

'THE REST OF THE STORY'

(*'Cross Words of Christ' – 2019 Resurrection Day Series*)

Lessons from the Gospel Record

The Cross-Work of Christ

To be a Christian, to be saved from sin, to be sure you are headed for heaven someday, you must believe in the Person of Christ (*that He was and is God the Son, come in the flesh*) and you must believe in the Cross-work of Christ (*that His death on the cross was the substitutionary sacrifice for us that pays in full for all of our sin(s)*). To have a defective view of Christ that denies Jesus was God in the flesh is to believe in a merely human Jesus and be without forgiveness of sin. In fact, to hold a defective view of Jesus is to add that to the top of your list of sins that offends God. And to have a defective view of what Jesus accomplished on the cross for us is to depreciate what He did and miss out on salvation altogether. To add to what He said at the end of His day of '*cross work*' at Calvary, by adding any good works, religious rituals, traditions, objects or sacraments is to add to your sin-list which remains unforgiven.

At the cross Jesus suffered the worst '*man*' could do to Him in the morning and the wrath of God poured out upon Him at the end of the day. If He said, just before He yielded up His spirit to the Father, "**It is finished!**", then it is finished. God's awesome plan of salvation – to condemn sin and forgive sin at the same time – was *finished* by what Christ has done, not anything we do. Adding to the *finished work* of Christ is to add more damnation for thinking you can contribute anything to the grace of God offered you as 100% grace at the cross. To take away from the *finished work* of Christ by treating it as an historical event without your sin having anything to do with it, takes away all possibility of escaping hell and the Lake of Fire someday since your name will be taken out (*blotted out*) of the Book of Life.

Right belief about the Person and work of Christ is what *communion* is all about (the bread represents His perfect, divine Person and the cup represents His perfect *finished work* of shedding His blood to purge our sins away in the sight of God). The *cross work* of Christ is the New Covenant in His blood that we co-sign by faith when we repent and call upon the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved. When it comes to salvation, God says '*you take the day off, My Son, Jesus has already done the work for you. Just abandon everything else you are trusting for grace and put all of your faith and hope in the 'finished' work of Christ for you.*'

PtL

'At The Cross, At The Cross...I First Saw The Light'

(*Cross Word of Christ #1 "Father forgive them..."*)

Luke 23:33-38

"Love Your Enemies..."

(*Jesus' gracious words to His executioners*)

*"And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there, they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. Then Jesus said, "**Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.**"*

23:33-34

Only Luke records these first words of Jesus, uttered by Him immediately upon being nailed to the cross. Whoever else He may have been referring to, it's clear that Jesus certainly must have meant those soldiers who actually crucified Him. On that day they were the only ones we know for sure heard it and were actually converted to Him, in answer to His prayer, in the end (*Luke 23:47, Matthew 27:54, Mark 15:39*).

When Jesus began His public ministry He emphasized in the *Sermon on the Mount* the necessity of His followers to 'love your enemies' by 'praying for those spitefully use you and persecute you' (**Matthew 5:44**). This is the very first thing He did as He practiced what He preached, for those who abused and persecuted Him by nailing Him to the cross.

- Why is Jesus' example in praying for and forgiving those who were hurting Him so very important in enduring persecution when people deliberately inflict pain on us? (**1 Peter 2:21-23**)
- How does forgiveness help us when we are persecuted? How does it help the one doing the persecution? What happens to us and them if we don't pray and forgive our enemies?
- Is there anyone in your life now or in the past you need to pray for and forgive? When will you get around to putting this behind you by actually doing this? Today? Tomorrow?

'The Savior's Stuff'

(Taking the Savior's stuff, not the Savior from the cross)

"...they divided His garments and cast lots. And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God." The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself." 22:35-37

The indignation of dividing Jesus' apparel, robe and sandals was predicted in **Psalm 22:18** and is recorded in all 4 gospels (especially **John 19:23-24**). One can only imagine how special those few material items were to those soldiers – 'things actually touched and worn by He Who was called '**King of the Jews**'! So sad it is for most of them to take home with them material souvenirs and relics of Jesus, but not faith in Him and what He was doing there for them! They remind us of religious relics about Jesus that people treasure and would rather have than Jesus Himself in their hearts and lives (the shroud, splinters of the cross, etc.). Stuff about the Savior, but not Him. Sad!

Roman Catholicism is especially guilty of falsely promising grace through material objects they say are connected to Jesus, the cross, the grave clothes, etc. Adoring, touching, kissing these things have no value in bringing God's grace to the person deceived into thinking it does. In fact, doing so is tantamount to pagan superstition and idolatrous practice of worshipping through things rather than directly worshipping God.

- Did you become a Christian by coming out of a religion that used relics (*pieces of material things, pieces of bones, etc.*) in their system?
- How hard was it for you to get rid of such things and worship God directly through Christ (**1 Timothy 2:5**)? Why do you think God hates the use of inanimate objects to worship Him?

'Sign Languages'

(The three inscriptions on the Savior's sign)

"And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin and Hebrew: **"This is the King of the Jews."** 22:38

The religious leaders were livid about the trilingual sign above Jesus on the cross (**John 19:19-22**). They demanded that Pilate have somebody add one little word to it 'He said' (*one word in Greek*). They wanted Jesus' crime to have been that He only said He was King, but he wasn't actually King of the Jews. Praise God that Pilate refused (*divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit to leave it as written*). This simple sovereign refusal to change the sign's wording is a perfect example of belief in taking God's Word at face value (*literal, verbal, grammatical inspiration of Scripture*). A slight change in wording would have contorted Who Jesus was/is and the reason He died on the cross that day.

- Talk about the awesome blessing that the sign was in all 3 languages of those present there that day. Like a card on a special gift being given, the sign was making it clear that salvation based upon the finished work of Christ is for all men and women everywhere. It is a message from the past recorded in the Bible to all disciples of Christ to get the Word of God and the gospel of Christ out to all peoples everywhere in this Church Age while we await His return (**Matthew 24:14**).