

## THE CROSS: A PLACE OF EXECUTION; A PLACE OF SUBSTITUTION

### I. 1 Corinthians 1:18

**A. 1 Corinthians 1:18 (NIV) says: 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.*

**B. John Piper elaborates:** “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.”

**C. When we decided to start having these drive-in services just before Palm Sunday, we decided to add this large cross. Perhaps you've wondered why we would erect a cross in the backyard of the Chapel? It's because the backside of the Chapel was becoming the frontside for a season and we wanted the cross to remain front and center. Paul C. Guttke rightly said:** “The Cross is God’s centerpiece on the table of time.”

**D. Crucifixion was the cruelest and most shameful form of execution ever devised by man. The Persians are believed to have invented it but the Romans are the ones who perfected its merciless cruelty. To realize that mankind, even the most religious people of that time, chose to nail the very Son of God to a cross, shows the depth of mankind's depravity, wickedness, and enmity against our Creator.**

**E. So why have Christians come to value the cross as a centerpiece, a cherished symbol to be displayed, worn, and revered? We're not grossly morbid people are we?! We don't adorn ourselves little electric chair necklaces, guillotine earrings or hangman's noose pendants! (At least I hope not!) Why then do we look so reverently upon the cross, despite the worst execution of all time happening there? But what happened there-- Jesus' sacrifice--led to eternal life for those who'd believe on Him! Jesus was nailed there in our place! The cross reminds us: "My sin for His righteousness!" (2 Cor. 5:21) A.W. Tozer said: “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.” (The Bread & Cup remind us...)**

**F. The cross is not only a symbol of execution, it is a symbol of substitution! My rebellion against God earned that place! But Jesus' love for me took that place!**

**G. There's a story of two brothers; the older was God-fearing, the younger one a worthless scoundrel. One evening as the elder brother sat in his home, the younger brother burst through the door, covered in blood. He cried out: "*Help me! I've killed a man and the police are after me!*" The older brother rose and said, "*Quick, take off your clothes and put on mine!*" As he did so, the older brother put on the bloody clothes. When the police charged in, they immediately arrested the older brother. He was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to death. Just before his execution, he wrote a note to his younger brother that read: "*I died in your place, in your bloody garment, for your guilt!*" This is precisely what Jesus did for us on the cross! This is why the message of the cross is not foolishness to us!**

H. In 1633, Rembrandt famously painted, *The Raising of the Cross*. The painting depicts Jesus nailed to the cross and being lifted up by those crucifying Him. Just to the side of Jesus' feet, a man in a blue painter's beret is visible, appearing as one of the executioners. His attire from the middle ages is out of place and doesn't seem to fit the scene being portrayed. But actually it does. Rembrandt painted himself into the portrait, making it clear his sin helped put Jesus on that cross. We all should be painted into that scene for our sins too put Jesus on that cross!

I. **1 Peter 2:24 (ESV) affirms: 24 He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; "by His wounds you have been healed."**

J. You are either sick and dying in your sins or you have been healed from them. If you are therefore sick and dying, my message to you today is this: **Be healed! Look to the cross where Jesus bore your sins and God's punishment for them! Love for you compelled Him to die on that cross! 1 Corinthians 1:18 (NIV) one more time: 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. (Let the Message of the Cross no longer be foolishness to you! Let it be the power of God and let it save you instead!)**

K. **John 3:14-18 (AMP) takes us to the Lord's Table: 14 Just as Moses lifted up the [bronze] serpent in the desert [on a pole], so must the Son of Man be lifted up [on the cross], 15 so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life [after physical death, and will actually live forever]. 16 For God so [greatly] loved and dearly prized the world, that He [even] gave His [One and] only begotten Son, so that whoever believes and trusts in Him [as Savior] shall not perish, but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send the Son into the world to judge and condemn the world [that is, to initiate the final judgment of the world], but that the world might be saved through Him. 18 Whoever believes and has decided to trust in Him [as personal Savior and Lord] is not judged [for this one, there is no judgment, no rejection, no condemnation]; but the one who does not believe [and has decided to reject Him as personal Savior and Lord] is judged already [that one has been convicted and sentenced], because he has not believed and trusted in the name of the [One and] only begotten Son of God [the One who is truly unique, the only One of His kind, the One who alone can save him]. (The Bread & Cup remind us...)**

\* Pray & Officiate Communion...

\* Close with the song, "Hallelujah My Father."

## **[Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff](#)**

### **[1 Corinthians 1:18 \(NIV\)](#)**

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### **[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.”

