

Matthew 27: The Cross of Christ

• **A. Peter**

• **1. When we come to the events that involve Peter in these final chapters, we must be struck by the staggering honesty of the Bible.**

- a. Nothing is hushed up; the events are recounted in all their stark shame and brutal honesty.
- b. But most likely the one person who spent the most time talking about these events was Peter himself!
- c. Can't we imagine him telling people, "This is the way that Jesus can forgive. He forgave me when I failed him in his bitterest hour of need."?

• **2. And yet I think sometimes we are much too hard on Peter.**

- a. Barclay: "The disaster that happened to Peter is one that could have happened only to a man of the most heroic courage."
- b. The other apostles did not do what Peter did for a very simple reason – they had run away! (Except for one, most likely John, as we see in John 18:15-16.)
- c. For Peter to enter the courtyard in the center of the High Priest's home was to walk into the Lion's den, and yet he did it.
- d. However the events ended, Barclay is right to remind us that they began with the bravery of Peter.

• **3. The first denial happened in the Courtyard.**

- a. After that first recognition, most would have fled for their life, but Peter did not – although he did move out onto the porch.
- b. You can see how we torn between love and fear.

• **4. Again on the porch he is recognized, but he does not flee.**

- a. His Galilean speech had given him away.
- b. As we discussed in the introduction, Galileans spoke with an accent that the Judeans considered so ugly that they were not allowed to pronounce the benediction at the Synagogue service.
- c. Peter swears and, many commentators believe, even curses Jesus' name – and yet he still does not flee.

• **5. And the cock crows – and Peter remembers what Jesus said, and at last he leaves, weeping bitterly.**

- a. We see extreme emotions in both Peter and Judas, but beyond that similarity they could not be further apart.
- b. Peter was there because of his love for Christ, while Judas was motivated by greed and hatred.
- c. Very few of us would have had the courage to be in that Courtyard at all, but Peter was there. What gave Peter that courage? Love. There is no other explanation.
- d. And two very important words ("and Peter") spoken by an angel in Mark 16 tell us that Jesus perfectly understood Peter's motivation:
 - (1) Mark 16:6-7 – "And he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you."
- e. Peter understood forgiveness, and, although he had once rebuked Christ for mentioning the cross, Peter understood the cross when he wrote 1 Peter 2:24 ("he bore our sins in his body on the tree").

• **B. The Cross of Christ**

• **1. Where do we place the cross of Jesus Christ?**

- a. Last week we considered Mary, who withheld nothing from Jesus but showed her love for him by anointing him with her most precious possession. This week we see that her gift prefigured the way in which God loves us -- He withheld nothing from us, but gave his only begotten Son to die on the cross for our behalf.

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- b. How do we view the cross of Christ? Where do we place it?
- c. Gal. 6:14 -- Far be it from me to boast except in _____?
- d. 1 Cor. 2:2 -- For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and _____?
- e. How do we fill in those blanks?

• 2. Death and the Cross

- a. Christ's death on the cross is the core of the gospel message.
 - (1) 1 Cor. 15:3-4 -- "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures."
- b. Would man have ever conceived of such a symbol as the cross?
 - (1) Isn't the cross itself powerful testimony to the divine origin of the gospel?
 - (a) 1 Cor 2:8-9 -- "None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But, as it is written, 'What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him'"
 - (2) The choice of a cross as a symbol is even more surprising when we remember the horror with which it was regarded in the ancient world.
 - (a) It was invented by barbarians at the edge of the known world and then taken over from them by the Greeks and the Romans.
 - (b) Its purpose was to delay death until the maximum amount of torture had been inflicted. Death could take days. Our word "excruciating" comes from the Latin word for cross.
 - (c) Roman citizens were exempt from crucifixion except for extreme cases of treason.
 - (d) Cicero called it a most cruel and disgusting punishment. He also said that the very word "cross" should be removed not only from the person of a Roman citizen but from his thoughts, his eyes, and his ears. Indeed, the mere mention of the cross is unworthy of a Roman citizen and a free man, he said.
 - (e) And it was this same symbol that Christianity moved front and center! While the Romans never wanted to even think about it, Paul would say he boasted in nothing else!
- c. Jesus died on the cross. Paul wrote, "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died."
 - (1) Phil 2:8 -- And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
 - (2) Acts 2:23 -- This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.
 - (3) Acts 5:30 -- The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree.
- d. The Swoon Theory?
 - (1) But why is there a swoon theory? Because there was an empty tomb. That historical fact is so well attested and established by so much evidence, it has forced some to argue that Jesus never really died at all. They say he merely swooned on the cross, and then came to later in the tomb.
 - (2) Not only is such a theory directly contradicted by the Scriptures, it defies all common sense. The Romans were experts at killing people.
 - (3) The cross is a symbol of death. It stands for the abrupt, violent death 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 and 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. A. W. Tozer
- e. Not only did Jesus die, but Jesus came to die.

