

## 1 Corinthians 1:17-18

### THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS

**Intro:** When Andrew Mercaldo left our church he gave me some wisdom as advice. He said that on Communion Sundays that whoever gave the message should always preach about the Cross and Christ crucified. This morning before we partake of the Bread and the Cup I want you to take time to think of what they represent and why Jesus wants us to remember Him when we celebrate Communion. We are living in a day when the message of the church and the cross is changing. Churches, and even whole denominations, are moving away from the old message of salvation through the blood of Jesus, and are moving toward a message of salvation through "social activism" and good works. The old bloody message of the cross is quickly being replaced by a bloodless message that lacks power and that lacks hope. Instead of hearing the devastating, but life changing news that men are sinners, people hear a message that tells them, "*I'm OK and you're OK!*"

Well, I would like to take the same stand that the Apostle Paul took all those years ago. When he wrote to the church in Corinth, Paul reminded them that he had been called for one purpose and that purpose was to preach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. That message was to be his focus and that message was to be his ministry.

Today, I would like to restate the old, old message. I would like to remind everyone in this building about what happened that day when the Lord Jesus died on the cross at Calvary. Because, it was that event, which took place at Calvary 2,000 years ago that altered the future for every person who places their faith in the One Who died there that day.

Please join me as we revisit the old story again. I would like to take you back to a little hill just outside the gates of the city of Jerusalem, where we will encounter an event that purchased and provided salvation for every person who receives that event as their very own. Let's return together to the cross of Calvary, and try to grasp *The Message Of The Cross!* As we do, please let the Lord speak to your heart and if you have never been saved, I invite you to come to Jesus today for salvation through His precious blood.

## I. THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS

A. **A Strange Message** - (That there should be life out of death. The Jews were looking for a Messiah Who would throw off the Roman yoke and give them liberty from their captors. They totally missed the fact that their Messiah would be One Who would suffer for the sins of the people, **Isa. 53:1-3.**) (**Note:** The message of the bloody cross of Jesus is still a strange message to those who have never experienced its life changing power. To them it is "*foolishness*". This word comes from the same word from which we get our word "*Moron*". To the lost the idea of trusting a suffering, bleeding man for salvation is moronic! Ill. **1 Cor. 1:21-24!**)

B. **A Shocking Message** - (A brutal, awful death was experienced there on that cross.) The death Christ died on the cross was one of absolute torture. You and I cannot even begin to imagine all the pain that Jesus was forced to endure for our sakes. Allow me to refresh your mind this morning about the terrible price Jesus paid for you as He suffered for sin that day.

1. Scourged - **Matt. 27:26** Then he released Barrabas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

2. Beaten - **Luke 22:63-64** Now the men who held Jesus mocked Him and beat him. And having blindfolded Him, they struck Him...

3. Spit upon - **Matt. 27:30** Then they spat on Him and took the reed and struck him on the head.

4. Beard Plucked from His Face - **Isa. 50:6**

5. Mocked - **Matt. 27:29** When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on his head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him saying "Hail, King of the Jews!"

6. Stripped Naked - **Matt. 27:28** And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him

7. Nailed to the Cross - **Matt. 27:35** **Then they crucified Him** ( The ancient Assyrians were the first to "**crucify**" their victims. However, they did not nail them to cross, they merely impaled them on sharpened stakes and left them to die a horrible death that often took several days. When the Romans came along, they streamlined the method and added the little touch of actually nailing their victims to the cross. This method of death usually took several days as well.)
8. These truths don't even begin to scratch the surface of Jesus suffered for you and me. His was a bitter cup, but one that He drank of willingly so that we might be saved, **Luke 22:41-42. And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt and prayed, saying Father, if it is Your will, remove this cup from Me, nevertheless, not My will but Yours, be done**

(**Note:** To hear the details of Christ's death on the cross is disturbing! But, it is a necessary truth that must be proclaimed and must be heard before there can be salvation. Friends, there is only one way for you to get to God and that is by the way of the cross. There is no salvation apart from faith in the work of Jesus on Calvary!)

C. **A Simple Message** - ( Not clouded by demands and details, but delivered in simplicity and clarity.) One of the problems with the modern church is that we have tried to attach too many conditions to salvation. However, the Bible is clear when it tells us that the way to be saved is for the sinner to accept by faith what the Bible teaches about Jesus and His atoning death on the cross. This is what the preaching of the cross is all about! It is not about you quitting your sins! It is about you coming to Jesus by faith! It's not about turning over a new leaf, it's about placing your faith in Jesus and Him alone for salvation! And if you do that you will in fact want to quit your sins and turn over a new leaf!

