

FROM TREE OF DEATH TO TREE OF LIFE

I. [Matthew 20:17-19](#) [1 Corinthians 1:18](#) [Galatians 3:13](#) [1 Peter 2:24](#)

A. **Matthew 20:17-19** (ESV) says: *17 And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, He took the twelve disciples aside, and on the way He said to them, 18 "See, we are going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death 19 and deliver Him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and He will be raised on the third day."*

B. The Scripture I just read represents the third time Jesus tells His disciples that He's going to be put to death and then raised from the dead. Like the previous times He told them, it goes in one ear and out the other. What's unique here in this passage is Jesus indicates the way He'll be executed and by whom. He will be crucified (impaled on a cross), by the Romans, which was the most shameful, torturous, and merciless form of execution ever devised by humankind.

C. On the first Sunday of September, the title of the message was, "*Our Guilt of Sin, nailed to the Cross.*" One of our key Scriptures was **Colossians 2:13-14** (NIV) *13 You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for He forgave all our sins. 14 He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. (Last Sunday in His lead-in to worship, Mark shared the same Scripture.)*

D. As for Jesus dying on the cross and the message thereof, Paul writes thusly in **1 Corinthians 1:18** (NIV) *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. (So as we speak of the cross, does it sound foolish to you or is the power of God on it? Your answer matters!)*

E. This past Monday, we watched an episode of Bonanza: "*The Grand Swing.*" It originally aired in Bonanza's 13th season. Ben Cartwright's adopted son, Jamie, disobeys his father which results in a wagon being destroyed and a horse so badly injured it had to be shot. Jamie fears the worst kind of punishment possible. Ben orders the boy to pack his bags and saddle up because they're going on a long trip. Ben doesn't tell Jamie where. For several days they ride the far boundaries of the Ponderosa, encountering rustlers, Indians, squatters, and faithful cowhands throughout. Young Jamie sees his father act judiciously, wisely, and mercifully towards many who deserved far less. Finally they come to a spot of ground under a large tree with a rock that has a cross etched on it. They've arrived at the farthest boundary of the Ponderosa. Ben tells Jamie the tree is called, "*The Witness Tree.*" Carved in the tree are the names *Hoss* and *Little Joe*. Those two had also made a journey of redemption and forgiveness. Then Ben turns to Jamie and tells him to carve his name in *The Witness Tree*. And so he does...

F. The Greek word for tree is *Xulon* (*zoo-lon*). Likewise for timber, poles, and posts. The cross is also referred to as a *xulon*, the tree upon which our Savior died.

1) **Acts 5:30-32** (NIV) *The Disciples before the Jewish Leaders, Peter declares: 30 The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead--whom you had killed by hanging Him on a tree. 31 God exalted Him to His own right hand as Prince and Savior that He*

might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. **32** We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him.

2) Acts 10:39-42 (NIV) Peter to Gentiles at the home of Cornelius: 39 We are witnesses of everything He did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed Him by hanging Him on a tree, **40** but God raised Him from the dead on the third day and caused Him to be seen. **41** He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen--by us who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead. **42** He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that He is the One whom God appointed as Judge of the living and the dead.

G. Two weeks ago, we nailed lists of sins to the cross to my left, symbolizing that the guilt of our sin had been nailed there, paid for by Christ Jesus our Lord. Jesus became a curse on a tree to kill the curse of sin we were under. Galatians 3:13 (NLT) 13 But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When He was hung on the cross, He took upon Himself the curse for our wrongdoing. For it is written in the Scriptures, "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." **Same verse from the Message Bible: 13** Christ redeemed us from that self-defeating, cursed life by absorbing it completely into Himself. Do you remember the Scripture that says, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"? That is what happened when Jesus was nailed to the cross: He became a curse, and at the same time dissolved the curse.

H. The Tree of Death leads us back to the Tree of Life. The Cross of Jesus Christ is our Witness Tree. It represents God's justice and His love. Both were accomplished there. Both were satisfied there. Here's the question: Is your name carved on that Witness Tree? You see, if Jesus hasn't paid for your sins, you will pay for them. Either judgment for your sin has already taken place on the xulon, the cross, the tree, or you'll face God's judgment at the Great White Throne. 1 Peter 2:24 (ESV) affirms: 24 He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed. **(Has your disease of sin been cured? Are you in complete remission or terminally infected? Your answer matters. God loves you and has seen fit for you to be cured. Jesus is the only cure. God's word for you today is this: Be healed!**

* In 1779, John Newton, author of "*Amazing Grace*," wrote another hymn titled, "*I Saw One Hanging on a Tree, In Agony and Blood*." Here are those lyrics...