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- (1) Hebrews 2:9, speaking of Jesus, says that he was made a little lower than the angels -- why? So that he might taste death for everyone.
- (2) Jesus came to this world to die. That is why he came. It was no accident. It was no surprise.
- f. Why did Jesus come to die?
 - (1) Because we are guilty sinners and God is a holy God.
 - (2) The cross was the only way to reconcile the two.
 - (a) Rom 5:10 -- while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.
 - (b) Eph 2:16 -- and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross.
 - (c) Col. 1:20 -- to reconcile to himself all things ... making peace by the blood of his cross.
 - (3) Matt 27:46 -- "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
 - (a) Why did Jesus say this? He said it so we would never have to. He came to reconcile us with God.
- g. Jesus Sacrificed Himself on the Cross
 - (1) Did the Romans "sacrifice" Jesus? No. We sometimes say (or actually, sing) that they did, but the Bible says otherwise. The Romans crucified Jesus, but Jesus sacrificed himself. God gave him to the world.
 - (2) Acts 2:23 -- "you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men." (the Romans)
 - (3) John 10:11, 17-18 -- "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ... 17 For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father."
 - (4) Gal 2:20 -- "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."
 - (5) Romans 8:32 -- "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?"
 - (6) Isaiah 53:12 -- "Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors."
 - (7) Matthew 20:28 -- "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
 - (8) John 3:16 -- "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."
 - (9) Jesus' life was not taken from him.
- **3. Man's View of the Cross**
 - a. Some see the cross as foolishness.
 - (1) 1 Co 1:18 -- "For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."
 - (2) 1 Co 1:23 -- "but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles"
 - (3) Acts 13:41 -- "Look, you scoffers, be astounded and perish; for I am doing a work in your days, a work that you will not believe, even if one tells it to you."
 - (4) Examples are not hard to find -- both ancient and modern.
 - (a) Ancient graffiti written below a picture of a cross -- "Alexamenos worships his God."
 - (b) In 1990, Ted Turner was named Humanist of the Year by the American Humanist Association. In his acceptance speech, Turner said: "If you really accept the Bible for what it says--the New Testament at any rate, the way it is generally interpreted by most people who believe it -- then

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everybody is going to hell...This life doesn't count for much of anything. It's just a transitory testing ground to see if you're going to measure up to make it to heaven...He had to come down here and suffer and die on the cross, so with His blood our sins could be washed away...weird, man, I'm telling you." In a 1989 interview, Turner described Christianity as a religion for losers.