## II. **THE PURPOSE OF THE CROSS**

A. **About Making A Statement** - Since way back in the Old Testament, the Lord has been telling us of His love for us. However, in Christ's death on the cross, God was able to declare boldly, for all to see, His boundless, matchless love for the lost of this world. The cross is God's statement of

love to the world - **John 15:13** Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends

- B. **About Providing Salvation** - The Bible, tells us that there is no other way to cleanse sin, but through the sacrifice of an innocent one in the place of the guilty one,. This is seen all the way back in the beginning when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, **Gen. 3:21**. This same line of thought continues all the way through the days of the Tabernacle and the Temple. There, sin was atoned for by the blood of sheep, bulls and goats, but it was never taken away. However, the Lord Jesus went to the cross and died for the sins of humanity. When He did, His death on the cross forever settled the sin debt of man! It is clear yet? If not, then listen to this precious passage of Scripture, **Rev. 1:5**; and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood. By the way, the word "*saved*" means, "*to keep safe and sound, to rescue from all harm and danger; from destruction and from perishing!*" Sounds to me like when a person comes to Jesus by faith and gets saved, it's a done deal! That person does not need to fear losing his salvation.
- C. **About Defeating Satan** - Ever since Lucifer sinned and became the devil, he has been in the business of trying to hinder the work of God. He loves nothing better than keeping souls in bondage and seeing them condemned to Hell. But, when Jesus went to the cross, I am of the opinion that Satan thought he had won the victory that day. I am sure he rejoiced when Jesus cried out, "*It is finished!*" But, what he did not know that day was that the Lord Jesus wasn't planning to stay dead! Maybe the devil should have listened closer and he would have understood that Jesus did not say, "*I am finished!*" He said "*It is finished!*" You see, when Jesus died on the cross, He did not die to stay dead, but He rose from the dead three days later and nailed old slew foot's coffin lid shut! The Bible tells us that the victory over the devil is found in the blood of the Lamb, **Rev. 12:11**. "*For they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb...*" (**Note:** Satan is defeated! He may roar like a ferocious lion and he may try to keep you from God, but he has been defeated by the power of God and you do not have to remain his prisoner this morning! There is power in the blood of Jesus to set you free!)

### III. THE POWER OF THE CROSS

(Ill. When the power of the cross is appropriated, three great and wonderful things take place. Notice what they are:)

- A. **Sin Dies** - When a person places his/her faith in the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, that person is forever changed! The chains of sin are broken, **Rom. 6:14**, and they are made into a new creature, **2 Cor. 5:17**. Now, the new born believer does not have to live his life in bondage to sin, (Ill. The blood has the power the change every life touched by it! There really is wonder working power in the blood of the Lamb!)
  
- B. **Hell Is Defeated** - No blood washed, blood bought individual will ever experience the flames and fires of Hell! One of the most precious verses in the Bible pertaining to this subject is found in **John 5:24**. There, the Bible tells us that we will never come into condemnation! **Romans 8:1** confirms this for us! Thank God, no child of God will ever have to go to Hell, Satan will not get his wish! That ought to cause us to rejoice this morning! Amen?
  
- C. **Heaven Is Delivered** - The blood is the key that unlocks the gates of glory! When the blood is applied, the child of God becomes instantly destined for an eternity in Heaven with the Lord! That is His promise to every believer. And, there is only one way to get to that glorious place, **John 3:3** where Jesus told Nicodemus that you must be "born again" in order to see the Kingdom of God.

**Conc:** When evangelist John Wesley was returning home from a service one night, he was robbed. The thief, however, found his victim to have only a little money and some Christian literature. As the bandit was leaving, Wesley called out, "Stop! I have something more to give you." The surprised robber paused. "My friend," said Wesley, "you may live to regret this sort of life. If you ever do, here's something to remember: 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin!'" The thief hurried away, and Wesley prayed that his words might bear fruit. Years later, Wesley was greeting people after a Sunday service when he was approached by a stranger.

What a surprise to learn that this visitor, now a believer in Christ as a successful businessman, was the one who had robbed him years before! "I owe it all to you," said the transformed man. "Oh no, my friend," Wesley exclaimed, "not to me, but to the precious blood of Christ that cleanses us from all sin!"

Has the blood been applied to your life? Is your name written down in Heaven?  
Is your faith in Jesus and in Him alone?

If you need to come to Jesus for salvation this morning, this altar is open! If you need to come and get your walk with God straightened out the Elders are available. You come while the Lord is dealing with your heart today!

Let's Pray....