I Saw One Hanging on a Tree, In Agony and Blood

I saw One hanging on a tree,
In agony and blood;
He fixed His loving eyes on me,
As near His cross I stood.

Refrain: O, can it be, upon a tree
The Savior died for me?
My soul is thrilled, my heart is filled,
To think He died for me!

Sure, never to my latest breath,
Can I forget that look;
It seemed to charge me with His death,
Though not a word He spoke. (Refrain)

My conscience felt and owned the guilt,
And plunged me in despair:
I saw my sins His blood had spilt
And helped to nail Him there. (Refrain)

A second look He gave, which said,
"I freely all forgive:
This blood is for your ransom paid,
I die that you may live." (Refrain)

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

Matthew 20:17-19 (ESV)

17 And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, He took the twelve disciples aside, and on the way He said to them, **18** "See, we are going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death **19** and deliver Him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and He will be raised on the third day."

1 Corinthians 1:18 (NIV)

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.

Acts 5:30-32 (NIV) The Disciples before the Jewish Leaders...

30 The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead--whom you had killed by hanging Him on a tree. **31** God exalted Him to His own right hand as Prince and Savior that He might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. **32** We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him.

Acts 10:39-42 (NIV) Peter to Gentiles at the home of Cornelius...

39 We are witnesses of everything He did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed Him by hanging Him on a tree, **40** but God raised Him from the dead on the third day and caused Him to be seen. **41** He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen--by us who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead. **42** He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that He is the One whom God appointed as Judge of the living and the dead.

Galatians 3:13-14 (ESV)

13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us--for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree..."

Galatians 3:13 (NLT)

13 But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When He was hung on the cross, He took upon Himself the curse for our wrongdoing. For it is written in the Scriptures, "*Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.*"

Galatians 3:13 (MSG) **13** Christ redeemed us from that self-defeating, cursed life by absorbing it completely into Himself. Do you remember the Scripture that says, "*Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree*"? That is what happened when Jesus was nailed to the cross: He became a curse, and at the same time dissolved the curse.

1 Peter 2:24 (ESV)

24 He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed.

I Saw One Hanging on a Tree, In Agony and Blood

by John Newton, 1779

I saw One hanging on a tree,
In agony and blood;
He fixed His loving eyes on me,
As near His cross I stood.

Refrain:

O, can it be, upon a tree
The Savior died for me?
My soul is thrilled, my heart is filled,
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A second look He gave, which said,
"I freely all forgive:
This blood is for your ransom paid,
I die that you may live." (Refrain)

[Video Clips & Important Articles](#)

"The Power of the Cross" - Stuart Townend

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nPFv-ywTY-c>

"At The Foot of The Cross" - Kathryn Scott:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hk7_SBxYSZs&feature=related

"The Maker of the Universe" - Phil Keaggy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwMzGBilfq4>

Bonanza "The Grand Swing"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yyZzHTlalS0>

18 Trillion Feet of You - The John 10:10 Project

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7W57lj_V_LQ

[Bonus Stuff](#)

[Acts 13:26-31 \(NIV\) Paul in the Synagogue at Pisidian Antioch...](#)

26 Brothers, children of Abraham, and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent. **27** The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus, yet in condemning Him they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath. **28** Though they found no proper ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have Him executed. **29** When they had carried out all that was written about Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb. **30** But God raised Him from the dead, **31** and for many days He was seen by those who had traveled with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now His witnesses to our people.”

[Galatians 6:14-16 \(NLT\)](#)

14 As for me, may I never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of that cross, my interest in this world has been crucified, and the world’s interest in me has also died. **15** It doesn’t matter whether we have been circumcised or not. What counts is whether we have been transformed into a new creation. **16** May God’s peace and mercy be upon all who live by this principle; they are the new people of God.

[Quote by Matt Chandler](#)

“The place the Gospel holds out for us is where God’s kindness and severity meet. This place is called the Cross, and it is where grace and wrath intersect. It is this place of shame and victory that God, in the form of the man Jesus of Nazareth, the long-expected Messiah, offered in His death the blood atonement necessary to satisfy God’s justice and secure our salvation.”

Quote by Martin Luther

“Learn to know Christ and Him crucified. Learn to sing to Him, and say, ‘Lord Jesus, You are my righteousness, I am Your sin. You have taken upon Yourself what is mine and given me what is Yours. You have become what You were not so that I might become what I was not.’”

