

A Look at the Cross

by Rolfe Barnard

The cross reveals God's attitude to sin, His love for sinful men, and the gift of salvation that He offers to all who believe.

Duration: 28:30

Scripture: Romans 5:8, Romans 8:32, 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 2 Corinthians 5:17, 2 Corinthians 5:19, 2 Corinthians 5:21

Topics: "Cross of Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the incomprehensible love of God. He marvels at the fact that Jesus, the sinless one, willingly endured shame and agony for the sake of sinful humanity. The preacher highlights the apostle Paul's attempts to describe this love, stating that it surpasses knowledge and controls believers. The sermon concludes with an invitation for listeners to recognize their need for Christ and turn to Him for salvation. The preacher also emphasizes that salvation is a gift from God, obtained through the blood of Jesus.

Transcript

My friends, I trust that many of you will take a second now, and turn to the book of 2 Corinthians, at chapter 5. And I want to read a passage of scripture that we read last Lord's Day. And the scripture begins at verse 14, and I want to read through verse 21 of 2 Corinthians, chapter 5. I want to speak to you today on the subject, a look at the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. Last Lord's Day we studied how that the early church preached the death of Christ.

And we saw that as the early preachers, preaching in the name of the early congregation of the saints, that as they saw the death of Christ, they saw in it three things. They saw, first of all, man's greatest crime. They saw, second, God's eternal purpose.

And they saw, third, in the death of Christ, the relation of the death of Christ to the forgiveness of the sins of men and women. Now this morning, just before I read the scripture, let me say that I want us today to look with the Apostle Paul at the Lord Jesus Christ hanging on a cross, and see there three great realities. Now with the subject before us, and the review of Last Lord's Day, let us read together 2 Corinthians, chapter 5, verse 14.

"...which died for them, and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh. Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new.

And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, to it that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us. We pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God, for he," that's God, "...hath made him," that's the Lord, "...to be sin for us," hallelujah, "...whom you know sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Let's look at that passage of scripture as it paints again the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me call to your attention three great realities that men have to look in the face if they will not evade, but will look at the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. The first of these great realities is that the cross shows crystal clear Whatever men shall say about it, the cross shows what God thinks of sin. We live in a day when sin is sort of relative, and people sort of scout the idea that it matters very much.

But I want you to think with me just a little while on what the cross shows about how God thinks about sin. For the cross not only shows what God thinks of sin, but it shows what sin is. And it shows that God is absolutely forever set against sin.

Just one short look at Jesus Christ hanging on the cross will convince anybody, if they'll look at it, that according to God, from the standpoint of God, that as God looks upon it, sin cannot be tolerated. The cross shows that God will not come to terms with it. At the cross, whatever else one may say about it, there is no trifling with sin.

Ladies and gentlemen, every drop of the blood flowing from the wounds of Jesus Christ as he hung on the cross says and says in eternal proclamation that sin matters to God. Oh, the most blasphemous thought that ever ran through the evil hearts of sinners as you and me is that God owes salvation to anybody. For the Bible is crystal clear.

Whatever God may have done, we are confined to what the Bible says he did do. And according to the Bible, without the shedding of blood is no remission. And according to the Bible, God Almighty, listen to me, God Almighty took the only way whereby sin could be forgiven.

That way was to hang his own son on a cross. And if that's the only way that salvation can be procured for sinful men, and according to the Bible it is, then if God owes salvation to anybody, then he owed the death of Christ to sinners. And that would make God a monster.

But, oh, my friends, as I see God in Christ acting on the cross, laying my sin upon the Lord Jesus Christ, I do not see a God paying a debt to sinful men, but I see a God in eternal grace moving in the direction of the salvation of sinners. Oh, the cross says that sin matters to God. And when we look at the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, when sin had been laid upon him, not mine, not his, but mine, we find in the book of Hebrews that Christ resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

For had he sinned, he could not have been my sin-bearer and my substitute. And so we see in the life of Christ here on the earth, we see God's attitude to sin. It must not be tolerated.

God will not come to terms with it. It must not go unpunished. The mystery and the marvel and the grace and the miracle of the cross of Jesus Christ is explained in the Bible by the terms there, is where justice

and mercy, righteousness and peace kissed each other and where God found a way, for he found it, we didn't, to be just, that is, to punish sin and the justifier of the ungodly.

That's the miracle of grace. That's the message of the gospel. That's the good news that God has found a way, not to wink at sin, not to overlook sin, not to let sin go unpunished, not to violate himself by overlooking sin.

But the scriptures tell us that mattering as it did, that sin matters to God, that God found a way. Man couldn't have found it. God found it.

