

950115AM

The Passion of Christ on the Cross Mark 15:22-47

The Cross of Jesus Christ stands at the center of God's redemptive Plan.

Read: 1 Corinthians 1:18
 Galatians 2:20
 Galatians 6:14
 Colossians 2: 9-15
 Revelations 5: 9; 13: 8

Its shadow was across the steps of each day of Jesus' life. Our text this morning has as its central focus the Cross of Jesus Christ. In this portion we can see:

1. The Purpose of the Cross 15:22-32
2. The Passion of the Cross 15:33-46
3. The Power of the Cross 15:37-47

Lets look at each of these and grow in our awareness of how much Christ did at the Cross.

The Purpose of the Cross 15:22-32

1. First, to display the sinfulness of man.
The Roman Cross that was the tool of God to accomplish Redemption had its origin in the horrors of the utter baseness of a sin filled culture.

Second, to demonstrate the Sovereignty of God. The details were planned in ages past by the Father. Listen to the scriptures fulfilled at the Cross:

So, the Purpose of the Cross was to show the Sinfulness of man and the Sovereignty of God. Paul put it this way:

2 Corinthians 5:21 For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. (KJV)

The Passion of the Cross = SUBSTITUTION

Mark 15:33-46

What was Jesus doing on the Cross? Of all people He was unworthy of its ignominious horrors. What was He doing there? SUFFERING IN MY PLACE. The central tenet of Christianity is the Substitutionary Atonement . Jesus died in my place. Gal 2.20 HE GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME!

Listen to what one Pastor¹ so eloquently said: (Mark 15:34)

About midafternoon Christ cried out with a loud voice saying, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” Here is something completely beyond human understanding: God became separated from God. God the Father turned His back on God the Son.

Exactly what kind of separation was that? The Son wasn’t separated from His own divine nature - He didn’t cease to be God. Neither was He separated from the Trinity in essence or substance. Rather, He was separated in terms of intimate fellowship and communion with the Father.

¹ John MacArthur, *Coming Face to Face with His Majesty*, p. 106-7.
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Finally, Christ declared, “It is finished!” and “bowed His head and gave up His spirit” (John 19:30). The suffering He so willingly endured for the sake of mankind was over.

Why Did He Do It?

Why did God allow His own Son to die on a cross? Paul explained, “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him *up for us all*, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:32 emphasis added) In His condemnation and death, Christ took our place. Isaiah said of Christ, “He was pierced through for *our* transgressions, He was crushed for *our* iniquities; the chastening for *our* well being fell upon Him, and by His scourging *we are healed*. *All of us* like sheep have gone astray, *each of us* has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity *of us all* to fall on Him” (Isa. 53:5-6, emphasis added).

The Father “Made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” 2 Cor. 5:21). Christ “redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us” (Gal. 3:13).

The death of Christ is a demonstration of what God is like. Paul said, “God demonstrates His how love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). One of the most beautiful and moving hymns about the cross is “O Sacred Head, Now Wounded”, which is attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux from the twelfth century. Read the words prayerfully and reverently, for they tell of a God who deeply loves us:

O sacred Head, now wounded,
 With grief and shame weighed down.
 Now scornfully surrounded
 With thorns, Thine only crown;
 O sacred Head, what glory,

What bliss till now was Thine!
 Yet, though despised and gory,
 I joy to call Thee mine.

What Thou, my Lord hast suffered
 Was all for sinners' gain.
 Mine, mine was the transgression,
 But Thine the deadly pain.
 Lo, here I fall my Saviour!
 'Tis I deserve Thy place;
 Look on me with Thy favor,
 Vouchsafe to me Thy grace.

What language shall I borrow
 To thank Thee, dearest Friend,
 For this Thy dying sorrow,
 They pity without end?
 O make me Thine forever;
 And should I fainting be,
 Lord, let me never, never
 Outlive my love to Thee.

So the Purpose was to show Christ's Triumph over man's
 sinfulness through God's Sovereignty.

The Passion of the Cross was to show Christ's Substitutionary
 Atonement. Finally we see:

The Power of the Cross = SALVATION'S TRIUMPH Mark 15:37-47

What is the power of the Cross? It is our Triumph. It is our
 liberation. It is the crushing of Satan's head.

Many years ago a pastor in Boston powerfully illustrated the power of the Cross²:

Jesus Has Paid for Our Release

Years ago, Dr. A.J. Gordon gave an illustration from the pulpit of his Boston church that explained the Cross better than any text of theology ever could.

One Sunday morning, the people came in and the choir met as usual. But sitting beside the pulpit was an old, beat-up, rusty birdcage. Dr. Gordon came to the pulpit and held up the empty cage. Then he told them this story.

It seems that one day he met a little boy in front of the church. He was carrying a rusty old birdcage in his hands, with several little birds clinging to the bottom of the cage. Dr. Gordon stopped him and asked,

“Son, where did you get those birds!” The boy answered, “I trapped them out in the field.” “What are you going to do with them?” the preacher asked. “I’m going to take them home and play with them and have some fun with them.” “What will you do with them when you get through playing with them?” Dr. Gordon asked. “Oh,” said the boy, “I guess I’ll just feed them to an old cat we have around the house.”

