

The Cross of Christ is the central defining feature of our faith, 1 Cor. 1:22-23. Paul's preaching wasn't with persuasive words like the sophists of the time, but the simplicity of the Gospel: Jesus Christ and Him crucified, 1 Cor. 2:1-5. The prophets bore witness and testified of Christ which we now hear in the preached Gospel and receive by the Holy Spirit, 1 Pet. 1:10-12.

The Message of the Cross: 4 Shocking Consequences of the Cross:

- 1) **The Cross Enrages the Sinner:** God is the caller of sinners to receive the power of God to be saved. It sounds like foolishness (moronic, idiocy, naïve) to the perishing, 1 Cor. 1:17-18. Gal. 5:11, Paul was persecuted for the message of the cross.
 - a. The message of the cross infuriated the Jews because: it ended the Law of Moses, there were no more sacrifices, it showed the law couldn't bring righteousness apart from Christ, and it ended Judaism.
 - b. It offends unbelievers because they can do nothing to please God. **The Cross:**
 - i. Offends Human Wisdom: 1 Cor. 2:14.
 - ii. Offends Human Sophistication: the cross is simple to understand, Gal. 2:16.
 - iii. Offends Human Effort: Jn. 6:44, no one comes to the Father except by Christ. Eph. 2:5, we were dead in trespasses and sin. The cross dethrones our self-righteousness.
- 2) **The Cross Exposes the False Christian:** Those motivated by looking good but not wanting to be persecuted, Gal. 6:12. Those desiring to live godly in this age will be persecuted, 2 Tim. 3:12. What is the weak spot to tell if someone is acting like a Christian but not a true Christian? They can't abide extending grace to someone else, 1 Jn. 3:14. Jesus' most difficult words to false Christians? "Depart me from, I never knew you."
- 3) **The Cross Kills the True Christian:** Paul boasted in the cross, Gal. 6:14. 1) The world, by Christ, is crucified to me, and 2) The Christian is dead to themselves, Mark 8:34, and bears his cross, Luke 14:27. We lose our lives to save them, Matt. 16:25.
- 4) **The Cross Satisfies the Father:** Col. 1:20, The Father reconciled all things to Himself through Jesus' blood on the cross. Col. 2:13, We were dead in our trespasses and the uncircumcision of our flesh. God made us alive with Christ having forgiven us **ALL** our trespasses.
 - a. The true Biblical definition of "guilt" is that we have a record of debt that we must pay for violating His holiness. Col. 2:14, God wiped out the certificate of debt against us, having nailed it to the cross, Paid in Full, by Christ.
 - b. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory (holiness and righteousness) of God, Rom.3:23.

God is just, He will require every sin to be paid for, but there is no way to repay every lie, thought, or deed that we have committed. The penalty is eternal and permanent.

- Ps. 103:11-14, God removes our sin from us as far as the east is from the west.
- Let us reason together, says the Lord, though our sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow, Is. 1:18.

Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim, till all the world adore his sacred name.

Further Discussion and Application

What is the cross of Christ? What must we bear as believers? What do we need to crucify in our lives so we can bear the cross of Christ? Make a list of Jesus' commands and examples that we should imitate as disciples of Christ? What needs to change in our lives so that we would follow Him more faithfully and heartily?

Read Galatians 2:16. This verse gives a simple explanation of the law vs. righteousness that comes through faith in Christ. Why is the message of the cross foolishness to those who are perishing? How come faith in Christ is so simple to understand for believers? What do we know about our sinful condition unto God prior to salvation and after God regenerates us?

Is. 1:18 God implores us to logically consider our situation. We are sinners and our sin is as crimson. But God is rich in mercy and forgives us through Christ's substitutionary atonement on the cross. God's works in us to will and do of His good pleasure. How do we demonstrate a changed and forgiven life? How does obedience to Christ show our changed life?

The cross exposes false Christians. Examine your motivations toward Christ. How do we show love and give grace to other brothers and sisters in Christ? Do we love them, prefer them, consider them better than ourselves, and pursue peace with all? How is our love demonstrated to Christ's church?

Loving the brethren proves we love Christ. Why did Jesus ask us to demonstrate our love for Him by showing love and grace to others? Why is it so important to identify with those who He sends our way who are unbelievers? 1 John tells us that those who don't love the brethren don't love God. What should be a focus as we gather to worship the Lord and as we live our life in the church? How do we demonstrate this love for others?