

THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS

1 COR. 2:1-5

1 Cor. 2:1 And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. ² For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. ³ I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. ⁴ And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

I. THE DEATH OF JESUS ON THE CROSS

- A. The cross was the first century Roman instrument of torture and execution. Imagine walking into a temple of a religion and seeing a guillotine, or a scaffold, or an electric-chair. The cross was far more painful, ugly, and degrading than any of them.
- B. Jesus lived as though his death would be the most important thing He came to do.
Mark 10:45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."
- C. The death of Jesus on the cross is central to the Christian faith. When Jesus gave His disciples something to remember Him by, He gave them a sign of His death: communion

II. THE CROSS MEANS THAT WE ARE RECONCILED TO GOD.

Col. 1:20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

Rom. 5:10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

- A. God has a hatred towards sin. He loves sinners, but hates their sin. God is a God of justice. It is not okay that there is murder and horrific crimes of humanity against one another. This is why God's wrath will be poured out. Jesus took this upon Himself when He went to the cross. It was as if Jesus took upon His body all the sins of the world. This is why the cup of God's wrath against the sin of this world is no light matter.
Matt. 26:39 He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."
- B. Christ became our substitute.
- C. This was the message Paul preached and lived when He was with the Corinthians.
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of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,⁵ that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

- D. The message of the cross brings the proper perspective to everything else in life. God sent His Son and He died on the cross so that I might have life. When this truth grips us, it will change the way we live, relate to one another and to the world, every aspect of how we live our lives.

III. THE CROSS OF CHRIST REMINDS US THAT WE HAVE BEEN CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST.

- A. Paul says that he was with them in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. He came in utter vulnerability, in order that the message of the wisdom of God might take center stage.

- B. The cross calls us to identify with Jesus' death (Gal 2:20; Luke 9:23-24)

Gal 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

1. There is an invitation that goes out: Whoever desires.

Gal 6:14 But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

2. To deny myself. Take up my cross. And follow Him. You can't follow Jesus unless you do the first two. Because that's what Jesus did.

Phil 2:5-8 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,⁶ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

3. To deny ourselves is to go against the spirit of this age. If we are going to be followers of Christ, we must make a decision to give God control of our lives. God is not interested in us doing great things for His Kingdom. He is calling us to become followers of Jesus. This is true greatness, to serve (Mark 10:43; 1 Cor. 1:18-19; 2 Cor. 12:9-10).

4. We don't experience the perfect strength of God in our lives because we don't come to grips of our weakness.

5. Paul boasted in his weakness. This is Christianity. In fact, it's a death to our old self (Gal. 2:20)

- C. What does this kind of life look like? That's the message Jesus preached. Matt 5-7. Sermon on the Mount.

Luke 9:23-24 Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."²⁴ "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.