

Dr. Terry E. Zebulke, Pastor  
Grace Community Church  
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## WHY THE CROSS?

(Philippians 2:8)

Series: "Philippians: The Joyful Letter" (Part 11)

...From the very first century, Christians have embraced various symbols depicting their love and faith in the Lord Jesus. Some of these included: the peacock, dove, the athlete's victory palm, a fish and a lamb. A universally acceptable Christian emblem would obviously need to speak of Jesus Christ...in time the chosen symbol became the simple cross. One man writes, "Christians wished to commemorate as central to their understanding of Jesus neither His birth nor His youth, neither His teaching nor His service, neither His resurrection, nor His reign, nor His gift of the Holy Spirit, but His death, His crucifixion." (Stott)

...Crucifixion seems to have been invented by "barbarians" on the edge of the known world, and taken over by the Greeks and the Romans. It is probably the cruelest method of execution ever practiced, for it deliberately delayed death until maximum torture had been inflicted. Often the victim could suffer for days before dying.

...God's sovereign plan to save you involved the sending of His only Son, Jesus, to die a horrible death for the sins of the world. He died as our substitute; He willingly laid down His life for us on the Cross.

### TWO CONSIDERATIONS MOVING US TO WORSHIP THE ONE WHO WILLINGLY DIED IN OUR PLACE.

He died, the Just for the unjust, the sinless for sinners!!

#### I. The Centrality Of The Cross. It Is the Focal Point Of The Bible And Time.

...The proper meaning of Philippians 2:8 is of great importance in understanding Christianity. Impossible...

A. The Cross is the central feature of the New Testament.

1. The Gospels give the major weight to Jesus' suffering and death. (1/3-3/5)
2. It is no exaggeration to say, the Cross overshadowed the life of Christ, even before...  
...Matthew 1:21, the angel tells His name..."Jesus, for He shall save His people from..."  
...Jesus Himself spoke of the suffering that was to come. (Mark 8:31; 9:31) He linked the success of His mission to the crucifixion. (John 12:32) "But if I am lifted up..."  
...John speaks of the crucifixion as that "vital hour." (7x) This "hour" was that which Christ came and His ministry proceeded. (John 2:4; 7:30, 8:20; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 17:1)

B. The Cross of Christ is in a real sense the central theme of the Old Testament.

1. The Old Testament sacrifices prefigure Christ, His sufferings and death.  
...He was the "Lamb of God" who came "To take away the sins of the world."
2. The Old Testament prophets explicitly foretell it. (Isaiah 53)  
...Jesus on the Road to Emmaus after His resurrection opened the Old Testament and taught from the Scriptures foretelling of His death and resurrection. (Luke 24:25-27)

C. Therefore, it is not surprising that the centrality of Christ's Cross has been recognized by Christians in all ages. The Cross stands as the focal point of the Christian faith.

..."Without the Cross, the Bible is an enigma, and the Gospel of salvation is an empty hope."

#### II. The Bible Unfolds The Value Of Christ's Sufferings. What Was Accomplished?

...Jesus' sufferings provide us with an example for us (1 Peter 2:21). But His sufferings mean far more...

A. Jesus died to remove sin. He's the "Sin-bearer," who removed sin by bearing its penalty Himself.

1. Hebrews 9:25. "Christ has appeared...to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself."
2. 1 Peter 2:21. "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree..."
3. The Day of Atonement. (Leviticus 16) 2 goats were chosen, and the High priest would lay his hands on the head of the goat and confess the sins of the nation. Symbolism...

4. This is what Jesus came to do, He came to remove our sin, bearing it in His own person. "He who knew no sin, was made sin...that we might become..." (2 Corinthians 5:21)
- B. Jesus died to satisfy God's inflexible justice. "Covered by His blood." He is the "mercy seat."
  1. The justice of God demanded the punishment of sin and the punishment is death...
  2. Jesus paid that penalty by dying in our place, satisfying Divine justice and leaving nothing for us but God's heaven.
  3. The Tabernacle/Temple had two rooms. The inner room spoke of God's judgment, the Ark of the Covenant contained the Law...but there was the mercy seat...blood.
- C. Jesus displayed God's amazing love for us in His sufferings. The Cross is the measure of God's love for you. (Romans 5:8) God the Father turned His back on His Son and Jesus tasted hell for us. This is how much God loves us. Look to the Cross and marvel at the extent of God's love

#### **SO WHAT? WHAT DIFFERENCE SHOULD THIS MAKE IN YOUR LIFE?**

1. If you are uncertain of salvation look to the cross and find there all that has been done to redeem. If you are discouraged, look to the cross and see the height and depth of God's love.
2. Come today and consider the depth of God's love for you. It is almost unimaginable that He loves us that much, who by birth are His enemies. How much does Jesus love you...He spread out His arms on that Cross and said, "This much!!!" May the love of Christ move you to worship and serve Him every day of your life.
3. If you are now apart from Christ and do not yet believe, you must look to the cross and find the One who has died to remove your sin and to still the demands of God's justice against you forever. The Bible tells..."Look and live." Call upon His name and He will certainly save you today.