

Evening Worship September 2, 2018

"Crazy about the Cross" 1 Corinthians 1:17-25; 2:1-16

I. The Holy Spirit helps us to comprehend (understand) the cross –

1. An ungodly world, non-believers, and sometimes even immature or confused Christians do NOT comprehend, understand Christ's cross –

A. They consider it foolishness –

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (1 Corinthians 1:18 NKJ)

...and to the Greeks foolishness, (1 Corinthians 1:23 b NKJ)

B. To the Jews it was a stumbling block –

but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block ... (1 Corinthians 1:23 NKJ)

They were ashamed to have a suffering servant as their king - ¹⁵ But they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!" (John 19:15 NKJ)

As was prophesied by Isaiah (Isaiah 53:1-6) they did not believe HIM Jesus, nor did they understand His cross was for them –

• Christ's cross was the arm and strength of God

Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

• They did not believe because Christ lacked the glitzy, the flashiness, the kind of power they had eyes for -

² **For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him.**

• They despised Him Whom they should have honored -

³ **He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.**

• His cross, His suffering was for our salvation, and because of our sins and yet it is NOT understood as such –

⁴ **Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵ But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by 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 has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. (Isa. 53:1-6 NKJ)**

2. Comprehension of the cross comes only by God's Holy Spirit, it comes with the New Birth –

A. Nicodemus was a teacher in Israel and yet Jesus says to Him – Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3 NKJ)

Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" ⁵ Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶ "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' (John 3:4-7 NKJ)

B. Ultimately Jesus brings Nicodemus to the cross, as this is where salvation from sin begins –

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ "that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁶ "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:14-16 NKJ)

C. Jesus does the work of salvation, dying on the cross, the Holy helps us to understand and appreciate it –

But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him." ¹⁰ But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. (1 Corinthians 2:9-10 NKJ)

D. The Holy Spirit is our helper and teacher –

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. (John 14:26 NKJ)

II. *The Holy Spirit helps us to choose the cross –*

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (1 Corinthians 1:18 NKJ)

1. *It is foolishness to THEM, those who lost, perishing headed to Hell, but to US but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*

We relish the cross, we see it as something beautiful, different, powerful because God's Spirit has taught us that it is such, we see things which eye hath not seen –

But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him." ¹⁰ But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. (1 Corinthians 2:9-10 NKJ)

2. *We choose Him and His cross because He has chosen us –*

For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*. ²⁷ But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; ²⁸ and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, ²⁹ that no flesh should glory in His presence. ³⁰ But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God-- and righteousness and sanctification and redemption-- ³¹ that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD." (1 Cor. 1:26-31 NKJ)

- A. *We choose Him because He has chosen us*
- B. *We choose His glory above our own (our own glory, are own comfort) because we realize He chose our salvation before His ease ...*

3. *Note how this does not come naturally "Across the will of nature, leads on the path of God, not where the flesh delighteth the feet of Jesus trod ..." Tersteegen*

For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. (Galatians 5:17 NKJ)

4. *Even the Apostle Peter had some trouble with this –*
 - A. *In some ways Peter was at the top of the class -*

Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 16:16-17 NKJ)

- B. *Yet, he refused to choose the cross, even for Jesus, maybe especially for Jesus –*

From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. ²² Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" ²³ But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." (Matthew 16:21-23 NKJ)

5. *Moses chose it –*

By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵ choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, ²⁶ esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. (Hebrew 11:24-26 NKJ)

6. *Paul chose it – Philippians 3:8-11, 1 Corinthians 2:2*

III. *The Holy Spirit helps us to carry the cross –*

1. *The Holy Spirit helped Christ take the cross – how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Hebrews 9:14 NKJ)*

2. *Jesus commands us to –*

Then He said to *them* all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. ²⁴ "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. (Luke 9:23-24 NKJ)

3. *We are to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice – Romans 12:1-2 "It is better to take pains than to suffer pains, and to be bound with the cords of duty than with the chains of darkness. Thomas Manton*

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