

CROSS—MY HEART

1 Corinthians 1:17-18

INTRO Turn your Bibles, or turn them on to 1 Corinthians chapter 1. Today, I want to preach on a subject you don't hear much in the modern church. I want to preach about THE CROSS.

The present day church has, for the most part, replaced the bloody cross of Calvary, where Jesus died for the sins of the world, with the more palatable gold and silver crosses that adorn the ears and necks of men and women. It's interesting really, that on any given Sunday, people will pour into churches wearing the most beloved symbol of the Christian faith around their necks and on their fingers, but hardly ever, if ever, hear a sermon on the cross. It's an abandoned message. And I get it. There is nothing beautiful about the cross where Jesus died. It was a ghastly scene, that would have made our generation sick at our stomachs had we seen for ourselves Christ crucified. BUT THE FACT IS, it's the preaching of the cross that brings people face to face with their sins and with the Savior. And as the New Testament writer of Hebrews wrote, "...without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin." (Heb 9:22)

So today, I want us to let the Word of God take us back to Calvary, that little hill where Jesus shed His blood to redeem the lost souls of all mankind. There, Jesus crawled His way over to a cross that was built just for Him, and He laid down on it to die in our place. He took our punishment, for the Bible says that "*the wages of sin is death...*" (Rom 6:23) And it confirms that "*all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.*" (Rom 3:23) We all deserved to die, but Jesus, God's Son, took our place.

Today, I am preaching on the subject, "CROSS—MY HEART". And the cross should have a special place in the heart of every Christian in the world today. My prayer is that you will fall in love with it all over again before we leave this place. Read with me from God's Holy Word...

1 Corinthians 1:17-18, Paul is writing to the church at Corinth, and he says, "*For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with words of wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. 18 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.*" Notice...

I) THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS: There are three things we need to notice about the preaching of the cross...

A) It's a STRANGE Message: v 18 "*For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing...*" 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, even though the prophet wrote about Him as such. **Isaiah 53:4-5** "*Surely He took on our infirmities and carried our sorrows; yet we considered Him stricken by God, struck down and afflicted. 5 But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.*"

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". The word translated "foolishness" is the Gr word "mōria" (mo-ree'-ah) from which we get our English

I) THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS:

A) It's a STRANGE Message: **v 18** CONTINUED word "Moron". To the lost the idea of trusting a suffering, bleeding man for salvation is moronic! And to most in the church today, it's a strange message. The question is, what do you think about the cross?

B) It's a SHOCKING Message: The death Christ died on the cross was one of absolute horror and torture. You and I cannot even begin to imagine all the pain that Jesus was forced to endure for our sakes. Let's see what the Word of God says about it...

1) He was Scourged: **Matthew 27:26** "So Pilate released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed Him over to be crucified."

2) He was Beaten: **Luke 22:63-64** "The men who were holding Jesus began to mock Him and beat Him. 64 They blindfolded Him and kept demanding, "Prophesy! Who hit You?"

3) He was Spit On: **Matthew 27:30** "Then they spit on Him and took the staff and struck Him on the head repeatedly."

4) He was Mocked: **Matthew 27:27-29** "Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company around Him. 28 They stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. 29 And they twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on His head. They put a staff in His right hand and knelt down before Him to mock Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

5) He was Nailed to a Cross: **John 20:24-25** "Now Thomas called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he replied, "Unless I see the nail marks in His hands, and put my finger where the nails have been, and put my hand into His side, I will never believe."

And this doesn't even scratch the surface of what all Jesus suffered as He died for us. **Isaiah 52:14** states, "many were appalled at Him—His appearance was disfigured beyond that of any man, and His form was marred beyond human likeness"

WOW, it's a STRANGE and SHOCKING message. But notice...

3) It's a SIMPLE Message: 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, **Romans 10:9-10** "that if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with your heart you believe and are justified, and with your mouth you confess and are saved."

This is what the preaching of the cross is all about! It is not about you quitting your sins! It's 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!

I must move on. Notice secondly...

II) THE PURPOSE OF THE CROSS: **v 18** "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."

So we see that the message of the cross can be two things, 1) It's foolishness, or 2) It's the Power of God. The difference being in whether or not you BELIEVE the message!

I) THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS:

II) THE PURPOSE OF THE CROSS: v 18 Ultimately, the purpose of the cross... is to appropriate the power of God in the lives of those who believe (those who are saved, or being saved-present tense as we read in this verse) And this PURPOSE is carried out through the ages by the MESSAGE or PREACHING of the gospel. SO, if we are rightly dividing the Word of Truth, the POWER OF GOD is directly connected to the CROSS. And since the crucifixion of Christ was a once in a lifetime event which took place some 2000 years ago, we rely on the continual preaching or message of the cross in the present to unleash the life changing power of God in the lives of those who believe today! WHICH BRINGS US NATURALLY TO OUR LAST POINT...

III) THE POWER OF THE CROSS: vv 17-18 *“For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with words of wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. 18 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.”*

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, Romans 6:14 states, *“For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.”* 2 Corinthians 5:17 declares, *“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.”* Romans 6:6 confirms, *“We know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.”*

The blood has the power to change every life touched by it! PRAISE GOD, 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 John 5:24 *“Truly, truly, I tell you, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not come under judgment. Indeed, he has crossed over from death to life.”* Romans 8:1 says, *“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”* No child of God will ever have to go to Hell, Satan will not get his wish! And the church all said...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, John 14:1-3 *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe in Me as well. 2 In My Father’s house are many mansions. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and welcome you into My presence, so that you also may be where I am.”* And, according to Jesus, there is only one way to get to that glorious place, John 3:3 *“Jesus replied, “Truly, truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”*

CONCLUSION: In closing, I need to ask, has the blood been applied to your life? Is your name written down in Heaven? Is your faith in Jesus and in Him alone?