

“The Power of the Cross of Christ”
I Corinthians 1:18

Introduction: “cross” (Strong’s) “a well known instrument of most cruel and ignominious punishment, borrowed by the Greeks and Romans from the Phoenicians; to it were affixed among the Romans, down to the time of Constantine the Great, the guiltiest criminals, particularly the basest slaves, robbers, the authors and abettors of insurrections, and occasionally in the provinces, at the arbitrary pleasure of the governors, upright and peaceable men also, and even Roman citizens themselves”

1. We See those that are Preaching- *“For the preaching of the cross...”* I Corinthians 1:23a
 - a. “In Paul’s day there was even greater stigma attached to such a message, for the cross was a gallows, the equivalent to an electric chair. Slaves, the lowest type of criminals, rebels, and enemies, were executed by crucifixion. The utmost shame and horror were attached to such a death.” (Phillips)
 - b. “To preach the cross was ridiculous.” (Phillips)
2. We See those that are Perishing- *“...is to them that perish foolishness...”*
 - a. Their Ruin- *“...is to them that perish...”* II Thessalonians 2:10
 - b. Their Reasoning- *“...foolishness...”* I Corinthians 1:23b, 2:14
 - (1) “Greek culture was unsurpassed in the ancient world.” (Phillips)
 - (2) “The problem was that this Greek penchant for cleverness had invaded the Corinthian church.” (Phillips)
 - (3) To them, their gods lived in luxury and lusts. The God Paul preached was born in a barn, raised in poverty, was ridiculed, insulted, and crucified. (Phillips)
3. We See those that are Prevailing- *“...but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”* Ephesians 2:5

Body: What does the Bible have to say about the power of the cross of Christ?

- I. The Road to the Cross Hebrews 12:2- *“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”*
 - A. Our Saviour’s Sight- *“Looking unto Jesus...”* Hebrews 11:24-27 (The Brazen Serpent—Numbers 24:1-9, John 3:14-16)
 - B. Our Saviour’s Sovereignty- *“...the author and finisher of our faith...”* (“Christ is both the exemplar and the enabler!” —Wiersbe)
 - C. Our Saviour’s Satisfaction- *“...who for the joy that was set before him...”* Acts 2:25-27 (Jesus knew that He would be resurrected.)
 - D. Our Saviour’s Stand- *“...endured the cross...”*
 - E. Our Saviour’s Shame- *“...despising the shame...”* Hebrews 12:3
 - F. Our Saviour’s Seat- *“...and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”* (And He is still sitting there! Hebrews 1:3)

- II. The Reproach of the Cross Galatians 5:11- *“And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.”*
- A. The Prior Preaching of Paul- *“And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision...”*
1. “Of course, he had once preached circumcision, but that was before his conversion.” (Phillips)
 2. “Some of the Judaizers even circulated the slander that Paul preached circumcision in order to ruin his influence.” (RWP)
 3. If Paul was still preaching circumcision, why was he suffering persecution?
 4. Keep in mind, when Paul had Timothy circumcised, it was to better reach the Jew, not to add to salvation.
 5. “Since the death and resurrection of Christ, there is no spiritual value to circumcision; it is only a physical operation.” (Wiersbe)
- B. The Present Persecution of Paul- *“...why do I yet suffer persecution?”*
1. If Paul were to agree with the Judaizers concerning circumcision for salvation, then all of his troubles would cease.
 2. Paul was still being mistreated because he was not preaching circumcision.
- C. The Pondered Perception of Paul- *“...then is the offence of the cross ceased.”*
1. The Judaizers never recognized Jesus as the true Messiah because “His life and teaching cut cleanly across theirs.” (Phillips)
 2. “*offence*” (Strong’s) “fig. applied to Jesus Christ, whose person and career were so contrary to the expectations of the Jews concerning the Messiah, that they rejected him and by their obstinacy made shipwreck of their salvation”
 3. “To preach the cross was an offense to the Jews, and it was nonsense to the Romans and the Greeks. Yet, Paul knew that Calvary enshrined the greatest truth in the world.” (Phillips)
 4. “So, although such preaching might be offensive to the unregenerate human heart, no other message existed. For preaching that message, Paul was mobbed in Jerusalem, mocked at Athens, and murdered at Rome.” (Phillips)
- III. The Reason of the Cross Colossians 2:14- *“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;”*
- A. The Annihilation of the Broken Law- *“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us...”* Acts 3:19
1. “All of the vast machinery of sacrifices and offerings that were such an integral part of the Mosaic Law did not really cancel sin.” (Phillips)
 2. “All it did was cover sin—sweep it under the rug, so to speak.” (Phillips)
 3. “In Bible days, financial records were often kept on parchment, and the writing could be washed off.” (Wiersbe)
- B. The Adversity of the Broken Law- *“...which was contrary to us...”*