- (c) When then candidate Obama dismissed small-town America as people who "cling to guns or religion," where did that word "cling" come from? "I will cling to the old rugged cross," perhaps? That is certainly how many people (including myself) understood the reference.
- b. Some see the cross as a stumbling block.
 - (1) The Jewish revulsion at the cross stemmed largely from the curse found in Deut. 21:23, which says "a hanged man is cursed by God."
 - (a) Gal 3:13 -- "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree'"
 - (b) Deut 21:23 was a huge stumbling block to the Jewish mind when it came to the cross. Many of them could not grasp the idea that the Messiah would come to this world to die on the cross.
 - (c) Yet, they should have. Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53 clearly point to the suffering of the Messiah, and Psalm 22 even paints an incredibly accurate picture of an actual crucifixion hundreds of years before it was ever done.
 - (2) 1 Co 1:23 -- "but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles."
- c. Some see the cross as an enemy.
 - (1) Phil 3:18 -- "For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ."
 - (2) They are hostile and actively opposed to the cross of Christ. Where ever the cross is raised, some will gather to fight against it.
- d. Some see the cross as an accident.
 - (1) How long has the cross been a part of God's plan?
 - (a) Genesis 3:15 -- "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."
 - (b) We also see an early preview of the cross in Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac.
 - (2) We see the cross in other Old Testament prophecies as well.
 - (a) Psalm 22:14-18 -- "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; 15 my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death. 16 For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet — 17 I can count all my bones— they stare and gloat over me; 18 they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots."
 - (b) Isaiah 53:5 -- "But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed."
 - (3) Jesus' mission was to come and die. He came to give himself as a ransom for many. He was not surprised. His death was not an accident.
- e. Some would rather not see the cross at all.
 - (1) The preaching of the cross has never been popular. It is not popular today.
 - (a) Far from hushing up the cross, the New Testament writers draw attention to it.
 - (b) The cross is not something to be regretted, or explained away, or hidden and kept out of sight. Rather the cross must be placed front and center, it must be at the core of what we teach and how we live.
 - (c) There is no gospel without the cross. There is no resurrection without the cross.
 - (d) The cross is the pivot of the Bible and of all history.

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- (2) Many today see the cross as an offense.
 - (a) That has always been the case. Paul mentioned "the offence of the cross" in Gal. 5:11. He and Peter both spoke about "a rock of offence." (Romans 9:33, 1 Peter 2:8)
 - (b) Although we should certainly not make it our goal to offend people, neither should we make it our goal not to offend people.
 - (c) "One test of a true church is whether it preaches a message that offends some people."
 - (d) The cross and the gospel will always offend some people. If we are proclaiming the gospel then we will offend people; if we have ceased to offend people, it is likely because we have ceased to proclaim the gospel.
- (3) Why then do so many want to avoid the cross?
 - (a) The cross reminds man of death.
 - (1) Modern man is in a state of total denial when it comes to death.
 - (2) Hebrews 9:27 -- "And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment."
 - (3) Death is the one appointment we all must keep. It may be the most inconvenient thing in life, but it is also the most obvious -- for modern man it is like an elephant in your kitchen that you are trying desperately to ignore but that you know someday you will not be able to ignore.
 - (b) The cross reminds man of blood.
 - (1) Liberal theologians speak with disdain about the theology of blood. They scoff at the notion that there is power in the blood. They turn their backs on what they call a bloody religion.
 - (2) The cross is an offense to sophisticated modern man. He cannot understand the cross, and that is its central offense to them.
 - (c) The cross reminds man of suffering.
 - (1) For many people the one goal of their life is to avoid suffering. Every decision comes down to a choice between pleasure and pain, and like a rat in a maze they move toward the treats and away from the buzzers.
 - (2) The cross reminds us that suffering is an inescapable part of our life on this earth. And the cross goes further than that -- it invites us to share in the suffering of Christ.
 - (3) The cross points us back to the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53:4-6 -- "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 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. 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."
 - (4) We show our love for others when we are willing to suffer for them, and the same is true of our suffering for the sake of Christ.
 - (d) The cross reminds man that ideas will not save us.
 - (1) The cross cuts across all of our ideas. It proclaims that we are not saved by ideas or philosophy.
 - (2) We are not saved by idealism (and idealists are some of the most bitter enemies of the cross!).
 - (3) The cross is an offense to the wisdom of man.
 - (e) The cross reminds man of his sin and his failure.
 - (1) Karl Menninger asked, whatever became of sin?
 - (a) Sometimes it seems that the only sin left in our society is smoking!
 - (b) Sin is rebellion and hostility to God. It is not sickness. It is not a mistake (which removes the intent element).
 - (c) C. S. Lewis -- "We are not merely imperfect creatures who need to grow; we are rebels who need to lay down our arms."

