

We have been looking at the theme of the Cross of Christ this month.

Two weeks ago we looked at the Scandal of the Cross of Christ. Last week we saw the Power of the Cross of Christ. This morning we will be looking at the PURPOSE of the Cross of Christ...

Have you ever had one of those weeks where everything started off great but by the end of the week--failure?

From a human perspective that is how Jesus' last week went...

Sunday: Jesus hailed as king, seemed Jews be freed, Roman's defeated, Satan defeated, God win... Disciples happy
By Saturday: Jesus crucified, Jews not freed, Romans still ruling, seemed Satan won, God lost... Disciples defeated

When Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, riding a donkey & was hailed as the Son of David by the crowds, Expectations were HIGH: Messiah here: God's fulfillment to save them from their enemies—Romans

Misunderstanding was also HIGH: Jesus entered Jerusalem not as a political savior but personal Savior from sin.

Jesus had tried to prepare the disciples for this but telling them plainly what would happen to him in Jerusalem.

Luke 18:31-34 And taking the twelve, he said to them, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. 32 For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. 33 And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise." 34 But they understood none of these things.

The disciples should have known what was going to happen to Jesus—yet they failed to understand.

It is easy for us to fail to understand what God is doing. It is easy for us to misunderstand God's purposes & ways. So let me ask you, "What was the PURPOSE OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST?"

My Purpose: Help you see AND rejoice in the three-fold PURPOSE of the Cross of Christ

To build a house, you must construct a strong foundation & well-designed frame to 'hang the house on.'

I want this message to be for you: a well-designed foundation, frame & roof to build your Christian life on.

Purpose #1=Foundation: Glorify God, Purpose #2=Walls: Save sinners, Purpose #3=Rafters: Secure Blessing

I. FOUDATION: Purpose #1: The Cross of Christ Supremely/Infinitely Glorifies God

John 12:23-24, 27-28, 31-33 And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. 27 "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. 28 Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." 31 Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. 32 And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." 33 He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

John 13:31-32 When Judas had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. 32 If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once."

John 17:1-3 When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, 2 since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. 3 And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

Jesus glorified His Father by joyfully obeying His Father's will in dying on the cross to save sinners.

Jesus scandalous death on the Cross brought an infinite degree of glory to God—we will never understand!

II. WALLS: Purpose #2: The Cross of Christ is God's only means to Save Sinners

BIBLICAL EXPOSITION: Romans 3:19-31

1. Everyone is a sinner, accountable to God's just judgment & cannot make themselves OK before God.

19 Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God.

20 For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

***The Law does not give us the ability to obey but merely exposes our weakness/failure to obey=sinners!**

2. God declares sinners righteous when sinners trust in Jesus Christ alone to save them.

21 *But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it —*

22 *the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction:*

23 *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*

***God declares you to be right before Him when you trust only in Jesus that He died for you!**

***All sinners are alike before God...sinners! (James 2:10...one sin condemns you)**

***Sin is failure to treasure, trust and obey Jesus Christ supremely in all things.**

3. God JUSTLY justifies sinners BY His grace (gift) & BECAUSE OF Jesus' Cross when they trust Christ.

24 *and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,*

25 *whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.*

This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.

26 *It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

***God saves you BY His grace, not because you are worthy or can earn or merit His gift—Jesus!**

***God is JUST in forgiving you BECAUSE Jesus propitiated God's just anger against your sins.**

4. God declares sinners righteous before Him ONLY when they stop trying & start trusting only in Christ.

27 *Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded.*

By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith.

28 *For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.*

29 *Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also,*

30 *since God is one. He will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.*

31 *Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.*

***You can ONLY trust Christ when you have first stopped trusting in yourself.**

***Since there is ONLY one True God, there is only ONE way to know Him personally...faith in Christ!**

***When God declares sinners righteous... they stop self-boasting & start treasuring Christ & loving people.**

BIBLICAL DOCTRINE: God saves sinners through justifying, sanctifying & glorifying those who trust Christ.

God justifies (declares righteous), in a free act of righteous grace, sinners the moment they trust Christ alone apart from works--God forgives all their sins, God declares them acceptable before Him & God identifies them in Jesus' death & resurrection life.