Then Dr. Gordon asked the boy how much he would take for the birds and the boy answered, “Mister, you don’t want these birds. They’re just little old field birds and they can’t sing very well.” Dr. Gordon said, “I’ll give you two dollars for the cage and the birds.” “All right,” said the boy, “It’s a deal, but you’re making a bad bargain.”

² Swindoll, *Issues and Answers*, p. 143-4.

The exchange was made and the boy went whistling down the street, happy because he had two dollars in his pocket. Dr. Gordon took the cage out behind his church and opened the door of the cage and the birds flew out and went soaring away into the blue singing as they went.

...[Dr. Gordon told his congregation,] “That little boy said that the birds could not sing very well, buy when I released them from the cage they went singing away into the blue, and it seems that they were singing, ‘Redeemed, redeemed, redeemed.’”

Jesus Christ paid His tears and His blood and His life when He bought us from Satan’s hand. And when He walked away a few hours later, He lifted the door to our cage and set us free. That’s why His resurrection is so important. Without it, life doesn’t have any meaning, and we are not free. We’re just trapped in a cage, lost and hopeless.

We can’t promise that if you surrender to Christ, all your problems will be solved. In fact, surrender could lead to death--the death of a dream, the death of a career, the death of a relationship, the death of your old way of life. But we can guarantee that if you surrender to the will of the Father, you will have the hope of resurrection -- physically, spiritually, and in every area of your life.

The Triumph of Christ on the Cross opened the way for us to know God. It is no longer me but Christ. Listen to Andrew Murray³:

*To be nothing before God and men,
to wait on God alone;*

³ Hunt, *Beyond Seduction*, p.163.

*to delight in, to imitate, to learn of Christ, the Meek
and Lowly One -
this is the very key to the School of Christ,
the only key to the true knowledge of Scripture.*

And now to 1995. What can the Cross do to me today? Listen and see if God has something to say to you today. Hymn writer Elizabeth Clephane captures the place we must go, The Shadow of the Cross:

*I Take O Cross thy Shadow for my abiding place;
I ask no other sunshine than the sunshine of Thy face.
Content to let the world go by, to know no gain or loss;
my sinful self, my only shame-
My glory all the Cross.*

Lets be practical now.

High Schoolers and Collegians⁴:

LIFT HIGH THE CROSS ABOVE ALL YOUR
CAREER OPPORTUNITIES AND PLANS.

*Matthew 16:24-25 Then said Jesus unto his disciples,
If any man will come after me, let him deny himself,
and take up his cross, and follow me. ²⁵ For whosoever
will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose
his life for my sake shall find it. (KJV)*

Empty nesters and those at the height of your careers:

LIFT HIGH THE CROSS ABOVE WHAT YOU
HAVE WORKED AND SAVED FOR ALL THESE
YEARS.

*Matthew 16:24-25 Then said Jesus unto his disciples,
If any man will come after me, let him deny himself,
and take up his cross, and follow me. ²⁵ For whosoever*

⁴ Adapted from Kroll, Vanishing Ministry, p. 151.

will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. (KJV)

Retirees and those who have all those years of everyday work at the job behind you:

LIFT HIGH THE CROSS ABOVE THE PLEASURES AND MUCH DESERVED COMFORTS OF YOUR GOLDEN YEARS.

Matthew 16:24-25 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. ²⁵ For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. (KJV)

What is your goal in life, down deep in your heart of hearts. Down where only you and God know what's going on?

- Is it me or Him?
- Is it how much money will I give to God. Or is it How much of God's money should I keep for myself?
- Is it how much time can I spare from my career for the church. Or is it how much can I invest in something that will matter in one hundred years?
- Is it how can I relax and unwind from my chosen path of career stress and fast paced living. Or is it how can every act of my life reflect that I am seeking first the Lordship of Christ in my spare time, recreation, hobbies, pursuits, athletics and social and family life?

Matthew 16:24-25

**Then said Jesus unto his disciples,
If any man will come after me,
let him deny himself,
and take up his cross,
and follow me.**

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it:

and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. (KJV)

- Is this too high a standard He is calling us to? Did not Jesus ask us nothing other than what He was willing to do Himself? Did He not love His Father more than brothers or sisters or mothers or fathers and even His own life also?
- Did not Jesus renounce all that He had as His RIGHTS and PRIVILEGES in Heaven as Heir of all things? Remember, when He died there was no probate of an estate to settle and divide. “His personal estate consisted of a loin cloth that the soldiers left Him after gambling away His outer garments”⁵.

*I gave My life for thee,
my precious blood was shed.
That thou mightest ransomed be, #436
and quickened from the dead.
I gave, I gave it all for thee,
what hast thou given for me?
I gave, I gave it all for thee,
what hast thou given for me?*

Matthew 16:24-25

**Then said Jesus unto his disciples,
If any man will come after me,
let him deny himself,
and take up his cross,
and follow me.**

**For whosoever will save his life shall lose it:
and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. (KJV)**

⁵ Sanders, *Spiritual Discipleship*, p. 21-22.