

THE CROSS PROVIDES OUR BLESSINGS

The cross of Christ plays the key role in our relationship to God. Jesus died to pay the price for man's sin. The only means by which a person can be redeemed or regenerated is through the finished work of the cross at Calvary. The bible tells us that Jesus used the term "born again" in St. John 3:3 and 3:7. To be born again means to be made alive unto God. We were rendered dead spiritually because of the sin brought about in mankind through Adam who disobeyed God's commandment. Through the death of Jesus on the cross we are now placed back in right standing with our Father and our God. Without the wages of sin being paid, we would have to pay with our own lives. The wages of sin is death. (Romans 6:23) Jesus paid our debt with His own life. He gave His life for our life. Let us look at some of the blessings we have received from the work of the cross.

1 Corinthians 1:17-18

"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. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved (born again) it is the power of God."

Another way of saying this:

Christ didn't send me to baptize. Instead, he sent me to spread the Good News. I didn't use intellectual arguments. That would have made the cross of Christ lose its meaning.

The message about the cross is nonsense to those who are being destroyed, but it is God's power to us who are being saved (born again).

Through the power of God we receive blessing.

Isaiah, as if he was standing and looking at the work on the cross writes:

Isaiah 53:1-12

Isa 53:1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

Isa 53:2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

Isa 53:3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Isa 53:4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

Isa 53:5 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 53:6 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 53:7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

Isa 53:8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

Isa 53:9 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 in his mouth.

Isa 53:10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

Isa 53:11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

Isa 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.

Isaiah is used by the Holy Spirit to tell what Jesus took and what Jesus gave on the cross.

Jesus prepares his disciples for his death, burial, and resurrection.

Matt. 16:21

“From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto His disciples, how He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.”

(Matt. 27:45-56; Mk. 15:21-32; Lu. 23:26-43; St. John. 19:28-37; Acts 2:22-36)

- On the cross Jesus took our rejection (Isaiah 53:3)
- On the cross Jesus gave us acceptance (Ephesians 1:6)
- On the cross Jesus took our sin (Isaiah 53:5)
- On the cross Jesus gave us righteousness (2Corinthians 5:21)
- On the cross Jesus took our sickness (Isaiah 53:5)
- On the cross Jesus gave us healing (1Peter 2:24; Matthew 8:17)
- On the cross Jesus took our punishment (Isaiah 53:5)
- On the cross Jesus gave us peace (Ephesians 2:14-18; Colossians 1:20)
- On the cross Jesus took our poverty (Isaiah 53:3)
- On the cross Jesus gave us prosperity (2 Corinthians 8:9)
- On the cross Jesus took our death (Isaiah 53:8)
- On the cross Jesus gave us life (Romans 6:3-4)

The cross is the place where we exchanged our old life for the life we have in Christ Jesus.

The cross is where we experience the victory Jesus won over the world, the flesh, and the Devil.

Romans chapter 6 the Holy Spirit reveals our position in Christ through the cross.

Romans chapter 7 the Holy Spirit reveals our condition of reliance on the power of the cross.

Romans chapter 8 the Holy Spirit reveals the promises acquired through the power of the cross.

The cross is not about a wooden beam where Jesus died; the cross is speaking about what Jesus accomplished on the cross.

Jesus' own words to the father were "it is finished".

Jesus gave His life on the cross, was placed in a tomb, and was raised from the dead on the third day completely victorious.

All Jesus did after His sacrifice on the cross, the resurrection, the ascension, the exaltation, the coming of the Holy Spirit were the proof He had truly brought about God's redemptive plan for mankind.

The cross speaks:

"God loved the world this way: He gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in Him will not die but will have eternal life.

God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but to save the world.

Those who believe in Him won't be condemned. But those who don't believe are already condemned because they don't believe in God's only Son."

(John 3:16-18 – God's Word translation)

The cross is God's greatest expression of love toward man.

Words of this song say it best:

"He paid a debt He did not owe, I owed a debt I could not pay,
I needed someone to wash my sins away.
And now I sing a brand new song, Amazing Grace!
Christ Jesus paid a debt that I could never pay"

God the Father loved His children so much He paid their debt of sin with His own Son, praise God!

My prayer is, God don't let your children allow anything to take the place of the cross in our lives, in our churches, in our message of good news, or our way of life. Holy Spirit keep fresh in our hearts and minds what the gospel is all about. The gospel is the good news that man can exchange their old life for a new life by believing in the finished work of Christ Jesus at the cross. What an exchange!

“Whoever is a believer in Christ is a new creation. The old way of living has disappeared. A new way of living has come into existence.”
(2 Cor. 5:17 – God's Word translation)

God loved us enough to die for us, and He did!

WARNING:

Be careful not to let anyone rob you of this faith through a shallow and misleading philosophy. Such a person follows human traditions and the world's way of doing things rather than following Christ.

All of God lives in Christ's body, and God has made you complete in Christ. Christ is in charge of every ruler and authority. In Him you were also circumcised. It was not a circumcision performed by human hands; but it was the removal of the corrupt nature in the circumcision performed by Christ. This happened when you were placed in the tomb with Christ through baptism. In baptism you were also brought back to life with Christ through faith in the power of God, who brought Him back to life.

You were once dead because of your failures and your uncircumcised corrupt nature, but God made you alive with Christ when He forgave all your failures. He did this by erasing the charges that were brought against you by the written laws God had established. He took the charges away by nailing them to the cross.

