

Three Crosses

Galatians 6:14; Luke 23:33

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FOCAL Read Responsively Luke 23:33 And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

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.

The Psalmist rightly said that **“I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are Thy works {O God}”**. Nothing brings a person back to reality like a high fever during a time of illness. We may consider ourselves self sufficient, and walk in pride barely acknowledging the Lord Who loves us, but when our immune system crashes we're looking for relief. An atheist will lie in a bed with a high fever, periodically crying out “O God” - whether he believes in God or not!

When I was seven or eight years old I got very sick and began to run a low grade fever. Mama let me stay home from school, something I was always willing to do. I was having – as they say in the country - “a high time” - watching TV and being waited on hand and foot. Then something happened: my stomach turned somersaults, and I felt like I was on fire. I called for Mama. She kissed me on my forehead – felt I had a fever – and then turned quickly put a thermometer in my mouth. As my temperature was dangerously high she ran a cool bath and made me get in it. I sure felt better when I wasn't so hot!

If you are born again by faith in Christ then the Lord has given you a spiritual tool by which you can determine whether your *spiritual health*. That tool is the Cross of Christ.

What do you think of the Cross of Christ? Prior to salvation by faith we all regarded that Cross as **foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:18)**. We were, we believed, sufficient unto ourselves. We believed ourselves good enough to go to Heaven and even, like the Pharisee in the Temple, said to God

Luke 18:11-12 “... God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. {12} I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.”

We believed ourselves rich, but were mere beggars outside the gates of the City of God. Like a child playing a piano did not recognize the black keys, but our piano was all of white. We could not play a melody for God because we did not recognize our sin. Then came that blessed day we saw our King. He wasn't sitting in a beautiful velvet lined chair, robed in gold and scarlet. His robe lay at His feet while He hung upon His Throne:

**Wounded and bleeding, for sinners pleading,
Blind and unheeding, dying for me!
"Father forgive them!" thus did He pray,
E'en while His lifeblood flowed fast away;
Praying for sinners while in such woe**

No one but Jesus ever loved so. ¹

Until God opens your eyes to the Cross you will believe that you are **sufficient unto yourself**. You will be like the Apostle Peter was when Jesus announced that He must go to the Cross. You'll tell the Lord **“be it far from Thee, Lord, this shall not be!”** How did Jesus answer Peter? He said **“Get thee behind Me, Satan, for you are an offense to Me: you desire not the things of God, but the things of the world!” (Matthew 16:23)**. The Cross is necessary. On the day that Jesus hung on the Cross of Calvary, two other crosses stood on either side of His. The thieves that hung on His right and left hand were hanging *because of their own sin*. Jesus, on the other hand, hung on His Cross for our sin, not for His. He hung bleeding to pay a penalty neither you nor I could pay. He hung tortured because **God loves us, and gave Himself for us (Galatians 1:4)**. He hung in our place for there was **no fault in Him (Luke 23:4)** – the fault was in us. If we will glory, if we will boast, let us boast in the Lord. **He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord (1 Corinthians 1:31)**.

Let's look at Calvary for a moment. The Cross in the middle, that Cross of Christ, is a Cross of **reconciliation**, of **redemption**, and of **restoration**. That Cross on the left is the Cross of **rejection**, whereas the Cross on the right is the Cross of **reception**. Let's look at these concepts for a moment as we break the bread of life.

1. We Glory In The Cross Of Reconciliation

¹ *Blessed Redeemer*, Words by Avis M. Christiansen, Music by Harry D. Loes, 1920

FOCAL 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.

As humans we *like to be right*. I have never seen an argument between two people where they were fighting over who was *more wrong*. No, we will battle over who is right, and we will act upon our rightness. But listen, dear friend,

You *cannot be saved unless you admit that you are wrong*. The Cross of Christ has no meaning *unless you and I are wrong*.

The Bible teaches that all of us – men, women, and children – are born in opposition to God. We do not naturally love God, but seek to do the things that are evil to God. We did not first seek to make the peace. We are not *naturally good*, as so many people believe. Humanity will not bring about a utopia. How do we know this? Look at the life of Christ.

Jesus Christ left the splendor of Heaven, came to earth, and was **born of a virgin in fulfillment of prophecy (Isaiah 7:14)**. He was “**Emmanuel, God with us**” (Matthew 1:23). Jesus **went about doing good, healing all who were oppressed of the devil (Acts 10:38)**. Did those whom He came to deliver from sin stand up for Him when He was unjustly tried? No, not at all. **He was delivered to the Gentiles – the unbelievers – to be**

mocked and scourged and crucified (Matthew 20:19). Unbelieving Pilate offered to release Jesus while crucifying the murderer **Barabbas** in His place. The crowd cried out “**crucify Him**”, though He had never done evil in all His life. The eyes which looked on the sick with compassion were dimmed as blood ran into them. The hands which healed the leper and raised the dead were nailed with coarse, iron spikes to the rough wooden cross.

