

The Absurdity and Glory of the Cross - I Corinthians 1:18-31

[How many became believers in the 70's? - Jesus Movement - bumper sticker boom - one way patches - one way signals - honk if you love Jesus - wearing crosses the rage - boldness - mostly disappeared - the symbols and the boldness]

[The cross as a symbol has a long history. First was the ICHTHUS. Acrostic for "Ιησοῦς Χριστός, Θεοῦ Υἱός, Σωτήρ". Also used were an anchor, cross, lamb, shepherd, and dove. In the early 200's, the cross symbol was widely used]

[Today we want to focus on the cross, the O.T. types that looked forward to it, the N.T. revelation of its necessity and completeness, its foolishness, and its glory] [Heavenly scripted drama.]

[Hand out outline]

I. The History of the Cross

A. Eternity past - [Not an afterthought or plan B] Acts 2:2-24; Rev. 13:8; 17:8;

B. O.T. Refs. Genesis 3:15 [A hint and promise]; 22:1-19 [Abraham offers Isaac]; Exodus 12 [Passover]; Leviticus 16:34 (all of chap. 16); [Note: sin is serious- God is holy. Life is in the blood. What does sprinkling blood signify? Cleansing. Why was it needed? In worship, God makes the rules, prescribes the order and times. Lev. 10:1-3;] [How have modern worship styles stepped beyond biblical bounds?] [God, who is all Holy, demands a price for moral debt. When we sin, we prove that we are guilty and will be judged because God who is Holy is also Just.]

Isaiah 53:4-6 [God provided remission for the debt, looking forward to the Lamb and Son of God paying it in full]

[All types and shadows were fulfilled in the life and death of the Savior, not just the death.]

C. N.T. Refs. [The Jews stoned one to death - a mercy; the Romans crucified the guilty - an agony. Public torture and humiliation for the worst of criminals - started by the Greeks]

John 19:14-18; Phil. 2:5-8; John 1:29 [Jesus is the perfect sacrifice: sinless, yet made sin for us.] [Many more refs., esp. in the epistles. The cross is central, foundational and seminal to Paul's preaching and ministry] I Cor. 2:2; I Peter 1:2 [Peter also]

II. The Necessity and Completeness of the Cross

- A. Romans 5:6-10 [We were without God, without hope, dead in sin, active enemies to our Creator, and couldn't remit or pay for our own sins in order to be justified and holy before God]
- B. Hebrews 9:19-28 - 'remission': Gr. Aphasis; 'liberty, freedom'
- C. O.T. offerings insufficient - Hebrews chapters 8-10 - see Hebrews 9:12-14 and 10:1-12 [Sin could not die unless Christ died; Christ could not die without being made sin; - Elisha Coles] [Christ's death proves He died in our stead, the just for the unjust.]

III. The Foolishness of the Cross

- A. II Corinthians 4:3,4 [When eyes are blinded, the need for forgiveness is non-existent or distorted. The Gospel is sown on rocky ground and cannot take root. Friend at work joke when he sneezes, saying, "Forgive me, Lord, for I have sinned." He has no real concept of the knowledge of the depths of sin, nor its sure judgment. But he does have a hope: that he's not sinful enough to go to hell. That's reserved for the worst of the worst. The cross, then, is foolishness and unnecessary to him.] [Those in Greece were the world's wisest at that time, but what does Prov. 9:10 say?]
- D. I Corinthians 1:18-31 [Both unbelieving Jews and Gentiles have the same problem: they think the cross work of Christ is absurd. And to hear that salvation is of faith alone in the Christ of the cross - that's a Looney Tune fantasy to them.] [Pride wants to take credit for righteousness, but it is only self-righteousness.]

[Sproul's lecture interruption: "Primitive and Obscene". Sproul agreed: the atoning work of Christ is primitive (of ancient decree, an ancient and bloody ritual and even tribal - if you consider Israel as a tribe; and it is obscene: for the holy, sinless, Son of God to enter a totally sinful world and die a sinner's death and be judged by His Father - that IS obscene!]

[But what the world calls 'foolishness', God calls 'wise.' - and 'wonderful.']

IV. The Glory of the Cross

- A. Galatians 6:14 [Let's note what it doesn't mean.]

Doesn't mean elevating the symbol to a superstitious level or use. Wearing a cross or displaying them all over your house, expecting God's protection and blessing is pure pagan religious superstition.

It doesn't mean glorifying the horrors, agony and suffering of Christ on the cross. The NT doesn't supply gross details of the crucifixion, especially in the epistles. The OT doesn't describe the slaughter house sights and sounds

of crying animals, and spattered and stained blood all over the tabernacle and temple.

It DOES mean that we glory in the WORK of Christ on the cross. John 19:28-30. All is fulfilled. God is satisfied. The great work of redemption is finished. We glory in that. We praise God for it. We sing songs about it. We want to see the One who died on our behalf. We want to fall at His feet in eternal worship and adoration and glory in His presence.

B. Hebrews 1:1-3

C. Revelation 5:12-14

THERE IS A FOUNTAIN FILLED WITH BLOOD

There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains:
Lose all their guilty stains,
Lose all their guilty stains;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.

Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its pow'r,
Till all the ransomed church of God
Are safe, to sin no more:
Are safe, to sin no more,
Are safe, to sin no more;
Till all the ransomed church of God
Are safe, to sin no more.