

The Centrality of the Cross

by Erlo Stegen

The Cross is the central message of Christianity, representing the power of God driving us and transforming our lives.

Scripture: Isaiah 61:10, Matthew 26:29, John 19:30, Romans 5:8, 1 Corinthians 1:18, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 2:13-14, Philippians 3:10, Colossians 1:20

Topics: "Transformation through Christ", "The Cross"

Description

Erlo Stegen emphasizes the centrality of the Cross in the life of a believer, illustrating that true transformation occurs when one encounters the Cross of Jesus. He explains that acceptance of the Cross leads to a life changed by God's power, while rejection results in spiritual perishing. Stegen highlights the unifying power of the Cross, which transcends racial and familial boundaries, and calls for believers to live in righteousness, reflecting on the significance of Christ's sacrifice. He urges listeners to examine their lives and relationships, ensuring they are reconciled with one another as they prepare to partake in the Lord's Supper. Ultimately, he reminds the congregation that the Cross is not just a symbol, but the very essence of their faith and identity in Christ.

Transcript

John 19:30

"So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit."

Matt 26:29

"But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

There is a legend about people who discovered three crosses and wanted to know which one was the Cross of Jesus. So they brought a lame man and had him touch each one. As he touched the second he was instantly healed; and so they knew that that Cross must have been the one on which Jesus Christ was crucified.

Although this is just a legend, it still makes it clear that the one who has touched the Cross of Jesus can never be the same again. Either he accepts the Cross and his life is transformed or he rejects the Cross

and perishes. Those who sit under the message of the Cross and understand nothing, and go out as they came in show by that that they are among those who are perishing.

The people of the world is driven by the things of the world and its lusts, but with us it is the power of God driving us. What power is at work in you?

You were not created for the world but for God to work in you. When the Lord is at work in you, you will win others to Christ. This place will soon be too small.

Words fail one to describe the greatness of the Lord and His work at Calvary.

A husband will be amazed at the change in the life of his wife and a wife at the change in her husband's life.

Jesus builds our families through the message of the Cross.

Even on the Cross He spoke to John "behold your mother" and to His mother "behold your son". Even on the Cross He brought families together - He brought the believers together.

If you are united in the family of Christ you as a white man will feel more united with your black gardener who is a believer than your blood-brother who does not believe.

He takes away our filthy rags and clothes us in robes of righteousness.

"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." (Isaiah 61:10).

It is not our own efforts which count anything. We might sing in the choir and be proud of that. Even that could be like filthy rags before Him.

The cup He had to drink was filled with your and my iniquity and filth. That is what was so terrible to Him. He was beaten and suffered for our iniquities. That is why He could say at the end "it is finished".

If you know this how can you go back to a life of immorality and drunkenness?

The stars declare the glory of God. Some scientists estimate that there are more stars in heaven than the sand on the seashore. They still find new stars and glaxies (consisting of millions or even billions of stars each) regularly.

Light travels at 300000 km/s. It's mind boggling. It can travel around the earth 8.5 times per second. If that's how far it travels in a second imagine how far it travels in an hour, day or week.

Now many of these stars are many light years away. In the whirlpool galaxy the Cross is clearly depicted in the star formation.

(Click on picture below to enlarge it.)

large_cross2.JPG (64902 bytes)

Even in the molecules that make up our body we see the Cross, for example in Laminin. Laminin is like glue in the blood throughout our cell tissue sticking them together. Its got the same function the re-inforcing rods in concrete has to hold the concrete together. God clearly shows us what an integral part the cross plays in our body.

In East Germany the communists built a huge tower to proclaim the achievements of communism. When they've completed the tower they suddenly saw to their dismay something completely unintended - the reflection of the cross in the ball of the tower (see picture below).

If you reject the Cross you only bring destruction to yourself.

Jesus has risen from the grave. He lives. Have you experienced His life in you? Today we celebrate Easter but what does it help you if He doesn't live in you.

Be reconciled with your brother and cleanse your life if you cannot partake of the Lord's supper today because you are not one with your brothers or sisters in Christ. If you cannot partake of the Lord's supper how will you partake of it one day in heaven as Jesus said:

"But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." (Matthew 26:29).

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