

THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS

I Corinthians 1: 18

"For the message of the Cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

It has been said that *"The heart of Christianity is the Bible, the heart of the Bible is the Cross, and the heart of the Cross is the very heart of God."* Nothing could be truer! But the Cross of Christ is at the same time the most atrocious and glorious object, ever seen by men or angels on this side of heaven.

The Message Of The Cross Is God's Word Concerning Holiness And Sin.

By holiness, I mean the holiness of the Sufferer and the horribleness of sin for which He suffered. *"Christ committed no sin,"* if He had, He would have come under its control, and be enslaved by it, and thereby forfeit His Messiahship and disqualify Himself to be the "spotless sacrifice. "

He was holy, harmless, and separate from sinners and He was the One who *bore our sins in His own body, and was put to death by the hands of "sinful, wicked men"* (Acts 2. 23).

The Cross reveals God at His best and man at his worst. The infinite holiness of God and the sinfulness of man met in a terrible clash in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

To love sin is to hate the Cross. To love the Cross is to hate sin, so much so, that you own up to it.

God hates sin! And the intensity of that hatred could not be more forcefully expressed than in the death of His Son on the Cross.

The Message Of The Cross Is God's Word Concerning Love And Sacrifice.

The Cross was no accident, no after-thought of God. It was the pre-determined will of God, before time began. God had no hope of saving men except by the death of His Son, so man has no hope of being saved except through the power of His Cross (Acts 4. 12).

The Cross stands for boundless, matchless, supreme love of God the Father, and the voluntary sacrifice of God the Son. The Apostle John tells us, *"This is love: not that we loved God, but He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins* (1 John 4:10)." True love is sacrificial. It is not self-seeking.

Eph. 5. 2 says, "*Christ also loved us, and gave Himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*"

Christ's brokenhearted cry, "*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do,*" shows His great heart of love toward sinners. The sufferings and sacrifice of Jesus Christ at Calvary is the proof and expression of the depth and intensity of the love of God.

By faith, inscribed upon the Cross we can manifestly see in shining letters, 'God is Love'.

The Message Of The Cross Is God's Word Concerning Righteousness And Peace.

Paul in his epistle to the Romans tells us that righteousness is a gift of God (Rom. 3:21-5:21). That means there is no righteousness, or justification apart from Jesus Christ. For we can't be declared "guiltless" except through Jesus' sacrifice for us on the Cross.

Without Christ, the Bible reveals that *our righteous acts are like filthy rags before God* (Isa. 64:6). Without Christ, no matter how religious we are, no matter what amount of good deeds we do, we can never become righteous by ourselves before a perfect God.

What can we, then do to get right with God? NOTHING! Christ as has done it all for us! *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God* (2 Cor. 5:21).

Plead His mercy, and His righteousness will be imputed to you. It will be transferred to you. Freely you are justified. God, the heavenly Judge, will then look upon you and declare you "NOT GUILTY", and he will look upon you as "if you never committed one single sin."

All who have been declared righteous now enjoy a new relationship. They have made peace with God (Rom5:1-2), and are called "children of God." Col.1:20 tell us, "*Christ made peace by the blood of His Cross.*"

At the Cross true righteousness and true peace kissed each other (Is 64:1).

The Message Of The Cross Is God's Word Concerning Salvation And Power

Paul told the Romans, *I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes* (Rom.1:16).

To the Jews the Cross was a stumbling block, to the Greeks it was foolishness, and to the Romans it was a sign of weakness.

The Romans boasted of their military power. Paul's message of the cross was foolishness to them. They ridiculed the very thought that the shameful and disgraceful death of a Jewish carpenter is the only means of salvation for a lost world. They were blind to the reality that He was crucified in weakness but was raised in power.

The Greek word for power is "dynamis"; from it we get the English word dynamite. The dynamite of men is unto destruction. But the dynamite of God is unto salvation.

Sadly, we are living in a day when the old message of the Cross is quickly being replaced by a bloodless and powerless message. A gospel that doesn't preach CHRIST CRUCIFIED FOR OUR SINS is a false gospel and has no power to save. It's not dynamite! It is as worthless as firecrackers!

Soli Deo Gloria!

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