

## Doctrine of the Cross

1. Jesus used the image of the cross to teach the importance and difficulty of following Him.
  - *Matthew 10:38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.*
  
2. To take up one's cross means to deny self. The cross is a place of death.
  - *Matthew 16:24 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.*

One rich young ruler of Israel, whom Jesus loved, was invited to deny himself and follow Christ.

  - *Mark 10:21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.*
  
3. At least one person was compelled to help Christ bear His own literal cross on the way to His execution.
  - *Matthew 27:32 And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.*
  - *Mark 15:21 And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross.*
  
4. Simon took the cross of Christ to Golgotha.
  - *John 19:17 And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha:*
  
5. In a cruel act of malice, and political posturing, Pilate wrote a sign and had it nailed to the cross at Golgotha.
  - *John 19:19 And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.*
  
6. While Jesus was on the cross, some mocked Him, adding insult to injury.
  - *Matthew 27:39 And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, 40 And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.*

7. The religious leaders of Palestine also laughed at Jesus and argued to themselves in what they believed to be a rational manner saying, *“How can a man save others who cannot help himself?”*
  - *Matthew 27:41 Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, 42 He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.*
8. While on the cross even the thieves crucified with Him reviled Him, though later, one repented and asked to go to Paradise.
  - *Mark 15:32 Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him.*
9. But not everyone at the cross mocked.
  - *John 19:25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.*
10. It was not enough that the Jews had Jesus crucified. In order to keep their religious festivals they asked that the Lord's legs be broken in order to hasten His death.
  - *John 19:31 The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day, (for that Sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.*
11. Before Calvary and after Calvary, no one can be a disciple of Christ who is not willing to bear a cross for His sake.
  - *Luke 14:27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.*
12. Following the resurrection of Christ, the cross became a symbol of His great work of redemption. The place of shame had been transformed into a place of great glory and worthy of remembrance.
  - The cross is the place where the battle of the ages for the souls of men was won. *1 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.*
  - The cross is foolishness to some but a display of the saving power of God to others. *1 Corinthians 1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.*
  - The cross is an offense to many. *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.*

- The cross is an encouragement to suffer persecution for Christ. *Galatians 6:12 As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.*
  - The cross is where a person dies to the world. *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.*
  - The cross is the place of reconciliation. *Ephesians 2:16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:*
  - The cross is the place where Jesus became obedient even unto death. *Philippians 2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*
  - The cross is the place of peace. *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.*
  - The cross is the place where God becomes free to justify the guilty. *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;*
13. More than two thousand years have passed, and yet there are still individuals who are enemies of the cross.
- *Philippians 3:18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:*
14. There are various reasons why individuals dislike the cross.
- Some do not like the cross because it does not fit their theological bias. The mere image of a cross enrages them. Given a chance there are religious zealots who would destroy any visible symbol of the cross and consider themselves doing God's work.
  - Some do not like the cross because it convicts them of sin, righteousness, and judgment to come.
  - Some do not like the cross because it reminds the heart of the bloody sacrifice necessary for redemption. A bloodless redemption based upon personal good works is preferred.
15. The *Bible* reveals why Jesus went 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.*