Quote by John Piper

“Life is wasted if we do not grasp the glory of the cross, cherish it for the treasure that it is, and cleave to it as the highest price of every pleasure and the deepest comfort in every pain. What was once foolishness to us--a crucified God--must become our wisdom and our power and our only boast in this world.”

Quote by Paul C. Guttko

“The Cross is God’s centerpiece on the table of time.”

Quote by A.W. Tozer

“The cross is the lightning rod of grace that short-circuits God’s wrath to Christ so that only the light of His love remains for believers.”

Quote by William Barclay

“The Cross is the proof that there is no length to which the love of God will refuse to go, in order to win (people's) hearts. The Cross is the medium of reconciliation because the Cross is the final proof of the love of God; and a love like that demands an answering love. If the Cross will not waken love and wonder in people's hearts, nothing will.”

Quote by Charles H. Spurgeon

“Those who preach the Cross of our Lord Jesus are the terror of modern thinkers. In their hearts they dread the preaching of the old-fashioned Gospel, and they hate what they dread.”

Jesus’ Words On The Cross

Over the course of 6 hours on the cross Jesus uttered just a few short sentences:
Luke 23:34 to all: *“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.”* **Luke 23:43 to the thief:** *“Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”*
John 19:26-27 to His mother: *“Woman, behold your Son!”* **Then to John:** *“Behold your mother!”* **Mark 15:34 in the ninth hour:** *“Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?”* Translated: *“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”* **John 19:28 in agony:** *“I thirst!”* **John 19:30 with our sins atoned for:** *“It is finished!”* **Luke 23:46 His final words:** *“Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.”* (Having said this, He breathed His last.)

The Power of the Cross

Oh, to see the dawn
Of the darkest day:
Christ on the road to Calvary.

Tried by sinful men,
Torn and beaten, then
Nailed to a cross of wood.

This, the power of the cross:
Christ became sin for us,
Took the blame, bore the wrath:
We stand forgiven at the cross.

Oh, to see the pain
Written on Your face
Bearing the awesome weight of sin;
Every bitter thought,
Every evil deed
Crowning Your bloodstained brow.

Now the daylight flees,
Now the ground beneath
Quakes as its Maker bows His head.
Curtain torn in two,
Dead are raised to life;
'Finished!' the victory cry.

Oh, to see my name
Written in the wounds,
For through Your suffering I am free.
Death is crushed to death,
Life is mine to live,
Won through Your selfless love.

This, the power of the cross:
Son of God, slain for us.
What a love! What a cost!
We stand forgiven at the cross.

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What Is The Cross Of Christ?

By Charles H. Spurgeon

What is the cross of Christ, then? Well, first, it is that doctrine which is the center of His holy religion, *the Doctrine of the Atonement*. By the Cross we mean that the Son of God did actually and literally die, nailed to a Roman gibbet as a malefactor--numbered with transgressors--doing this because He had, of His own voluntary will, taken upon Himself the sin of His people and, being found with that sin upon Him, He must expiate it by His

death. He must lay down His life, "the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God." As it is written, "He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Now, they that oppose this doctrine are the enemies of the Cross of Christ, and they who accept this Atonement and repose their entire confidence upon it, are the friends of the Cross of Christ. They think of that Sacrifice on Calvary with reverence linked with love. They never know how sufficiently to speak of it with adoring gratitude that ever such a Victim should have been presented--the Father, Himself, giving Him--and that such a Victim should ever have been slain, the Lord resigning His life for us! Oh, it is amazing and more than amazing--a miracle that carries every other miracle within itself--greater and more Divine than all the deeds whereof poets have sung, even though they are the deeds of God, Himself, for in this

He has excelled Himself:

*"God in the presence of His Son,
Has all His mightiest works outdone."*

They are "the enemies of the Cross of Christ" who try to belittle this great Atonement and make it out to be a very small affair, next to nothing in importance. As I have often said of some preachers, they teach that Jesus Christ did something or other, which in some way or other, in some measure or other, connected with our salvation. We do not teach any such hazy ideas as that! We say that He laid down His life for the sheep and that for those sheep He has made a perfect, complete and effectual Redemption by which He has delivered them from the wrath to come. Blessed is he who rejoices in that Doctrine of the Cross of Christ!

- C.H. Spurgeon sermon excerpt, *"The Enemies of the Cross of Christ"* #2553, page 2, delivered at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London, England, Sunday evening, October 26, 1884