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- (2) To accept the cross is to accept that without it you are lost. It is to accept that you need something you cannot provide for yourself.
- (3) The cross is an offense to the pride of man.
- (4) Yet the very presence of the Son of God in this world is an utter, absolute condemnation of each of us. It is because we sinned that Jesus came to die. The cross points to our failures. It leaves no room for pride.
- (5) And something else that offends modern man is that all men are equal before the cross of Jesus Christ. There are no differences among men when it comes to the cross.
- (6) Rom 3:22-23 -- "For there is no distinction: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

- (f) The cross reminds man that there is only one way to God.
 - (1) That is what Jesus said in John 14:6 -- "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
 - (2) The cross makes that same statement. If there is another way to God, then Jesus died for no reason.
 - (3) The cross is an offense to the values of modern man.
 - (4) Modern politically correct man recoils at the idea that Christianity is true and all other religions are false, but to say otherwise is to call Jesus a liar and empty the cross of its power to save.

- f. Some see the cross as secondary.
 - (1) Rather than say, as Paul, I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified, they would say nothing except Jesus Christ and his ethical teachings.
 - (2) Jesus never said that men would be saved because he was the Son of God. He said that men would be saved because of what he, as the Son of God, was going to do. The power of salvation is in the cross of Christ -- what Jesus did, rather than just on what Jesus is or what Jesus taught.
 - (3) Notice the amount of space devoted in the gospel accounts to the death of Christ. Why so much? Because it is of primary importance.
 - (a) We know more about the details of the hours immediately before and the actual death of Jesus, in and near Jerusalem, than we know about the death of any other one man in all the ancient world. Wilbur Smith
 - (4) The cross was of primary importance to Christ, and the same must be true for the church of Christ.
 - (5) "If you move faith from that center [of the cross], you have driven the nail into the church's coffin. The church then is doomed to death, and it is only a matter of time when she shall expire."
 - (6) The church can only live and breathe at the cross; without it there is no life and no reason to exist.

- g. Some see the cross as a worldly means to a worldly end.
 - (1) You see this most often in people who mix the cross with politics -- those who mix the cross with the flag.
 - (2) In the Berlin Museum you can see swastikas with a cross in their center. Hitler initially embraced the cross because of its power to rally the Germans to his side.
 - (3) Chesterton -- "Coziness between the church and state is good for the state and bad for the church."
 - (4) C.S. Lewis in The Screwtape Letters -- "Let him begin by treating Patriotism ... as a part of his religion. Then let him, under the influence of partisan spirit, come to regard it as the most important part. Then quietly and gradually nurse him on to the stage at which the religion becomes merely part of the 'cause', in which Christianity is valued chiefly because of the excellent arguments it can produce"

- h. Some see the cross as the power of God unto salvation.
 - (1) 1 Co 1:18 -- "For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

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- (2) 1 Co 1:23-24 -- "but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."
 - (3) You cannot remain neutral in the presence of the cross. It has always divided mankind, and it still does. It is either an offense to us or it is the power of God to our salvation. We are either clinging to that cross or we are enemies of that cross. There is no middle ground when it comes to the cross.
 - (4) And, unlike the other attitudes we just considered, we are to glory in the cross!
 - (a) We are not just to admire it, or just praise it, or just believe it, or just intellectually accept it. We are to boast in it -- and in it alone.
 - (b) That cross points to the most important event that ever occurred and that ever could occur. There is an exclusiveness about the cross that can never be lost.
 - (5) As the song says, we must "survey" the wondrous cross. It calls for more than a casual glance. We must meditate on it, gaze at it, and survey it from every angle. Does it have that position in our life? Does it have that position in our congregation?
- **4. God's View of the Cross**
- a. Jesus placed the cross front and center.
 - (1) Jesus' death on the cross was central to his mission.
 - (a) The doctrine of the death of Christ is the substance of the gospel. Stephen Charnock
 - (2) Jesus spoke plainly and openly about the cross; there was nothing secret about it.
 - (a) Mark 8:31-32 -- "And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him."
 - (b) Mark 9:31 -- "For he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise."
 - (c) Mark 10:32-34 -- "And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, 33 saying, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. 34 And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise."
 - (d) John 12:31-33 -- "Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. 32 And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." 33 He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die."
 - (e) When Peter rebuked Jesus in Matthew 16:22 for speaking about his death, Jesus said that Peter was not setting his mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.
 - (f) Jesus spoke of his death as he, Peter, James, and John were walking down from the mountain of the transfiguration in Matthew 17:12.
 - (g) Jesus spoke of his death in response to the request by James and John and their mother that they be given the positions of honor in Christ's kingdom in Matthew 20:28.
 - (h) He spoke openly of his death at least six times during the final week.
 - (3) Jesus' baptism by John foreshadowed his death.
 - (a) At his baptism, Jesus identified himself with sinners, which he would do fully upon the cross.
 - (b) Romans 6:3-11 shows that our own baptism and death and burial to sin is an imitation of his own death.
 - (1) "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with

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him in a resurrection like his. 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. 7 For one who has died has been set free from sin. 8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. 10 For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. 11 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus."