God moved in that direction. So those marvelous words, God was in Christ doing something, reconciling the world to himself. How? By ignoring sin? No, sir.

By overlooking sin? No, sir. By coming to terms with sin? No, sir. By letting sin go unpunished? No, sir.

But by laying sin upon the Lord Jesus Christ. He who knew no sin was made sin for us. Isn't that marvelous? You understand that, Brother Barnett? No, sir.

Bless God, I believe it. And I rejoice in it. Oh, my friend this morning, living in a day when we take things for granted, look again at the cross of Christ and see him hanging there.

That's God in Christ. That's God acting. That's God punishing sin.

That's God laying the lash of the demands of his holy law on my sin bearer. Is he yours? Or my substitute? Is he yours? Can you say he's mine and I'm his? Ladies and gentlemen, on the cross and at the cross, if you look at it, you'll see what God thinks about sin. It must be punished.

You'll see that God's absolutely against it. You'll see that he cannot overlook it. You'll see that he could not save men by just forgetting about sin, but that the very nature and the holy character of God demanded that the violated law should be vindicated.

And so praise God for the substitute who came and lived under the law and kept it not for his own sake, but in the stead of sinners. And so he went to the cross and God could lay my sin upon him because he had no sin of his own. Looking at the cross, we see a second great reality.

Do you see it? Here it is. In the cross, we see the supreme revelation of the love of Almighty God, the supreme revelation, unveiling, manifesting of the love of God. I wonder if we could pause here.

You got time just to rejoice in the love of God, just to think of it, just to wade around in it, just to drink some of it. Oh, the marvel of it that the sinless one should have been ready and glad for the sake of miserable sinners to endure such shame and agony. And yet he did the marvel of it, marvelous, marvelous grace of our loving Lord.

You know, my dear friends, words are too poor and inadequate to even try to describe a love so glorious and so subduing. The Apostle Paul tries it once in a while. He says it passes knowledge.

He says I am controlled by the love of Christ. He says he loved me and gave himself for me. He says Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it.

Marvel, don't scoff at it. Don't take it for granted. Marvel at the love of God in Christ.

Oh, the wonder of it. We sing a song sometime in my meetings. Oh, what a wonder that Jesus found me.

Out in the darkness no light could I see. Oh, what a wonder he put his great arms under. And wonder of wonders he saved even me.

The marvel of the love of God as we see it revealed in the cross of Christ. And there's the marvel of the sacrifice of himself. In Romans 12 and 1 we see these words.

I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service. Now that's for every child of God. Oh, by the mercies of God we are to present our bodies living sacrifice holy, acceptable unto God and that's just our reasonable service.

But oh my, more than for us that found perfect expression it just reached perfection in Christ. For bless God, he did present his body a sacrifice. It was holy and praise God.

The scriptures say that he gave a sacrifice that was acceptable unto God. Praise the Lord for the sacrifice of himself. And in Ephesians chapter 5 and 2 the Apostle Paul begs his readers and he'd beg you if you'd hear it to make Christ's spirit of sacrifice theirs.

In Ephesians 5 and 2 we're enjoined to walk in love as Christ also both loved us and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor. And Paul says you do that way you walk in love because Christ loved us, you do like he did. He gave himself, you give yourself as an offering and as a sacrifice to say thank you to God so that the poison of this old world of sin may be perfumed by the sweetness of your devotion to Christ.

God's love hanging there on a cross I see God's love manifested. I see God's love revealed. Oh, the book says in Romans 5 and 8 that God commended his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

And in Romans 8 verse 32 I read those marvelous words He that spared not his own son but delivered him up for us all how shall he not with him also freely give us all things praise the Lord. You know the beloved ones it was God who made the offering those majestic words God was in Christ God was in Christ God was the offerer and God was the offering Oh, it was God who made the offering It was God who paid the price It was God who having loved his own which were in the world loved them unto the end The love of God The love of God Do you just take it for granted God help you not to Oh, if we could recover in your day and mind the wonder and the marvel of the grace of God in dying in Christ on a cross the love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell the love of God And looking at the cross I see the cost of man's redemption to God It cost God something to come down here in Christ and go into the market place and provide by his own precious blood a ransom so that sinners might have the shackles and bondage of sin set or cut off they might be set free might be restored to the good favor of a holy God It cost God something The scriptures say He bought with a price And it was God was in Christ reconciling Then God paid the price You didn't have to pay it God paid it Miracle of miracles I can't explain this I couldn't I couldn't explain it in a million years How could God do this?

