Scripture than Paul and yet he says; “I don’t glory in this at all, in my accomplishments or in my work.”

Sometimes I think that when I see men glorying in their works and in their names and accomplishments and they put out the figures, the facts, the numbers and all of these things, I think to myself, Paul wouldn’t have done that.

Paul said, “*I am less than the least of all the saints.*” He said, “*I’m really not worthy to be an apostle.*” He said, “*Christ came to save sinners of whom I am chief.*” He never gloried in the flesh; he never listed how many souls he had won to the Lord.

He never listed and we have no record of how many people Paul preached to or how many people were saved. He said, “*I thank God I baptized none of you.*”

I read an article about some fellow who had baptized 150,000 people. Paul said, “*I thank God I didn’t baptize any of you. God didn’t send me to baptize (or to count noses); He sent me to preach the Gospel.*”

He could have gloried in those things but he didn’t. He could have gloried in his knowledge. In fact, one ruler said to him; “*you have studied so much you have lost your mind.*” He was a man of letters, learning, and intellect. Paul didn’t glory in that.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE CROSS?

GALATIANS 6:14 • HENRY T. MAHAN

He didn't glory in his revelation. Did you know that he was taken to the third heaven? That's right! He said, "In the body or out of the body; I don't know. I knew a man so many years ago that was taken to the third heaven and saw things and heard things that was lawful or possible to utter."

Paul had been into the presence of God. That's right, according to the Scripture. But; he doesn't glory in it. He doesn't glory in it; he doesn't say; "God forbid that I should glory, save in the fact that I am wise and intelligent. I've had revelations that are far beyond anything that you have ever heard or seen."

He didn't glory in his graces. He was a bold man and courageous. He stood before kings. He stood there on Mars Hill and faced the minds, the great minds of his day and said; "why I know that you folks are awful religious. You have a shrine to this god, that god, and the other god, even unto an unknown god."

I'm going to preach that "unknown God to you." That's a bold man. He was a humble man; he said, "*I am nothing. I'm not one wit behind the chief apostle; I'm nothing.*" What is Paul? He said, "*Nothing, nothing.*"

He was a self-denying man, a prayerful man. He was a thankful man; a man of God if ever there was a man of God. But, he never gloried in these things. He never gloried.

I wonder about our glorying in ourselves, in our buildings, in our organizations and in our accomplishments. Aren't we ashamed of ourselves? "*Who maketh thee to differ? What has thou that thou didst not receive? Now; if you received it; why do you boast as if you didn't receive it? A man can receive nothing except it be given him from God.*"

What do you glory in Paul? "*God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" That's Paul's glory, his chief glory and his only glory.

I want to sound a warning note. "If you have ears;" our Lord use to say that; "*he that hath ears let him hear.*" If you have ears and you may not have ears to hear; it takes a God-touched, ear. It takes a Spirit-created ear. It takes a holy ear to hear the Word of God, the mysteries of the kingdom of God.

If you have an ear; you listen to me; I warn you; beware of self-righteousness; beware of glorying in yourself, your works and your deeds and trying to find some reason for God to accept you and to love you and to save you because of what you have done. I warn you!

Open sin has destroyed its thousands but self-righteousness; its tens of thousands. It's the greatest killer of men's souls.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE CROSS?

GALATIANS 6:14 • HENRY T. MAHAN

I will be honest with you; I had rather stand before God at the Judgment a murderer than to stand before God robed in my self-righteous, religious rags. God saves murderers; God saves harlots and God saves drunks.

You know, over there in the Scriptures, it says; *“such were some of you.”* It lists all of these things. It lists these awful sins and says *“such were some of you but you have been washed.”*

But; I will tell you this; no self-righteous man has ever entered the Kingdom of God.

Our Lord Jesus Christ had kind words for sinners. The harshest words that He ever spoke were for the religious, holier-than-thou, highest, moral, good people, who felt they had no sin.

It is deadly, it is fatal. Now you can hear me and you can heed me or you can ignore me. But, one of these days, if you hear me, you will thank God that you listened. God saves sinners.

That bunch of Pharisees saw Him go to the house of a sinner to eat and they turned to the disciples and said; *“why does your Master eat with Publicans and sinners?”* Why doesn't He run around with us good people? Why doesn't He run around with us church people? Why doesn't He run around with us pious people?

Our Lord understood what they were saying and what they were thinking. He turned and said; *“the well do not need a physician but sick people. I didn't come to call the righteous, (the self-righteous); I came to call sinners to repentance.”*

And He said this to the Pharisees; *“you are going to find yourselves outside the Kingdom of God and the Publicans and the harlots on the inside. They will enter heaven before you.”*

What did Paul not glory in? He didn't glory in anything except the cross of Christ.

What did He glory in? Look at the text; He tells us and He defines it clearly. Why don't we read the Scriptures? *“God forbid that I should glory, (delight in, rest in, and have any confidence in, in anything), except the cross of Jesus Christ.”*

Now then; what did He mean? What is the cross of Jesus Christ? What did He mean by the cross?

Now listen to me; do you hear me? The cross to some people means that wooden cross made out of a tree on which Jesus Christ died on Golgotha or Calvary's Hill. That's not the cross.

Paul is talking about glorying in it. Paul would never have worn a cross around his neck, never. He never would have worn one in his lapel.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE CROSS?

GALATIANS 6:14 • HENRY T. MAHAN

He didn't glory in idolatrous symbols. In **Philippians 2:8** it says our Lord; "*became obedient (subjected Himself) unto death, yea, even the death of the cross.*" Now, that Scripture is talking about that tree; it is talking about that emblem of shame, that cross on which He suffered, hanged, and died.

