

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.)
 - I. The Cross
 - A. The Superstitious Cross
 - a. **Whether it be the Protestant denominations with their cross, or the Catholics with their crucifix, the cross has become a superstitious focal point.**
 - i. Many wear, tattoo on their body, or heavily decorate their home with crosses or crucifixes.
 - ii. ***The mindset which often spurs on this behavior is contrary to Christ, and misses the point of the cross.***
 - iii. 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.
 - iv. Such is superstitious, contrary to God's will, and completely misses the point of **"the cross."**
 - b. **This view of the cross bears semblance to Paganism, not Christianity:**
 - i. **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.**
 - c. **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.**
 - B. The Real and Symbolic Cross
 - a. **Real** – All of this is not to say there was no literal physical cross.
 - i. **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.
 - ii. **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.)**
 - iii. **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 matter anyway.

- b. **Symbolic** – “the cross” is used in scripture by way of metonymy.
 - i. **Metonymy** – a part put for the whole. (EX: “*The pen is mightier than the sword.*” *Pen* – written word; *Sword* – military force)
 - ii. 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).
 - c. What, then, is the crux of “the message of the cross” (1 Corinthians 1:18)?
- II. The Crux of the Cross
- A. The Curse of Sin
 - a. **Galatians 3:10-12** – Paul demonstrating that justification is ONLY by faith, and impossible by perfect keeping of law.
 - i. (v. 12) – To be justified by law, one must PERFECTLY keep the law – to sin in one point is to violate the whole law.
 - ii. (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.
 - b. **Galatians 3:13-14** – Christ became a curse for us.
 - i. How did Christ become a curse? – (v. 13b) – cf. Deuteronomy 21:22-23 – God allowed a public display of the punishment of sin.
 - ii. “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.
 - iii. Jesus’ death on the cross was a public display of the severity of breaking God’s law.
 - c. “for us” – vicarious – “The soul who sins shall die” (Ezekiel 18:20), but sinless Christ died in our stead →
 - B. Redemption
 - a. **Atoning Sacrifice**
 - i. **Hebrews 9:6-7** – The type of the tabernacle – Once a year on day of Atonement – not without blood.
 - ii. **Leviticus 17:11** – Life in blood – sin requires blood, or life to appease God’s judicial wrath. (PROBLEM – bulls and goats just a shadow)
 - iii. **Hebrews 9:11-12** – The blood Christ brought was His own →
 - iv. **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.
 - b. **Forgiveness**
 - i. Because atonement was made for sins by Jesus’ blood, God can forgive men of their sins.

- ii. **Hebrews 8:12-13** – There was a need for a New Covenant, under which God would forgive men of their sins.
- iii. **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.
- c. **Reconciliation**
 - i. **Sin separated us from God, but at the cross atonement was made, forgiveness made possible, thus, reconciliation offered.**
 - ii. **Colossians 1:19-22** – We are reconciled, brought to peace with God, rejoined in fellowship with God, through the cross.
 - iii. **Because of the cross, and through the cross we can approach God. Without the cross such is not possible.**
 - iv. **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 →**
- C. **Personal Crucifixion and Cross Bearing**
 - a. **To receive the benefits of the cross we must be identified with the cross.**
 - b. **Romans 6:1-6** – In baptism, we gain access into the benefits of Christ’s death.
 - i. It is in Jesus’ death where atonement, forgiveness, and reconciliation is found; where redemption is found.
 - ii. **To gain access to such, one must be baptized.**
 - c. **Galatians 2:20** – Paul was baptized, or crucified with Christ.
 - d. **Galatians 6:14** – In Paul’s baptism, the world (sin) became dead to him, and he to the world. →
 - e. **Jesus bore His cross to Calvary, then was crucified.**
 - f. **We are crucified, then bear our cross until heaven:**
 - i. The cross Jesus bore was that of being **“obedient to the point of death, even the death on the cross” (Philippians 2:8).**
 - ii. **Mark 8:34-38** – We must take up our cross, obeying Jesus AT ALL COSTS, so that we may be saved in the end.
 - iii. **The cross, as it was for Jesus, stands for SELF-DENIAL, TOTAL SURRENDER IN OBEDIENCE, SUFFERING AND SHAME, but then, GLORY →**
 - g. **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.
 - h. **“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?"**