1. Christ Alone:

Jesus' sacrifice for sinners' sins & His perfect righteous life is the ground of sinners' acceptance with God.

2. Faith Alone:

Faith in Christ, enabled by God's grace, is the sole instrument by which sinners are united to Christ.

3. Justified Forever:

God justifies or declares righteous believing sinners fully & permanently the moment they trust Christ.

4. Identified in Christ:

At the moment of trusting Christ, God also sanctifies believing sinners by identifying them in Jesus' death & resurrection, so they are now 'in Christ' not 'in Adam' & are freed from the necessary rule of Sin.

5. Progressively Sanctified:

Saving faith, which alone receives the gift of justification, does not remain alone but produces by the Holy Spirit, the fruit of love AND progressive degrees of practical holiness (obedience to Christ).

6. Saving Faith Works:

The fact that saving (justifying) faith produces the fruit of good works gives rise to Biblical expressions which seem to make good works the means of justification, but in fact simply express the truth that faith that does not yield the fruit of good works is dead and is NOT true saving faith.

7. Justified, Sanctifying, Will be Glorified:

a. God justifies sinners the moment they trust Christ (freed from sin's penalty=no condemnation).

b. God sanctifies believing sinners by joining them in Jesus' death & resurrection (new identity in Christ) & progressively sanctifies them (frees them from sin's power as they by faith follow Christ in the Spirit).

c. God will glorify believing sinners by redeeming their body (free them from the presence of sin forever).

III. **RAFTERS: Purpose #3: The Cross of Christ Secures God's Blessings for His People**

Romans 8:31-32 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

Jesus Christ... secured all of God's blessings for you—ASK HIM!

2 Corinthians 1:20-22 20 For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory. 21 And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, 22 and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

Jesus Christ... is the guarantee (AMEN) of all of God's promises to you—ASK HIM!

John 14:12-14 12 "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. 13 Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

Jesus Christ... invites you to join Him "on the limb of faith" to be God's channel of blessing to others!!!

-BE sensitive to the indwelling presence of the Spirit...

-BE expectant, persistent, earnest believing prayer in/through Jesus Christ...

Four Questions...

1. **How despicable is sin to God?** YOUR sin? Repulsive... Hideous... Horrific... Disgusting...
-YOUR sin crucified Jesus Christ!
2. **How valuable is the 'Cross of Christ' to God?** Is. 53:10 'It pleased the Lord to crush Him...'
-Infinitely valuable...Everything Jesus did in life and death—He did for the glory of his Father.
"Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say, 'Father save me from the hour?' No! For this purpose I have come to this hour: Father glorify thy name." (John 12:27-28)
"Now is the Son of Man glorified and in him God is glorified." (John 13:31)
"I have glorified you (Father) upon the earth having accomplished the work you gave me to do." (John 17:4)
-All of Jesus' pain, shame, humiliation and dishonor He experienced magnified God's glory.
3. **Why did God choose to save sinners?** Because of His great love & His glorious GRACE—Cross of Christ!
-LOVE—God sent Jesus to die for sinners because of His desire to personally KNOW YOU!
-GRACE---God sent Jesus to die for sinners so He could JUSTLY forgive those who trust Christ.
4. **Who is Jesus Christ to YOU this morning?** Historical figure... Some ideal... God in flesh crucified for you
-Peter: 'Woman, I do not know Him...' Lk. 22:57 "Yes, Lord, You know that I love you..." Jn. 21:15
-Thomas: 'Unless I see in His hands the mark of the nails-I will never believe' 'My Lord and My God' Jn. 20:25f
-Saul: 'Saul breathing threats against the disciples of the Lord...' 'Who are You, Lord?' Acts 9:1-5

God justifies (declares righteous), in a free act of righteous grace, sinners the moment they trust Christ alone apart from works...

He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:5-7)

Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. And to the one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness. (Romans 4:4-5)

We know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified. (Galatians 2:16)

So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. (Galatians 3:24)

...God forgives all their sins,

Just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works: "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin." (Romans 4:6-8)

And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. (Col 2:13-14)

...God declares them acceptable before Him, and

...since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. 5:1)

...God joins them to Jesus' death & resurrection life.