That is not what we glory in. I won't cherish the "old, rugged, cross." That's not what I cherish, anymore than I would cherish a hangman's noose, electric chair, or a guillotine. I don't cherish that block of wood.

Secondly: The cross sometimes (are you listening) in the Scripture means the afflictions and trials of God's people. Sometimes, when we talk about the cross we are talking about afflictions and trials.

Our Lord said; "*take up your cross, (whatever your cross is, whatever it is that is identified with you, your suffering, your affliction, your trial, or whatever,) and follow me.*"

That is a symbol of your death. That is a symbol of your subjection. That still is not the cross. Paul didn't glory in the fact that he suffered for Christ. He gloried in the fact that he was able to suffer for Christ or permitted to suffer for Christ. He counted it an honor to suffer for Christ but he didn't glory in his cross that he bore.

What does the cross mean to you? "*God forbid that I should glory save in the cross.*" Let me tell you what it means. It means that the cross is the all sufficient, substitutionary, sacrifice of Christ, by which He redeemed His people.

When we talk about the cross, the preaching of the cross, "*it is to them perishing foolishness. To us who are saved it is the wisdom of God and the power of God.*"

We are talking about all that Christ is and all that Christ did in His incarnation, in His righteousness, in His sacrifice, in His ascension, and in His mediatorial work to redeem His people.

You see, the cross was just the climax of it. The cross was just the pinnacle of it. Everything before the cross pointed to the cross. Everything after the cross pointed back to the cross.

Our Lord died. I mean, our Lord was born to die on the cross. That is why He came into the world. He said, "*For this hour came I into the world.*"

Everything He did led to the cross and everything after the cross, all that He pleads, He pleads His wounds; He pleads His blood; He pleads His sacrifice and He pleads His death.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE CROSS?

GALATIANS 6:14 • HENRY T. MAHAN

So, when we talk about the cross, we are talking about Christ's incarnation; "*He became flesh*" so He could die. He took upon Himself a body that could suffer and it could bleed.

You see, God has no body that bleeds but God was incarnate in human flesh. "*God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.*" Paul said to the elders; "*feed the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*" Well; it took a body in order to die. He went to the cross and died and He arose again.

So, Paul is saying this, "I glory, my chief glory, my only glory, is in all that Christ has done to redeem us." He died for our sins. "*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.*"

You see; our Lord Jesus Christ "*entered not into the holy place made with hands but into heaven itself. Not with the blood of an animal but with His own precious blood.*"

He put it not on a mercy seat in the tabernacle but the mercy seat of glory and there He redeemed us from all of our sins. That's the cross!

In other words; when Paul said; "*God forbid that I should glory save in the cross,*" he was saying; "I glory in the gospel of redemption; I glory in the work of redemption; I glory in the person of redemption; I glory in the work of redemption, and in the results of redemption, everything, from Alpha to Omega, of what Christ did. That is the cross!

My friend, you can know a lot about the Bible. You can know its history; you can know about the lost pages. You can know about those that they found. You can know about the dates, characters, and kings.

You can know about the laws, the precepts, and the Proverbs. If you do not know Christ and Him crucified, you have read your Bible to no avail because that is the message of God's Word; it is the message of redemption.

You read, if you will, **Luke 24** and you will find our Lord saying this, that everything written in Moses, beginning at Moses and the prophets, in the Psalms were concerning Him, everything that was written.

All of these writings and prophecies were concerning Christ. If you read the Bible and you do not see Christ crucified, Christ our sacrifice, Christ our substitute, you have read the Bible to no avail.

Your religious knowledge, your knowledge of the Scriptures will be a source of great anguish to you in the Day of Judgment.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE CROSS?

GALATIANS 6:14 • HENRY T. MAHAN

Religion without the cross, without the death of Christ, is like a lamp without oil; it is useless. It is like the earth without the sun, useless. It is like a clock without hands, useless. It is like a compass without a needle, it is useless.

That is why Paul gloried in the cross. When he talks about the cross and glorying in that cross, he is not talking about that emblem, it is not the cross. Christ wasn't the only man who died on a cross; a lot of people died on crosses back yonder under the Roman rule.

But, Paul gloried in the person who suffered, in the blood that was shed, in the work that was accomplished, in the redemption that was fulfilled. He gloried in that, all that Christ did, he gloried in the redemption. That's what he is talking about.

Now; why should you seek the glory in the cross of Christ? Why should you seek to have a confidence in this cross of Jesus Christ?

Well, let me give you four reasons and I will close:

First of all: The death of Christ was foreordained of God; *"He was the lamb slain before the foundation of the world."* Now, when Peter preached at Pentecost and faced those people that nailed Christ to the cross, He said; *"you did what God determined before to be done."*

Secondly, *"God was in Christ?"* That is the reason you should study this and look into it and consider it. *"God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."*

Thirdly: Everything God has for a sinner is in Christ crucified. *"It's the blood that maketh atonement for the soul. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission."*

Fourthly, this is the only plea of those who prior to this day have found peace. You go back through the Scriptures, *"Abraham saw my day and was glad. Moses wrote of me."* David said, *"The Lord is my Shepherd."* Job said, *"I know that my redeemer liveth."*

You see? All of them found their peace in the cross. All of the old writers found their peace in the cross. Not until this present day has any prominent writer ever talked about finding peace in positive, mental, thinking. It has always been in the cross.

Other religions have their laws and their moral precepts. Other religions have their forms and ceremonies. Other religions have their prophets and priests. Other religions have their rewards and punishment but only the Gospel has a cross.

That's right; only Christ's Gospel has a cross, a sacrifice, a crucified Saviour, and consequently, a hope of redemption. It is in the cross!