

Why the Cross? – Friday 3rd April, 2015 – Good Friday

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.” (John 3:14-15).

Beloved in The Lord,

There is an old German Hymn that states:

“Jesus make us understand why You died, and help us to bear fruit, from the Cross that You bore.”

Why the Cross? Why did Jesus have to suffer so terribly, and die the most horrible death? The answer is very simple: ***“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16).***

Jesus suffered and died on the cross, because He loved you and me and all people. We need to understand that God is Just and Holy. He has an eternal law that cannot be broken that states that the wages of sin is death. Death here, is not just physical death, but death here is eternal death. Another word for eternal death is Hell. Hell is a place where the soul is alive, but finds itself in solitary confinement, in total darkness, without any hope whatsoever, in pain and torment forever. Hell is separation from Almighty God without remedy.

Hell is an awful, indescribable place. Hell was created as a place of punishment for Satan and the angels who fell with him in the rebellion he led against God. When Adam sinned (rebelled) against God, then all of mankind was brought under the curse of sin and death, for in Adams loins was the whole human race. Since Adam, we are born in a state of sin, theologians call it *“original sin”*. We are born under condemnation of death.

God has a second unbreakable law and that states that without the shedding of blood there can be no forgiveness of sins. The life is in the blood, and only blood can atone for sin. There is nothing else that God will accept. Because God is Holy, the blood of atonement had to be Pure and Holy. The only way that God could save man from Hell, and yet appease His laws was to send His Son Jesus to the cross as our Saviour.

When Jesus was born He was born to an earthly mother – Mary, but He had no biological father, as Mary became pregnant in the power of The Holy Spirit. Sin is passed on through man’s seed, but seeing as Jesus was born without a biological father, He did not inherit original sin. He also lived a totally spotless, and sinless life. We read in Hebrews: ***“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:14-15)***

Jesus was totally without sin, and so His sacrifice was accepted by God The Father. Why the Cross? Because there was no other way, and there never will be any other way. By shedding His blood Jesus paid the full atonement price for sin, for all people in all times. He died a substitutionary death. That means He took our place.

We read in Isaiah: ***“Surely our griefs He Himself bore,
And our sorrows He carried;
Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten of God, and afflicted.
⁵ But He was pierced through for our transgressions,
He was crushed for our iniquities;
The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him,
And by His scourging we are healed” (Is.53:4-5).***

One word that we find repeated in these verses is “Our”. It was our punishment that Jesus took. It was our sin that nailed Him to the cross. He suffered and died in our stead, in our place, so that we would not be eternally damned to Hell. Why the Cross? Why did Jesus bear the burden of our sin? Because He loved us so very much.

Please understand that God loves you personally with an amazing love. He desires for you to reciprocate. He wants to live in fellowship with you. He desires for you to trust Him, to rely upon Him, to live in faith toward Him. He wants you to abide in His presence now and in eternity. He has room at His table for you. He has a home for you. Jesus put it like this: ***“Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.
² In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you;
for I go to prepare a place for you. ³ If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again
and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:1-3).***

Why the Cross? Jesus tells us: ***“that where I am, there you may be also.”*** Without the cross, we cannot come to where He is. The cross is like a bridge that leads across the valley of death to The Father’s Home in Heaven. There is no other bridge, there is no other path, just the cross. Jesus continued in this passage: ***“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me” (John 14:6).***

You see there is no other way. No one comes to the Father, but through Jesus. That is why the Cross. That is why I preach the Cross. That is why I preach Christ Jesus and Him crucified, because He is the Way and the only Way to God. My friends it is vital that you understand this. Many don’t. Many falsely believe that it doesn’t matter what you believe, somehow everything will be alright in the by and by. It won’t be. To get to Heaven you must come God’s way and His way is exclusively the way of the Cross. The only way is Jesus Christ.

The way is the same for all people, and the way is open for all people. The way is opened by receiving Jesus in faith, believing that His blood has paid your sin debt in full.

God has provided a way to Himself and that is free for us, even though it cost Him more than we can comprehend. All we need to do is turn to Jesus in faith and say yes to Him.

Jesus Himself taught about salvation: ***“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life” (John 3:14-15).***

Jesus is referring to an incident in the Old Testament during the time Israel was in the desert heading to the Promised Land. The people had risen up against God and had been murmuring and complaining. God punished their sin by sending fiery snakes into their midst. These snakes were deadly. Many perished. Moses interceded for the people and God commanded him to make a bronze serpent and to put it on a pole and elevate it where all could see it. If anyone was bitten, all they had to do was look at this serpent on the pole and they would be healed and not die. Healing was promised to all who would look at the snake. If someone lacked faith and said in his heart “I don’t need to look at that serpent on a pole. I will deal with this my own way, they found it to be a fatal mistake. Those that obeyed and looked at what God had provided, lived.

This was a very powerful shadow of the Cross. This serpent foreshadowed Calvary. Jesus was lifted up on the Cross, so that every sinner, who looks to Him may be saved. Every person without fail, who looks to Jesus in faith, is saved and receives their place in The Father’s House. But those who reject Jesus, who do not believe in Him, will die in their sins and suffer in eternity.

The cross road of eternity is the Cross. Those who look to Jesus in faith, go to God, those who reject Jesus go to Hell. It is that simple. Your eternal destiny is decided at the Cross. How do you view the Cross?

God has done all He will do. In love He has provided for your salvation. He invites you to come, but has given you the will to choose.

On Good Friday, there were two criminals being executed alongside Jesus. Today one is in Heaven with Jesus and the other is eternal death. What separated them? Jesus on the Cross. One rejected Him and the other looked to Him in faith. These two men symbolise all humanity. Which one are you?

My prayer for you today is that you will understand the answer to the question: “Why the Cross? “ and that you will look to Jesus in faith and be saved. He loves you. Come to Him today.

Amen.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.