We are naturally born evil, at war with God. We are, according to the Scripture, *naturally ungodly* – separated from God because we are His enemies. There is none good, no, not one. Yet the Bible tells us that the Cross is the greatest instance of love ever known. We read:

Romans 5:10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

We glory in the Cross because **we were enemies of God – we fired the first shot – we started the war – But God laid down His life for us that the war might end.**

How can a person find peace with God? Recognize that the Cross is *no compromise*. God never compromises. We were His enemies when He, of His free and sinless will, decided to make the peace by sending Christ to that terrible Cross. The Bible tells us:

2 Corinthians 5:18 And all things are of God, who

hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

God did not – nor does not – *ever* – expect us to make payment for sin. People, you cannot come to God as if you are going to a supermarket. There is no coin that Heaven will accept but the Blood of Jesus Christ. *As a matter of fact* the Bible says that:

2 Corinthians 5:19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

God took the initiative in extending the hand of reconciliation. We made enemies with God, we were guilty. The Bible says:

Colossians 1:21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

Though the Lord was the offended party, He took the initiative to make the peace. **“The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world”** (John 1:36)

Hebrews 9:26 ... now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

You who are believers *were* enemies of God, but are now **reconciled to God by the Cross of Calvary**. You are *restored* and are no longer enemies of God, but are **sons**

of God. The Bible tells us:

John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

If you have admitted your sinfulness and your inability to *be right* with God, if you have looked at the Cross of Reconciliation and seen Christ as the *only means* by which you may be saved – then you are **no longer strangers and foreigners, no longer enemies of God, but are children of His Kingdom, sons of God in the midst of a fallen and hopeless generation.**

Your glory is not in the Law, not in a Building, but your glory rests in Christ – for He alone has reconciled you to God by the Blood of His Cross.

2. We Glory In The Cross of Redemption

FOCAL 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.

We who are saved do not glory in our abilities, but in His ability. The Apostle Paul said **“Here is where I make my boast – the Cross of Christ alone.**

The Apostle Paul was an Israelite of the seed of Abraham and of the Tribe of Benjamin (**Romans 11:1**). He was a chief Pharisee, and *blameless in keeping the*

Law (Philippians 3:5-6). Did Paul boast of these things? Did he boast of his family tree, of his roots, of his education, of his apparent sinlessness insofar as the Mosaic Law was concerned. Absolutely not! The Apostle said:

Philippians 3:8-9 Yea doubtless, and **I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, {9}** And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

The Apostle said said “my boast will be in the Cross of Christ, for this Cross alone has redeemed me from where I was to where I need to be”.
Unredeemed people are always following an unredeemed world!

What has Christ redeemed us from by His Cross? **He has redeemed us from the curse of the Law!** The Scripture says:

Galatians 3:11-13 But that **no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. {12}** And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. {13} **Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:**

Look at Christ and live! See Him hanging there – He satisfies the Law of God. In our society you cannot be tried for the same offense twice – this is called *double jeopardy*. If you were placed on trial for a crime and the jury rendered a “not guilty” plea, then you could never again be tried for that same offense.

God punished Christ for your failure of His Law on that tree. God used the Blood of Christ to *redeem your souls from the Law that you so willingly broke!*
The world is crucified unto me.

People are continually trying to add to the things of God. Look to the Cross – are you hanging with Jesus? Are you nailed on top of Him on that terrible tree? Absolutely not! You may be, like that thief on the right hand, be hanging beside Him. You may cry out to Him:

Luke 23:42 ... Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

My prayer for you is that you are one of those who cried out “Lord, remember me!” My prayer is that you see yourselves as that thief on the right hand on the Cross of Reception, hands justly nailed to your sin, feet nailed by the world, crying out “Lord, remember me”. Every Christian who has ever been saved was not saved by works nor kept by works. He or she was saved by believing that Christ alone could redeem them.

Romans 5:6 For **when we were yet without strength,**

in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

Christ did not die for the Godly – **He died for the ungodly.** You were lawless lawbreakers. You were given God's Law but broke it entire, and were bound for hell. You had nothing:

Romans 9:16 So then **it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.**

It is **of faith that we are saved that it might be by Grace.** Like the echo of thunder through a mountainous valley the words “**by Grace**” repeat throughout the Scripture.

Romans 4:16 Therefore it is **of faith, that it might be by grace;** to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,

Romans 5:15 But not as the offense, so also is the free gift. For **if through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.**

Romans 11:6 And **if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace.** But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

Ephesians 2:5 Even **when we were dead in sins, hath**

quickened us together with Christ, by (grace ye are saved;)

You belonged to Satan, you belonged to death, you belong to hell, you belonged to justice, you belonged to the world, you belonged to damnation – but **He redeemed you from all. The world is crucified unto you, and you unto the world if you have been born again!**

3. We Glory In The Cross of Restoration

FOCAL 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.**

The Cross of Christ is a Cross of restoration. When we who are saved look to the Cross *our mental and spiritual balance* is restored.