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Gal. 2:20)

1. Christ Alone: Jesus' sacrifice for sinners' sins & His perfect righteous life is the ground of sinners' acceptance with God.

Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. (Romans 5:18-19)

For our sake He (Father) made Him (Jesus) to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him (Jesus) we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

... and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith. (Philippians 3:9)

2. Faith Alone: Faith in Christ, enabled by God's grace, is the sole instrument by which sinners are united to Christ.

For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law (Romans 3:28).

Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. And to the one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness (Romans 4:4-5).

3. Justified Forever: God justifies or declares righteous believing sinners fully & permanently the moment they trust Christ.

...since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. 5:1)

But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, & righteousness & sanctification, & redemption, so that, just as it is written, "Let Him who boasts, boast in the Lord." (1 Cor 1:30-31)

4. **Identified in Christ: At the moment of trusting Christ, God also sanctifies believing sinners by indentifying them in Jesus' death & resurrection, so they are now 'in Christ' not 'in Adam' & are freed from the necessary rule of Sin.**

We know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. (Romans 6:6-7)

I send you to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me (Acts 26:18).

5. **Progressively Sanctified: Saving faith, which alone receives the gift of justification, does not remain alone but produces by the Holy Spirit, the fruit of love ...**

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23)

Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. . . If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen (1 John 4:8, 20).

...AND progressive degrees of practical holiness (obedience to Christ).

But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power. (2 Thessalonians 1:11)

For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead (James 2:26).

By this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him (1 John 2:3-4).

6. **Saving Faith Works: The fact that saving (justifying) faith produces the fruit of good works... gives rise to Biblical expressions which seem to make good works the means of justification, but they simply express the truth that faith that does not yield the fruit of good works is dead and is NOT true saving faith.**

Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14).

For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. (Romans 8:13-14)

For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. (Galatians 6:8-9)

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)

So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead... Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God. You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead (James 2:17, 21-26)

7. **Sinners who believe in Christ alone are justified, being sanctified, and will be glorified.**

- a. God justifies sinners the moment they trust Christ (freed from sin's penalty...no condemnation).
- b. God sanctifies believing sinners by joining them in Jesus' death & resurrection (new identity in Christ) & progressively sanctifies them (frees them from sin's power as they by faith follow Christ in the Spirit).
- c. God will glorify believing sinners by redeeming their body (will free them from the presence of sin forever).

SUN Jesus triumphantly entered Jerusalem, 19:36-44
Jesus wept... Disciple: excited—'Yea'

MON Jesus cursed fig tree & cleansed the temple 19:45-46
Jesus righteous anger Disciples: wondered—'Who?'

TUES Jesus taught with authority in temple 20:1-21:38
Jesus confronted leaders Disciples: confused—'What?'

WED Satan led Judas to betray Jesus 22:1-6
Jesus grieved over Judas Disciples: clueless—'huh?'

THU Jesus observed Passover, prayed, arrested 22:7-65
Jesus surrendered to Father Disciples: ran/denied—'No!'

FRI Jesus is tried, scourged, crucified & died 22:66-23:49
Jesus wins through 'defeat' Disciples: crushed—'What?'

F:forg Sin:Tod Moth:Beh God:My G Self: I th W/Sp: It fin F:Into

SAT Jesus' body in tomb--Guards posted! 23:50-56
Jesus proclaims victory Disciples: numb—'What?'

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-Law does not give us the ability to obey but merely exposes our weakness/failure to obey=sinners!

21-23 God declares sinners righteous when sinners trust in Jesus Christ

-God declares you to be right before Him when you trust only in Jesus that He died for you!
 -All sinners are alike before God...sinners! (James 2:10...
 -Sin is failure to treasure, trust obey Christ supremely in all things.

24-26 God JUSTLY justifies sinners BY & BECAUSE when they trust

-God saves you BY His grace, not because you are worthy or can earn or merit His gift—Jesus!
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-You can ONLY trust Christ when you first stop trusting in yourself.
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