



THE CROSS OF CHRIST

What does the cross of Christ mean? Today, we do not hear too much about the cross of Christ because we associate it with suffering. The cross becomes a negative topic that goes against our way of thinking about life in how one should prosper and succeed. Nevertheless, the cross is so much more than what we think it is. The suffering due to sin is the issue that is addressed through the cross of Christ since Christ is our substitute for our sins. As we learn to have an open mind to view and see that the early church did suffer persecution, but it was for the cause of Christ. Still today, we need to be reminded that in some countries Christians do still suffer because of what they believe. Therefore; we must ask these questions, "What do we believe in," "to whom do we place our faith in for security," and "how do we maintain our righteousness"?

Paul the apostle was in prison in Rome when he wrote the second letter to Timothy stating that, "**I know whom I have believed**" [2 Timothy 1:12]. He makes the statement that it was Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and brought life and immortality to shine light through the gospel [see 2 Timothy 1:10]. The gospel of the good news in Christ Jesus is that He suffered on the cross not only for our sin, but he conquered death. Paul's holy calling as an appointed preacher and an apostle kept his faith in Jesus to where he suffers for the cause of the gospel [see 2 Timothy 1:8-12]. We also read in Hebrews 12:1-4, that with such a cloud of witnesses we are to throw off everything that would hinder us to sin and **fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith who endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.** In our struggle against sin, we have not resisted to the point of shedding our blood. It is through Christ Jesus that we obtained anything at all. He shed His blood for us on the cross. We have heard this statement many times. However, do we really identify with what that means? What are some of the benefits of the cross? I would like to challenge you to take some time to study this for yourself as you read the following benefits and look up the scripture reference noted.

1. He has chosen us before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. **Ephesians 1:4-8**
2. In Love he has predestined [or to determine in advance] that we be adopted as His sons and daughters into the family of God through Jesus Christ. **Romans 8:15, 29-30, Ephesians 1:5, 11-14**
3. He has given us redemption or the forgiveness of our sins through the blood of Jesus Christ. **Romans 3:24, Ephesians 1:7-9, Titus 2:14**
4. He has given us the gift of righteousness through what Jesus Christ did on the cross. We can not become righteous by our own self-efforts. We obtain our righteousness by faith in what Jesus Christ did for us on the

cross. He is our righteousness. [Romans 4:24, 5:17, 1 Corinthians 1:30-31, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Galatians 2:20-21, 3:6, Ephesians 2:4-10](#)

5. He has justified us by the death of Jesus Christ who became sin for us. It is by our belief in what he did for us on the cross that we are justified by our faith in Christ Jesus. [Romans 4:25, 5:1-2, 16, 18, 8:30, Galatians 2:16](#)
6. We have been baptized into His death and resurrection and we are seated with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. [Romans 6:3-6, Galatians 3:27, Ephesians 2:4-6, Colossians 2:11-12](#)

Paul said in 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." (KJV)

Our self is hidden in Christ. Everything we have is because of Christ. We have nothing to boast about when it comes to righteousness, justification, redemption, sanctification, etc. Many of us have tried to overcome by any means we can come up with by trying to follow some formula to obtain our righteous standing other than in the way that God provided. Our self-will, self-righteousness always gets in the way. It is a part of our character that has not been turned over to God's will. That is why Jesus said, "**If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me**;" for whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it." Matthew 16:24-25 (NIV) The battle is our own self-will wanting to take control. This brings envy, jealousy, and strife into our lives. It is our carnal nature. To be carnally minded is to be living by our own efforts without divine intervention. Every time a rule is required our flesh screams. We want to do the exact opposite. [Rules = Laws] We make up our own laws or rules, which we deem as righteous. I have heard statements that there are no absolutes. Perfect perfection must be maintained in our lives especially those of the Christian faith.

Romans 14:5-13 speaks how we are to live unto the Lord and not ourselves. We live to the Lord and die to the Lord. Christ died that He might be Lord to both the living and the dead. We need not to criticize how we do certain things such as eat, drink, dress, or go about our business as long as we live unto the Lord. We need not censure another's household. We will all stand before the judgment seat of God and be held accountable for our own actions. The purpose is to know that we are to live and be led by the Spirit of God. We are not to have the mind of the flesh, which is mind and reason without the Spirit's leading. The Holy Spirit witness within our heart lets us know the truth about a situation plus God's word helps guide us in the right direction of our thinking and how to live. If we are carried away by our emotions, mind and reason with no thought as to what we do, we can not please God. See Romans 8:5-10. He has imputed [given us] righteousness. It was not earned, but given to us because of the cross. We are a debtor [one who owes a debt to another] not to the flesh but to Christ because of the power of the cross, which has allowed the Holy Spirit to rule within our hearts. We must make it a habit to submit everyday and ourselves to God. Remember that each day is provided for by the gift of life our Lord has given to us. Do not allow the spirit of slavery/bondage to be put back upon you but let us hold unto and receive the Spirit of adoption to where we can cry Father! Father! [Romans 8:15] We can not justify our actions by works to

maintain holiness. We can come to the Father, ask, and receive His forgiveness. Three things to remember and consider as we behold the cross of Christ daily:

1. To be thankful and count your blessings which our Lord has bestowed upon us.
2. Submit ourselves [self-will, passions, and desires] to God and allow His will to change us into the image of Christ through the Holy Spirit, which He has placed within our hearts.
3. Receive and accept the grace of God through Jesus Christ as a gift and allow Him to work daily in our lives.

As Paul states in Colossians 1:19-23:

“For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation--if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant. [NIV].

Written by Inge Schultz © 2000