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

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**1 Peter 2:24 (ESV)**

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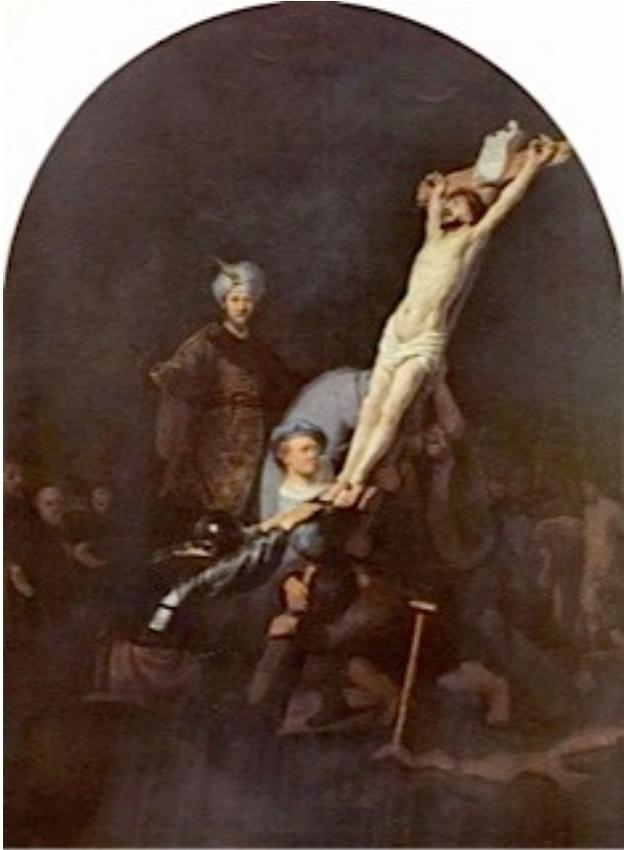
**John 3:14-18 (AMP)**

**14** Just as Moses lifted up the [bronze] serpent in the desert [on a pole], so must the Son of Man be lifted up [on the cross], **15** so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life [after physical death, and will actually live forever]. **16** “For God so [greatly] loved and dearly prized the world, that He [even] gave His [One and] only begotten Son, so that whoever believes and trusts in Him [as Savior] shall not perish, but have eternal life. **17** For God did not send the Son into the world to judge and condemn the world [that is, to initiate the final judgment of the world], but that the world might be saved through Him. **18** Whoever believes and has decided to trust in Him [as personal Savior and Lord] is not judged [for this one, there is no judgment, no rejection, no condemnation]; but the one who does not believe [and has decided to reject Him as personal Savior and Lord] is judged already [that one has been convicted and sentenced], because he has not believed and trusted in the name of the [One and] only begotten Son of God [the One who is truly unique, the only One of His kind, the One who alone can save him].

**Communion - Westminster Confession of Faith**

Our Lord Jesus, in the night wherein He was betrayed, instituted the sacrament of His body and blood, called the Lord’s Supper, to be observed in His church, unto the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of Himself in His death; the sealing of all benefits thereof unto true believers, their spiritual nourishment and growth in Him, their further engagement in and to all duties which they owe unto Him; and, to be a bond and pledge of their communion with Him, and with each other, as members of His mystical body.

- WCF, Paragraph I, Chapter Chapter XXIX.



Rembrandt's *"The Raising of the Cross"* - Circa 1633

### **Quote by Charles Spurgeon**

“They bewailed innocence maltreated, goodness persecuted, love bleeding, meekness about to die; but my heart has a deeper and more bitter cause to mourn. My sins were the scourges which lacerated those blessed shoulders, and crowned with thorn those bleeding brows: my sins cried “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” and laid the cross upon His gracious shoulders. His being led forth to die is sorrow enough for one eternity: but my having been His murderer, is more, infinitely more, grief than one poor fountain of tears can express.”

### **Video Clips & Important Articles**

**The Sorrows of Minneapolis: A Prayer for Our City - John Piper**  
<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-sorrows-of-minneapolis>

**"At the Cross (Love Ran Red)" - Chris Tomlin (acoustic Sessions)**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORyXT2ZRwUE>

**“At The Foot of The Cross” by Kathryn Scott:**  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hk7\\_SBxYSZs&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hk7_SBxYSZs&feature=related)

**"In My Place" - Matt Damico - Kenwood Music**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ohS-y4i17V8>

**A Prayer for Mercy - Kevin DeYoung**  
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/a-prayer-for-mercy/>

## **Bonus Stuff**

### **Romans 1:16-17 (NIV)**

**16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. **17** For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed--a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

### **Colossians 1:15-22 (NLT)**

**15** Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, **16** for through Him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see--such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through Him and for Him. **17** He existed before anything else, and He holds all creation together. **18** Christ is also the head of the church, which is His body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So He is first in everything. **19** For God in all His fullness was pleased to live in Christ, **20** and through Him God reconciled everything to Himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross. **21** This includes you who were once far away from God. You were His enemies, separated from Him by your evil thoughts and actions. **22** Yet now He has reconciled you to Himself through the death of Christ in His physical body. As a result, He has brought you into His own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before Him without a single fault.

### **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 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.”

### **When I Survey The Wondrous Cross**

Lyrics by Isaac Watts - 1707, Music by Lowell Mason - 1824

Based upon Galatians 6:14 which says: *“May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”* (NIV)

When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of Glory died;  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,  
Save in the death of Christ, my God;  
All the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to His blood.

See, from His head, His hands, His feet,  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down.  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown.

Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were an offering far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

## **What Is The Cross Of Christ?**

Sermon Excerpt 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.