1. It was contrary to us because we could not keep the law. (RWP)
 2. The ordinances were not for us, but against us. (Phillips)
- C. The Acceptance of the Broken Law- *"...and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;" I Peter 2:24*
1. Illustration: John Phillips worked at large bank in Canada.
 2. "When the loan was repaid, the bank canceled the promissory note by recording the payment received and by drawing two diagonal lines across the front of the note." (Phillips)
 3. "The note was canceled by a cross." (Phillips)
- IV. The Reconciliation of the Cross Ephesians 2:16- *"And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:"*
- I. The Agreement of the Cross- *"And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross..."*
1. "Not only did the Gentiles need to be reconciled to the Jews, but both the Jews and the Gentiles needed to be reconciled to God!" (Wiersbe)
 2. "There are no divisions based on racial origins, religious backgrounds, class distinctions, national boundaries, or color prejudices in the church." (Phillips)
 3. "Both" are a new man in Christ. Ephesians 2:15
- II. The Abolishment of the Cross- *"...having slain the enmity thereby:"*
- V. The Rest in the Cross Colossians 1:20- *"And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."*
- I. Through His Redemption- *"And, having made peace through the blood of his cross..."*

Mary had a little Lamb, His life was pure as snow.
 And everywhere the Father led, the Lamb was sure to go.
 He followed Him to Calvary, one dark and dreadful day,
 And there the Lamb that Mary had washed all my sins away.

- II. Through His Restoration- *"... by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."*
1. "Sin somehow has put the universe out of joint. Christ will set it right." (RWP)
 2. "Not once in the Bible is it ever said that God is reconciled to man. God has no need to be reconciled to us; we need to be reconciled to him. The hostility is all on our part." (Phillips)
 3. "The father never stopped loving the prodigal." (Phillips)
 4. II Corinthians 5:19- *"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."*

5. “God’s reign, then, extends to three realms; reconciliation extends to only two realms. Reconciled people are to be found both on earth and in heaven.” (Phillips)
- VI. The Rejoicing over the Cross Galatians 6:14- *“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.”*
- I. The Controlled Praise- *“But God forbid that I should glory...”*
 - II. The Correct Praise- *“...save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ...”*
Revelation 5:9
 - III. The Crucified Person- *“...by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”*
 1. “Paul's old world of Jewish descent and environment is dead to him.” (RWP)
 2. “Paul lived with an eye on Calvary. To him, the cross was the symbol of what the world had done to Jesus.” (Phillips)
- VII. The Result of the Cross I Corinthians 1:17- *“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.”*
- I. The Duty of the Preacher- *“For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel...”*
 1. “Baptism neither confers salvation nor confirms salvation. It is the first step of a saved person in a life of obedience. Baptism is simply the outward expression of an inward experience.” (Phillips)
 2. “The great thing to do is to tell people how to be saved.” (Phillips)
 - II. The Depriving of the Power- *“...not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.”*
 1. “The salvation message is simplicity itself.” (Phillips)

Conclusion: Certainly, we as God’s children realize the power of the cross of Christ and should glory in it!