

## Doctrine of the Cross

1. The Cross-is a symbol of death for all Christians.
  - *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.*
  - *Mark 8:34 And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*
  - *Luke 9:23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*
  
2. The Cross-Jesus has reference to is not physical—such as sickness or blindness, nor a natural limitation. The reference is to something personal and spiritual that needs to be put to death, for it is an offense to God, and a danger to the soul.
  
3. Failure to die to self in the area that needs to be dealt with, makes a person unworthy to be a true disciple of Christ.
  - *Matthew 10:38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.*
  - *Luke 14:27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.*

“God . . . will treat us without pity because he desires to raise us without measure—just as he did with His own Son on the cross!” A. W. Tozer (1897-1963)

“God gives us the cross, and then the cross gives us God”. Madame Jeanne Marie de La Mothe Guyon (1648-1717)
  
3. The Rich Young Ruler did not become a disciple of Jesus because he would not die to self in the one area of his life that needed to be crucified.
  - *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.*

Despite the Lord’s love for the Young Ruler, He let him leave and go to his own self-destruction. Therein lays a word of warning. Do not presume upon the love of Christ when He calls to discipleship. Do not turn away, or delay to follow Him.

4. The symbolic death to self reflects the true sufferings of Christ at Calvary. God the Father ordained that salvation is to come by the shedding of blood on a Cross. Thomas À Kempis (C. 1380-1471) reminds us that

- in the cross is health,
- in the cross is life,
- in the cross is protection from enemies,
- in the cross is heavenly sweetness,
- in the cross strength of mind,
- in the cross joy of the Spirit,
- in the cross the height of virtue,
- in the cross perfection of holiness.

There is no health of the soul, no hope of eternal life, save in the cross.

5. Jesus always knew that He would die on a Cross, and taught this truth to His disciples, though sometimes in cryptic language.

6. The Lord never contested the will of the Father. Jesus always submitted.

- *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.*

7. Then the dreadful hour came. After being betrayed, arrested, beaten and mocked, Jesus was forced to carry his own cross. What Jesus spiritually asked of His disciples, He did physically, by way of an example.

- *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.*

8. On the way to Calvary, staggering under the ordeal of carrying His own Cross, Jesus found temporary relief when a stranger was commanded to help him.

- *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.*
- *Luke 23:26 And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.*

9. Once at Calvary a sign was placed over the head of Jesus.

- *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.*

Pilate wanted to shame the Jewish community, and confirm that it was they, and not he, that ultimately killed their Messiah.

10. Witnessing all of this were the woman who loved Jesus so very much.

- *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.*

While the women wept, the workers of Satan stepped forth.

11. From the beginning of His ministry to the end, The Enemy of Men's Hearts encouraged Jesus to bypass the Cross. In the end there was the Taunt of Temptation to come down from the Cross.

- *Matthew 27:42 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.*
- *Matthew 27:40 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.*
- *Mark 15:30 Save thyself, and come down from the cross.*
- *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.*

Had Jesus come down from the Cross-of Calvary, there would have been no salvation for you or for me.

12. The physical sufferings of Christ on the Cross-would have been even greater, if the religious leaders of Israel would have had their way.

- *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.*

It was not enough for the Pharisees and members of the Sanhedrin to have Jesus bloodied and butchered through scourging and crucifixion, they wanted his legs broken and his breathing stopped through suffocation—in order to keep the Sabbath holy!

13. Lest the sufferings of Christ be for nothing, God the Father has ordained that the story of the Savior's sufferings be told until the end of time. From the sea of humanity individuals have been tapped on the shoulder and entrusted with the privilege of proclaiming the simplicity of the gospel.

- *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.*

14. The declaration that Divine redemption comes by grace though faith alone, seems like a foolish message to many, but it is really the power of God unto salvation.

- *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.*

Calvary means "the place of a skull", and that is where our Lord is always crucified, in the culture and intellect of men. Oswald Chambers (1874-1917)

15. Because men always want to do something to merit the merits of Christ, and add to their salvation, they are offended when told that Christ alone saves. The Christian Jews of old wanted to include the act of circumcision as part of the process of salvation. The apostle Paul opposed this practice. He would not preach a gospel that included ritual circumcision.

- *Galatians 5:11 And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? Then is the offense of the cross ceased.*

Paul understood the root of the problem. The Jewish Christian community simply wanted to be able to say that they had a physical mark on their body to prove that they were born again and worthy of God's favor.

- *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.*

That same problem still exists today. There is a desire to make a fair showing in the flesh. So the cults add good works as part of the process of salvation. And certain religions add baptism as part of salvation's process. The Catholic Church insists that baptismal regeneration, plus good works, plus faith in Christ, to be the way of salvation. But it is still Christ alone that saves.

16. If we are to glory, let us not glory in our good works, our baptism, church membership or fraternity identifications. Let us glory in 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.*

“In the cross of Christ I glory,  
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;  
All the light of sacred story  
Gathers round its head sublime.”

Sir John Bowring  
1792-1872

17. Those who preach any other gospel or means of salvation, except by the Cross of Calvary, 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:*

18. The doctrine of a free gospel of free grace cannot be pressed enough. It is by means of the Cross-that men are reconciled to God.

- *Ephesians 2:16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:*

Have you been reconciled to God? Have you been to Calvary? Have you looked afresh upon Jesus Christ with the eye of faith and confessed Jesus as Lord and Saviour?

“Calvary is the place of decision. It is the eternal sword, erected to divide men into two classes, the saved and the lost” (Billy Graham (1918 - ).

19. Peace with God comes through the blood of 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.*

20. Whatever judgments God the Father has against us are blotted out at Calvary.

- *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;*

“Why did God do this? Because of His infinite love. God proved his love on the cross. When Christ hung, and bled, and died it was God saying to the world-I love you” (Billy Graham (1918- ).

21. And so we look unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith...

- *Hebrews 12:2 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.*

Come to Christ. Then it will not seem hard to pick up your cross and follow Him.

“O my Savior, make me see  
How dearly thou hast paid for me”.

Richard Crashaw (c. 1613-1649)