But the scriptures say God was in Christ You bought with a price You bought You bought You bought with a price What price? The price of the cost of his well-begotten only begotten son God was in Christ You know man's redemption wasn't purchased by some decree published of some fight or by God getting on a

microphone and announcing that he's ready to pardon sinners But the redemption of men cost God himself in Christ himself in Christ It was God who was in Christ It was God who was in Christ If that's so then he got a claim on us He's got a claim on us He bought with a price Not by an announcement Not by a radio message Not by flashing some wonder in the sky But you bought with a price of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ Tell me that I'll not recognize his claim on me You're wrong, brother You're wrong 2 Corinthians 5, 15 I read these words And that he died for A-double-I-o That they which live should henceforth live not live under themselves but under him which died for them and rose again Has the purpose of the death and resurrection of Christ as far as you're concerned gone by the Lord?

Do you live a selfish life? Are you just concerned about yourself? Did you just live to yourself? No, sir But you live under him You live under him That's why I died So you live under him And in 1 Thessalonians 5, 10 I read these words Who, that's talking about Christ died for us Are you one of those us's? That whether we wake or sleep We should live together with him Can one refuse him?

He died for us He gave himself for us That we should live to ourselves That whether we be sleeping or waking We should live with him And together with him And not under ourselves The love of God is manifested And revealed at the cross It's the supreme revelation Of the love of God for sinful men Not only as you look at the cross Do you see what God thinks about sin It must be punished Not only as you look at the cross Would you see the supreme revelation Of God's love for sinful men But there bless God You see the gift of God Is salvation for sinners It's a gift Oh the Bible says sinner You can't earn it But you can receive it When every avenue of you making it yourself Has been closed If you just stop Right there where you are And throw up your hands And quit trying to make it yourself

And quit parading a few little good deeds You think you've done to God Trying to swap it to him for his pardon If you just admit That your very best righteousnesses Are as filthy rags In the sight of a holy God Well that's when God's ready to save you For God gives his gift to people Who are paupers and beggars And hungry and thirsty And who are guilty Hell deserving Hell bound sinners And who sing only My only hope My only plea Christ Jesus died And he died for me You know on the cross We see that he took That's my Lord Took the sinners place I rejoice in that That's too good to be true But it is true That is the gospel my friends Have you ever heard it as good news Have you ever believed That somebody needed to take your place If it didn't you'd have to take your place in hell On the

cross my Lord Jesus Christ Did something for me That I could never have done for myself And I believe that's the gospel He took my place He died in my stead He died as my sin bearer He died as my substitute He died thank God In my place He did something for me In my behalf That I couldn't do for myself And if it is true As the bible says it is That God was in Christ Bearing my sin and yours On the cross Then bless God that is the gospel That tells me of God Sacrificing himself And making himself My substitute Glory hallelujah There he united himself with me And by faith I've been joined to him And growing out of that Bless God Shall I not say That God's attitude to sin Shall be mine That the love That Christ had for the Father Shall be our love That his passion for holiness Shall be ours

For bless God My Lord Jesus Christ Hung there as a representative For sinners And the wondrous phrase In Christ God was in Christ In Christ if any man Be in Christ He is a new creation Old things have passed away Behold all things have become new That blessed expression in Christ Are an equivalent of it Occurs exactly 243 times In the New Testament That means that God Puts me in Christ That he takes me out of Adam And he puts me in Christ And your position now is either An old Adam guilty defiled Or in Christ Cleansed and forgiven Are you in Christ Have you been accepted by God For his sake Can you say I've

been accepted In the beloved one James Denny One of the great writers Of a bygone generation said As I look at Charles Westcott's words Mr.

Westcott said It is the voice of God No less than the sinner Which says Thou O Christ Art all I want More than all I find in thee Oh God The father looks at his son And he says you're all I want More than all I find in thee And the old sinner Thank God can do that See God that's the way I look at it Thou O Christ Art all I want More than all I find in thee For in Christ Means to be right with God I close this message with the text Romans 8 33 Who shall lay Anything to the charge Of God's elect It is God That justifies Salvation Is the gift of God Wrought out in the blood Of his son For believing sinners Are you a believer May God bless you And now our father We've brought this message And we know many people Just sort of laugh at it Because it's the gospel And nobody seems to need a savior now But out there in radio land Somebody's heard And somebody's saying right now That's the one for me I'm a sinner I'm ruined and defiled And I need him Oh thank God The only thing that will recommend you To the mercy and grace of God Is in need All All All That he requires Is to feel Your need Of him Would you turn yourself over to him Now For Christ's sake Amen Would you do it This is evangelist Ralph Barnett

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