The world considers sin to be a trifle. Look to the Cross. Hear Him utter those words through bleeding lips

John 19:30 **...It is finished:** and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

A trifle? You must be mad! Look at Him hanging on that Cross. See His tattered flesh. Hear Him cry out:

Psalms 22:1 **... My God, my God, why hast thou**

forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?

He Who always called God “My Father” now cries as an abandoned Child lost and wounded. **“Where are You, God? I know I said I would do this, but where are You? The physical pain is nothing, but Your leaving Me – I am so lonely. Oh hear Me, God. The burden of the scourge is nothing compared to the burden of this. Where are You, God – Where ARE You!”**

Every Christian who ever lived despises sin for we see what it did to our Savior. We do not go out and dally with it. In Churches today people who profess Christ as Savior sin and smile about it. But sin must be punished, ere there can be no restoration. Thus Paul looked at sin and said **“I am crucified to the world, and the world to me”**.

Adrian Rogers once said “Do you know what takes the joy out of your life? Sin. When you as a Christian allow sin to creep back into your life after you have been justified (saved by faith in Christ) that destroys your joy. That's the reason that David prayed in Psalm 51:12 “restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation”. He didn't pray “God have my salvation restored”. Once you get saved you can't lose it, but you can lose the joy of your salvation.”

If you have fallen away from God, if you have allowed

worldliness to creep in and rob you of your joy, *look to the Cross*. Confess your sin before God and He will **restore unto you the joy of your salvation**. Oh that Blessed Cross is a Cross of restoration.

Dear friend, if you are saved you are not constrained by the Law of Moses, but by the Cross of Christ. The two arms of the Cross teach us who believe the life we are called into.

The vertical arm of the Cross points heavenward – we who are saved by faith in Christ are *restored to love God*. The horizontal arm of the Cross points earthward. We who are saved by faith in Christ are *restored to love others as He loved us*. In the center of this perfect symbol of love hangs the Perfect Model of Divine Love – Jesus Christ our Lord.

I will not go back to a dead Law to live my life for God. I will go to the Cross in all that I do and say. In the Cross I am restored to peace. In the Cross my sins are removed. In the Cross my fears are relieved.

When Israel wandered in the wilderness the Lord gave them manna from Heaven, and they mocked it. Too many Christians today are given the Manna from Heaven – Jesus Christ and Him crucified – and seek to add to the work that He alone has completed.

Galatians 3:1-3 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently

set forth, crucified among you? {2} This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? {3} Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

You were restored to live in Him and for Him.

Galatians 2:20-21 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. {21} I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Are you crucified with Christ? Were you the thief on the right hand who – in faith – said “**Lord, remember me**”? Or are you the thief on the Cross of Rejection who, looking at Christ, said:

Luke 23:39 ... If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

This man died in his sins, and this day burns in hell with Judas Iscariot, Pilate, Caiaphas, and all who rejected the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. If you are saved by faith then you see the world through the Blood of Calvary. **C.H. Spurgeon**² put it this way:

“A child, a pipe, a little soap, and some pretty bubbles: such is the world. The Cross alone can wean us from such play.... The Christ that died upon the

Cross now lives in our hearts. The Christ that took human guilt has taken possession of our souls, and henceforth we live only in Him, for Him, and by Him. He has engrossed our affections. ... God make it so to be with us, that we may glorify God and bless our age.

May God touch your hearts with His Word.

FOCAL Read Responsively Luke 23:33 And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

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.

1. We Glory In The Cross Of Reconciliation

- *You cannot be saved unless you admit that you are wrong.* The Cross of Christ has no meaning *unless* you and I are wrong.

(Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; Acts 10:38; Matthew 20:19; Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:18; 2 Corinthians 5:19; Colossians 1:21; John 1:36; Hebrews 9:26; John 1:12) _____

2. We Glory In The Cross of Redemption

- We who are saved do not glory in our abilities, but in His ability. The Apostle Paul said **“Here is where I make my boast – the Cross of Christ alone.**

(Romans 11:1; Philippians 3:5-6; Philippians 3:8-9; Galatians 3:11-13; Luke 23:42; Romans 5:6; Romans

9:16; Romans 4:16; Romans 5:15; Romans 11:6; Ephesians 2:5) _____

3. We Glory In The Cross of Restoration

- The Cross of Christ is a Cross of restoration. When we who are saved look to the Cross *our mental and spiritual balance* is restored.

(John 19:30; Psalms 22:1; Psalm 51:12; Galatians 3:1-3; Galatians 2:20-21; Luke 23:39) _____

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