

## *A People of the Cross*

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**Introduction:** What do you think of when you hear the cross of Christ mentioned?

- A. To the Christian the cross should represent the foundation of our lives. **(Gal 6:14)**
  - 1. How does it become a foundation? Far too many see the cross in a casual way.
  - 2. We should be shocked by the cross of Christ. In it we will see the vileness and the gore of sin, even our own.
  - 3. Every issue in our lives must be framed by the cross of Christ.
- B. The people of God are identified by the cross of Christ. **(Matt 16:21-24)**
  - 1. Peter had to come to learn how the unthinkable would later become his glory.
  - 2. How does the cross become a daily activity? My decisions must become a cross issue and not one of personal preference. **(Gal 2:20)**

### *I. The Cross Shows Me the Suffering of Christ*

- A. Jesus made a great sacrifice in coming to earth. **(Jn 1:1-2, 17)**
  - 1. Can you conceive of God becoming man? There was great agony in doing this. (Ex. Suppose you lived the next 33 years in a cave with no light!)
  - 2. Jesus longed to return to the Father. **(Jn 17:5)**
- B. Jesus willingly went to His death. **(Phil 2:8-9)**
  - 1. He plainly said so in his ministry. **(Jn 2:19-21; 10:18)**
  - 2. Jesus sought out the mob! **(Jn 18:5-8)**
  - 3. Jesus knew what the rulers of the world never knew. The cross would be the instrument of their defeat and the means of our victory. **(1 Cor 2:7-8)**
  - 4. This mind must become my mind! **(Phil 2:5)**
- C. Jesus was betrayed and forsaken by his disciples.
  - 1. Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss. **(Lk 22:47-48)**
  - 2. The disciples forsaken Jesus while Peter also made a show of ungodliness. **(Mk 14:50; Matt 26:73-75)**
  - 3. There are few disappointments greater to a teacher than to see the student throw it all away. How would you feel if your closest friend did this?
  - 4. We will be tested in time to see if we too are “ashamed of the cross.”
- D. Jesus was hated by those whom He loved.
  - 1. Jesus grieved over Jerusalem. **(Matt 24:37-38)**
  - 2. These fickle people could cry at one time “Hosanna” and then later say “Crucify Him.” **(Mt 21:9; Lk 23:21)**
  - 3. Jesus prayed for their forgiveness on the cross. **(Luke 23:34)**
- E. Jesus suffered greatly on the cross.
  - 1. We need to see the blood, hear the hatred of the rulers, feel the pain of the nails and feel the shame. This was the Son of God dying for my sins!
  - 2. How bad was this suffering? Jesus prayed earnestly for another way. **(Lk 22:41-44; Heb 5:7-8)**

### *II. The Cross Shows Me the Certain Love of God*

- A. Why did Jesus have to die at all? (**Isa 53:4-5; 2 Cor 5:21**)
    - 1. So the justice of God could be satisfied.
    - 2. There is no forgiveness outside of Christ. (**John 14:6**)
- “The cross is the crystallized point in history where eternity merges with time.”
- B. But why a death on the cross?
    - 1. Why not dying in His sleep or some other death?
    - 2. God wanted the cross to be a demonstration of His love. (**Rom 5:6-8**)
    - 3. Good news! God loves you this much!

### ***III. The Cross Shows Me How to Live***

- A. My view of life is radically changed.
    - 1. The change is so great it is called a death. (**Col 3:1-3**)
    - 2. Have you ever had an event completely change your outlook? (Ex. Accident)
    - 3. We must fight to keep this mind that comes from the cross. (**Rom 6:6**)
- “To be crucified means, first, the man on the cross is facing only one direction; second, he is not going back; and third, he has no further plan of his own.” -- A.W. Tozer
- B. Things that divert our mind from the cross.
    - 1. **The physical needs of life**
      - a. What does the cross of Christ teach us about true riches? (**2 Cor 8:9**)
      - b. What does His death teach us? (**1 Tim 6:7-8**)
    - 2. **The hurtful things in this life**
      - a. The cross of Christ teaches us to let them go. (**Luke 23:34**)
      - b. The cross eliminates the fear of many things. (**Matt 10:28; Eph 4:31-32**)
- “If the cross suited us, it would no longer be a cross, and if we refuse those that hurt us, we will refuse all crosses. The cross which God sends us must of necessity always be humiliating, painful, paralyzing, difficult. The cross is precisely what hurts us in that place where we are most disarmed and vulnerable.” - Louis Evely
- c. Some in the church have a fellowship based upon injustices done to them rather than on the cross. This “fellowship of the miserable” will always be limited in company and will produce permanently crippled spirits.
  - 3. **The cares of this life (Matt 13:22)**
    - a. When our priorities are confused then weakness will result. (**Mt 6:33**)
    - b. We will never find peace in more things or “getting away from it all.”
    - c. Jesus said His cross will teach us about peace. (**Jn 14:26; 16:31-33**)
  - C. Things the Cross of Christ will cause me to do.
    - 1. Love the study of His word. (**1 Pet 2:1-3**)
    - 2. Love the teaching of the lost. (**Lk 19:10**)
    - 3. Love my brethren. (**1 Pet 1:22-23**)
    - 4. To take a stand even if I must suffer. (**Gal 5:11; 6:12**)

**Conclusion:** Are you bearing your cross?

- A. The world will never understand the power of the cross! (**2 Cor 13:4**)
- B. Are you walking with your cross or have you found “another way”. (**Phil 3:18-19**)