- (c) In Luke 12:50, Jesus refers to his own death as a baptism.
 - (1) "I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled! 50 I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished!"
- (d) Those who belittle baptism, belittle the cross of Christ! The two are inseparably linked.
- (4) The Communion Supper is a proclamation of the cross.
 - (a) Luke 22:19-20 -- "And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 20 And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."
 - (b) Matthew 26:26-29 -- "Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." 27 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, 28 for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29 I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."
 - (c) 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 -- "For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."
- (5) The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the message of the cross.
- (6) If you want to know anything about the wisdom or love of God, look at the cross.
 - (a) 1 Cor 1:23-24 -- "but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. "
- b. Paul placed the cross front and center.
 - (1) 1 Cor 2:2 -- "For I decided to know nothing among you expect Jesus Christ and Him crucified."
 - (2) Eph 2:16 -- "and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility."
 - (3) Col 1:20 -- "and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross."
 - (4) Col 2:14-15 -- "by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. 15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him."
 - (5) Acts 17:2-3 -- "And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, 'This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ.'"
 - (6) Rom. 3:22-25 -- "For there is no distinction: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith."
 - (7) Rom. 5:6-9 -- "For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even

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to die— 8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God."

- (8) Rom. 6:3 -- "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?"
- (9) Rom. 8:32 -- "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?"
- (10) 1 Cor. 1:23 -- "but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles"
- (11) 1 Cor. 11:26 -- "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."
- (12) 1 Cor. 15:3-4 -- "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures."
- (13) 2 Cor. 5:21 -- "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."
- (14) Gal. 5:11 -- "But if I, brothers, still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been removed."
- (15) Gal. 6:12-14 -- "It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. 13 For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. 14 But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."
- (16) Eph. 2:16 -- "and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility."
- (17) Phil. 2:8 -- "And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."
- (18) Heb. 12:2 -- "Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."
- c. Peter also placed the cross front and center.
 - (1) 1 Peter 2:24 -- "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed."
- d. The victorious cross is front and center in the book of Revelation -- even though the word "cross" does not appear in the book. (Although Rev. 11:8, which compares Rome with Sodom, Egypt, and Jerusalem -- "where their Lord was crucified" -- comes close.)
 - (1) Revelation celebrates the victory of the church over the mighty Roman empire, and the primary symbol of that victory is the Roman cross!
 - (2) Revelation 1:5 -- "and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood"
 - (3) Revelation 1:17-18 -- "But he laid his right hand on me, saying, 'Fear not, I am the first and the last, 18 and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.'"
 - (4) We can see the cross throughout the book of Revelation when we notice that a key name for Christ in Revelation is the Lamb of God.
 - (a) Revelation uses the term "lamb" nearly 30 times.
 - (1) I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain. (5:6)
 - (2) Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain. (5:12)
 - (3) The Lamb opened one of the seven seals. (6:1)
 - (4) The wrath of the Lamb. (6:16)

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- (5) Washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (7:14)
- (6) The book of life of the Lamb who was slain. (13:8)
- (7) The marriage of the Lamb. (19:7)
- (8) The supper of the Lamb. (19:9)
- (9) The wife of the Lamb. (21:9)
- (10) The throne of God and of the Lamb. (22:1)

- (b) Others in the New Testament also speak of Christ as the Lamb.
 - (1) John 1:29 -- "The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'"
 - (2) 1 Peter 1:18-19 -- "Knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot."
 - (3) 1 Corinthians 5:7 -- "For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed."

