**The Crux of the Cross**

*Galatians 6:14*

**Introduction**

1. ***“The cross”*** was something of which Paul was extremely proud. He boasted, or gloried in the cross before others. In fact, this was his entire purpose as an apostle – to boast in the cross of Christ before everyone he met.
2. What was this ***“cross”*** in which Paul boasted? What did he mean by such?
3. ***“The cross”*** is mentioned many times in the New Testament. We must understand ***“the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*** **Many do not…**
4. What is the crux of the cross? (Main focus, central point of.)
5. The Cross
6. The Superstitious Cross
   1. **Whether it be the Protestant denominations with their cross, or the Catholics with their crucifix, the cross has become a superstitious focal point.**
      1. Many wear, tattoo on their body, or heavily decorate their home with crosses or crucifixes.
      2. ***The mindset which often spurs on this behavior is contrary to Christ, and misses the point of the cross.***
      3. Such is used as a good luck charm, or something which causes them to be surrounded by an impenetrable force field, or as a means to somehow obtain God’s favor.
      4. Such is superstitious, contrary to God’s will, and completely misses the point of ***“the cross.”***
   2. **This view of the cross bears semblance to Paganism, not Christianity:**
      1. **Acts 17:24-29** – Paul to the Athenians on Mars’ Hill.
         1. **(v. 29)** – God is not physical, and cannot be treated as such. He cannot be pleased with the physical.
         2. **Those who think a physical cross will make them closer to God are severely mistaken.**
   3. **There is nothing spiritual about a physical cross/crucifix. Such is reflected by the lives lived by many who wear them, and surround themselves by them.**
7. The Real and Symbolic Cross
   1. **Real** – All of this is not to say there was no literal physical cross.
      1. **Jesus was crucified on a cross** **– John 19:17-19** – bore an actual cross, nailed to it, and a sign placed above Him on it.
      2. **Crucifixion was a form of Roman capital punishment where the offender was flogged, then nailed to a wooden cross where they would suffocate and die. (Shapes of X, T, t – t is the traditional view of Jesus’ cross.)**
      3. **Literal not important** – *some claim to possess slivers of the actual cross on which Jesus was crucified* – false claims – no way of knowing – does not mater anyway.
   2. **Symbolic** – “the cross” is used in scripture by way of metonymy.
      1. **Metonymy** – a part put for the whole. ***(EX: “The pen is mightier than the sword.” Pen – written word; Sword – military force***)
      2. **Usage of *“the cross:”***
         1. ***“the cross of Christ…the message of the cross”*** **(1 Corinthians 1:17, 18)** – the gospel truth.
         2. ***“The cross”*** stands to represent the entirety of the gospel truth 🡪
         3. ***“offense of the cross”* (Galatians 5:11); *“enemies of the cross”* (Philippians 3:18).**
8. What, then, is the crux of ***“the message of the cross” (1 Corinthians 1:18)?***
9. The Crux of the Cross
10. The Curse of Sin
    1. **Galatians 3:10-12** – Paul demonstrating that justification is ONLY by faith, and impossible by perfect keeping of law.
       1. **(v. 12)** – To be justified by law, one must PERFECTLY keep the law – **to sin in one point is to violate the whole law.**
       2. **(v. 10)** – Such a one is cursed.
          1. ***“your iniquities have separated you from your God” (Isaiah 59:2).***
          2. ***“For the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23).***
          3. **Sin is not harmless. Sin is death.**
    2. **Galatians 3:13-14** – Christ became a curse for us.
       1. How did Christ become a curse? – **(v. 13b) – cf. Deuteronomy 21:22-23** – *God allowed a public display of the punishment of sin.*
       2. ***“is accursed of God”*** – Such a one was hanged for all to see the ugliness of sin, and the just punishment meted out by God.
       3. **Jesus’ death on the cross was a public display of the severity of breaking God’s law.**
    3. ***“for us”*** – vicarious – ***“The soul who sins shall die” (Ezekiel 18:20),*** but sinless Christ died in our stead 🡪
11. Redemption
    1. **Atoning Sacrifice**
       1. **Hebrews 9:6-7** – The type of the tabernacle – Once a year on day of Atonement – **not without blood**.
       2. **Leviticus 17:11** – Life in blood – sin requires blood, or life to appease God’s judicial wrath. (**PROBLEM – bulls and goats just a shadow**)
       3. **Hebrews 9:11-12** – The blood Christ brought was His own 🡪
       4. **Hebrews 10:3-10** – Blood of bulls and goats could not atone for sins, so God prepared a body for Jesus as the sacrifice which COULD and WOULD make atonement for sins.
    2. **Forgiveness**
       1. **Because atonement was made for sins by Jesus’ blood, God can forgive men of their sins.**
       2. **Hebrews 8:12-13** – There was a need for a New Covenant, under which God would forgive men of their sins.
       3. **Hebrews 9:16-22** – A covenant must be dedicated with blood.
          1. **(v. 22)** – There is no remission, or forgiveness without blood.
          2. The blood of Jesus dedicated the NC, and provided forgiveness.
    3. **Reconciliation**
       1. **Sin separated us from God, but at the cross atonement was made, forgiveness made possible, thus, reconciliation offered.**
       2. **Colossians 1:19-22** – We are reconciled, brought to peace with God, rejoined in fellowship with God, through the cross.
       3. **Because of the cross, and through the cross we can approach God. Without the cross such is not possible.**
       4. **2 Corinthians 5:18-19** – God’s desire was to mend the relationship man had broken through sin – it was through Jesus’ death on the cross that such occurred.
          1. **(vv. 20-21)** – However, we must BE reconciled to God through Christ.
          2. **Reconciliation is offered through the cross, but WE MUST COME TO THE CROSS 🡪**
12. Personal Crucifixion and Cross Bearing
    1. **To receive the benefits of the cross we must be identified with the cross.**
    2. **Romans 6:1-6** – In baptism, we gain access into the benefits of Christ’s death.
       1. It is in Jesus’ death where atonement, forgiveness, and reconciliation is found; where redemption is found.
       2. **To gain access to such, one must be baptized.**
    3. **Galatians 2:20** – Paul was baptized, or crucified with Christ.
    4. **Galatians 6:14** – In Paul’s baptism, the world (sin) became dead to him, and he to the world. 🡪
    5. **Jesus bore His cross to Calvary, then was crucified.**
    6. ***We are crucified, then bear our cross until heaven:***
       1. The cross Jesus bore was that of being ***“obedient to the point of death, even the death on the cross” (Philippians 2:8).***
       2. **Mark 8:34-38** – We must take up our cross, obeying Jesus AT ALL COSTS, so that we may be saved in the end.
       3. **The cross, as it was for Jesus, stands for SELF-DENIAL, TOTAL SURRENDER IN OBEDIENCE, SUFFERING AND SHAME, but then, GLORY 🡪**
    7. **The cross is the road to glory** – **cf. John 13:31** (*after Judas went out to betray Jesus*) – Jesus knew the first step of the final chapter to the cross was taken, and thus to glory.
    8. ***“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” (1 Corinthians 1:18)***.

**Conclusion**

1. We must not allow the world’s view of the cross to taint our understanding of it.
2. **At the cross is the redemption of mankind in Jesus sacrificial death.**
3. This is the crux of the cross.
4. Will you obey the ***“message of the cross?”***