“He stripped the rulers and authorities of their power and made a public spectacle of them as He celebrated His victory in Christ.”
(Col.2:8-15 – God's Word translation)

A warning from the past to encourage us to stay focused on Jesus and what He has done for us on the cross.

A.W. Tozer writes:

“All unannounced and most undetected there has come in modern times a new cross into popular evangelical circles. It is like the old cross, but different: the likenesses are superficial; the differences, fundamental.

From this new cross has sprung a new philosophy of the Christian life, and from that new philosophy has come a new evangelical technique – a new type of meeting and a new kind of preaching. This new evangelism employs the same language as the old, but its content is not the same and its emphasis not as before.

The old cross would have no truck with the world. For Adam’s proud flesh it meant the end of the journey. It carried into effect the sentence imposed by the law of Sinai. The new cross is not opposed to the human race; rather, it is a friendly pal and if understood aright, it is the source of oceans of good clean fun and innocent enjoyment. It lets Adam live without interference. His life motivation is unchanged; he still lives for his own pleasure, only now he takes delight in singing choruses and watching religious movies instead of singing bawdy songs and drinking hard liquor. The accent is still on enjoyment, though the fun is now on a higher plane morally if not intellectually.

The new cross encourages a new and entirely different evangelistic approach. The evangelist does not demand abnegation of the old life before a new life can be received.”

He preaches not contrasts but similarities. He seeks to key into public interest by showing that Christianity makes no unpleasant demands; rather, it offers the same thing the world does, only on a higher level. Whatever the sin-mad world happens to be clamoring after at the moment is cleverly shown to be the very thing the gospel offers, only the religious product is better.

The new cross does not slay the sinner, it redirects him. It gears him into a cleaner and jollier way of living and saves his self-respect. To the self-assertive it says, “come and assert yourself for Christ.” To the egotist it says, “come and do your boasting in the Lord.” To the thrill seeker it says, “come and enjoy the thrill of Christian fellowship.” The Christian message is slanted in the direction of the current vogue in order to make it acceptable to the public.

The philosophy back of this kind may be sincere but it does not save it from being false. It is false because it is blind. It misses completely the whole meaning of the cross.

The old cross is a symbol of death. It stands for the abrupt, violent end of a human being. The man in Roman times who took up his cross and started down the road had already said good-bye to his friends. He was not coming back. He was going out to have it ended. The cross made no compromise, modified nothing,

spared nothing; it slew all of the man, completely for good. It did not try to keep on good terms with its victim. It struck cruel and hard, and when it had finished its work, the man was no more.

The race of Adam is under death sentence. There is no commutation and no escape. God cannot approve any of the fruits of sin, however innocent they may appear or how beautiful to the eyes of men. God salvages the individual by liquidating him and then raising him again to newness of life.

That evangelism which draws friendly parallels between the ways of men is false to the Bible and cruel to the souls of its hearers. The faith of Christ does not parallel the world, it intersects it. In coming to Christ we do not bring our old life up onto a higher plane; we leave it at the cross. The corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die.

We who preach the gospel must not think of ourselves as public relations agents sent to establish good will between Christ and the world. We must not imagine ourselves commissioned to make Christ acceptable to big business, the press, the world of sports or modern education. We are not diplomats but prophets, and our message is not a compromise but an ultimatum.

God offers life, but not an improved old life. The life He offers is a life out of death. It stands always on the far side of the cross. Whoever would possess it must pass under the rod. He must repudiate himself and concur in God's just sentence against him.

What does this mean to the individual, the condemned man who would find life in Christ Jesus? How can this theology be translated into life? Simply, he must repent and believe. He must forsake his sins and then go on to forsake himself. Let him cover nothing, defend nothing, excuse nothing. Let him not seek to make terms with God, but let him bow his head before the stroke of God's stern displeasure and acknowledge himself worthy to die.

Having done this let him gaze with simple trust upon the risen Savior, and from Him will come life and rebirth and cleansing and power. The cross that ended the earthy life of Jesus now puts an end to the sinner; the power that raised Christ from the dead now raises him to a new life along with Christ.

To any who may object to this or count it merely a narrow and private view of truth, let me say God has set His hallmark of approval upon this message from Paul's day to present. Whether stated in these exact words or not, this has been the content of all preaching that has brought life and power to the world through the centuries. The mystics, the reformers, the revivalists have put their emphasis here, and signs and wonders and mighty operations of the Holy Ghost gave witness to God's approval.

Dare we, the heirs of such a legacy of power, tamper with the truth? Dare we with our stubby pencils erase the lines of the blueprint or the pattern shown us

in the mount? May God forbid. Let us preach the old cross and we will know the old power.” (The Dwelling Place of God, 1966)

Paul writes in Gal. 6:14 these words:

“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.

But it’s unthinkable that I could ever brag about anything except the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. By His cross my relationship to the world and its relationship to me have been crucified.” (God’s Word translation)

We can glory throughout all eternity because of what Christ Jesus did for every one of us.

The person who lives a sinful life belongs to the devil because the devil has been committing sin since the beginning. The reason that the Son of God appeared was to destroy what the devil does.

Jesus won the victory and now that victory is available to us.

If we keep the emphasis on Jesus Christ and His finished work, we will not fall for all the “false emphasis” that leads us away from the truth. Whatever takes one away from Jesus Christ and the cross becomes the emphasis in their life, and takes them away from Him.

God help us to glory in the blessings of the cross!