- (c) The Old Testament also portrays the Messiah as a Lamb.
 - (1) Isaiah 53:7 describes the Messiah as a lamb that is led to the slaughter.
 - (2) The Passover lamb prefigured the sacrifice of Christ.
 - (3) Abraham and Isaac prefigured the sacrificial death of Christ.

- e. In the New Testament, the cross is a symbol of victory rather than defeat.
 - (1) You will find no defeatism among God's people in the Bible. Instead, in the midst of persecution, there is a joyful confidence. They are more than conquerors. Jesus overcame the world. We see a great victorious triumphal procession.
 - (2) Col. 2:15 -- "He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him."
 - (3) 1 Cor. 15:57 -- "But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - (4) Rom. 8:37 -- "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."
 - (5) 2 Cor. 2:14 -- "But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere."
 - (6) Victory is the theme of Revelation!

- f. The church must also place the cross front and center.

- **5. The Crucified Life**
 - a. There are many paradoxes associated with the cross, but perhaps the greatest is that Christ turned the cross, that ancient symbol of death, into a symbol of life.
 - (1) That is what happens when the Author of Life touches something!
 - (2) And that is what Christ does to us at our baptism, which Romans 6 describes in terms of Christ's death. We are raised to newness of life.
 - (3) And yet we are also raised to carry our own cross. We are raised to live a crucified life.

 - b. The Christian's Cross
 - (1) Gal 6:14 -- "But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."
 - (2) Matt 10:38 -- "And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me."
 - (3) Luke 14:27 -- "Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple."
 - (4) Matt 16:24 -- "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

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- (5) Mark 8:34 -- "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."
- (6) Luke 9:23 -- "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."
- (7) 1 Peter 2:24 -- "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. "
- (8) Gal 6:12 -- "It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ."

• 6. Songs & Quotes about the Cross

• a. Isaac Watts

- (1) When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.
Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.
See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?
Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

• b. Quotes about the Cross

- (1) He who alone was free among the dead-because he was free to lay down his life and free to take it up again-was for us both victor and victim. . . . and it is because he was the victim that he was also the victor. Augustine
- (2) The love on the cross is not what God suddenly became but what God always was and ever shall be. William Barclay
- (3) The Cross is the Gate of Heaven. Karl Barth
- (4) He drained the cup of God's wrath bone dry, leaving not a drop for us to drink. Richard Allen Bodey
- (5) The cross of Christ destroyed the equation "religion equals happiness." Dietrich Bonhoeffer
- (6) Christ's blood is heaven's key. Thomas Brooks
- (7) Do you wish to see God's love? Look at the cross. Do you wish to see God's wrath? Look at the cross. D. A. Carson
- (8) Nails were not enough to hold God-and-man nailed and fastened on the Cross, had not love held Him there. Catherine of Siena
- (9) By the cross we know the gravity of sin and the greatness of God's love towards us. John Chrysostom
- (10) O my Savior, make me see How dearly thou hast paid for me. Richard Crawshaw
- (11) The cross is the ladder to heaven. Thomas Draxe
- (12) You do not understand Christ till you understand the cross. P. T. Forsyth
- (13) The more we lack in this world, the more we discover the best thing the world has to offer us: the Cross. Charles de Foucauld
- (14) God came to earth to do the one thing he could not do in heaven. Die. Ken Gire

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- (15) It was love that kept Jesus from calling 12,000 angels who had already drawn their swords to come to his rescue. Billy Graham
- (16) God gives us the cross, and then the cross gives us God. Jeanne Guyon
- (17) Christ did not die that God might love us, but He died because God loved us. Charles Hodge
- (18) Through a tree we were made debtors to God; so through a tree we have our debt canceled. Irenaeus
- (19) The whole world in comparison with the cross of Christ is one grand impertinence. Robert Leighton
- (20) On the cross, God treated Jesus as if he lived your life so he could treat you as if you had lived his. John F. McArthur
- (21) The death of Christ was the most dreadful blow ever given to the empire of darkness. William S. Plumer
- (22) The cross is our tree of life. Vic Reasoner
- (23) Death stung himself to death when he stung Christ. William Romaine
- (24) In the cross there is safety. Thomas à Kempis
- (25) The cross of Christ is the most revolutionary thing ever to appear among men. A. W. Tozer