

THE GLORY OF HIS CROSS

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THE GLORY OF ITS PROPHETIC ANNOUNCEMENT

The cross holds a large place in the thinking and the speaking of the Christian. Have you noticed how many times a reference is made to it in our hymns? Have you observed how many times the writers of New Testament scripture speak of the cross of Jesus? But such an emphasis on the cross might be surprising to some.

The cross was an ancient instrument for capital punishment. It was to former cultures what the gas chamber, the electric chair and the hangman's noose are to more recent generations. The fact is, death by crucifixion on a cross was the most terrible form of capital punishment ever devised. It necessitated shameful display to public view, a slow death and excruciating pain beyond description. Though Deuteronomy 21 :22, 23 permitted death to be executed by hanging the criminal from a tree, it demanded that the body must be taken down and buried the same day, saying, "He that is hanged is accursed of God. " The apostle Paul took up that same theme and wrote in "Galatians 3: 13 concerning crucifixion, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. " Yes, the cross was a place of suffering, shame and punishment for the worst of crimes. Why, then, do Christians sing words which say, "I will cherish the old rugged cross"? Why

would a writer of Holy Scripture be inspired to pen the words, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Galatians 6:14)? It is because there is something about the suffering of Jesus on the cross which is different from the suffering of any other person who has died such a death.

There is a "glory" to the cross of Jesus Christ. The wood was not sacred, of course. The place where the cross stood was no more holy than any other place. The nails have no sanctity because they were driven to secure the body of Jesus to the frame. No, the glory of the cross of Jesus lies in something else.

The cross is special in the hearts of Christians because of Him who died upon that instrument of death. It is Jesus who hallows the cross. We do not glory in the cross itself, but in the spiritual victory which Jesus won when He died on the cross and arose from death the third day after. It is the redemption which He effected there which makes the cross to have special meaning to Christians.

Planned from the beginning

The crucifixion of Jesus Christ was no accident. It did not occur because God could do no better. Jesus stood as a lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8). He came into the world for the express purpose of dying on the cross in behalf of sinners (John 12:27; Mark 10:45). Jesus' death on the cross was the very plan of God in effecting the salvation of the lost. Jesus recognized that what happened to Him was in direct fulfillment of what the ancient prophets had announced would happen. He told the disciples, 'Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations' (Luke 24:46, 47). "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself' (Luke 24:27).

Predicted by prophecy

The prophetic prediction of the events surrounding the crucifixion of Jesus add a halo of glory to His cross. The predictions were made hundreds of years before the events took place, indicating God planned the cross all the while.

1. Psalm 41:9 predicted that Jesus would be betrayed by one of His disciples. Mark 14:43-49 tells how Judas Iscariot, betraying His Master to the enemies, led the soldiers to the garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus went often to pray.
2. Zechariah 11: 12, 13 predicts that thirty pieces of silver would be paid for the act of betrayal but then afterwards given to the potter for a piece of ground. Matthew 27:3-10 reports that exact amount paid to Judas Iscariot and later used to purchase a potter's field to bury Judas after he had committed suicide. In fact, the passage is quoted in Matthew 27, so exact was the prophecy and its fulfillment.
3. Psalm 69:25 and 109:8 predict that one of the chosen ones (whom we call "apostles" in the New Testament) would leave his place desolate, and another would take his office. Acts 1: 15-20 reports how the early church prayed and voted and selected Matthias to take the place which Judas Iscariot had forsaken. Simon Peter, who seems to have been in charge of the group on that occasion, quoted the passage in the Psalms to show that was the proper thing to do.
4. Zechariah 13:7 announced that the followers would forsake the Lord when He was arrested, and Matthew 26:31, 55, 56 reports that was exactly what happened as they fled from Gethsemane.

5. Isaiah 50:6 spoke of the scourging, mocking and abuse which Jesus would undergo. Matthew 27:27-31 reports how they treated him exactly as had been foretold.

6. Isaiah 53:4-7 described His terrible suffering and declared it would be endured in silence without complaint or threatening. Mark 15 reopens the events while Acts 8:32-35 quotes Isaiah 53 to show it happened exactly as foretold.

7. Psalm 22: 16 spoke of the piercing of the hands and feet of the suffering Servant of God. {Further reference is made to that in Zechariah 12:10; 13:6}. Luke 23 tells how they crucified the Lord, and Acts 2:22, 23, 37 records the references to it made by Simon Peter in his great sermon on the day of Pentecost.

8. Psalm 69:20,21 describes the sorrow of the suffering One and their giving vinegar and gall for Him to drink. That was exactly what happened in the crucifixion of Jesus, according to Matthew 27:33, 34.

9. "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture," are the words of Psalm 22:18. That was an exact description of what the soldiers did at the cross of Jesus, according to John 19:23,24.

10. "My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?". is recorded in Psalm 22: 1 and Matthew 27:46. The one is prophecy; the other is history .It happened as was announced.

11. "He was cut off from the land of the living" according to the prediction of Isaiah 53:8. "He gave up His spirit" according to the history of Luke 23:46.

12. He was with the wicked in His death {Isaiah 53:9; Matthew 27:38) and with the rich in His burial {Isaiah 53:9; Matthew 27:57-60).

I hope the recounting of those twelve predictions and their fulfillment in the suffering and death of Jesus Christ has not grown wearisome to you. I have listed them because they show beyond reasonable doubt that the crucifixion and death of Jesus {and His resurrection which followed) were announced centuries before it came to pass.

That means that God intended all the time to permit His only begotten Son to go to the cross and die for sinners that they might be saved from their sin. That is why the cross has a special attraction to Christians. It was because of what happened there in the sacrifice of Jesus that redemption has been secured for all those who trust Him.

Turn from your sins and place your faith in Him as Savior. right now.

THE GLORY OF ITS INNOCENT SUFFERER

The glory of the cross of Jesus Christ lies not in its material nor its design nor its location but in the nature of Him who suffered and died thereon. Thousands of people have been crucified to death on a wooden cross, but only the cross of Jesus Christ has made any particular difference in human history. His cross is different because He is different. Christians do not glory in the cross of Christ but in the Christ of the cross.

What was there about Jesus Christ which made His death on the cross so different from other tragic victims who had died thereon? The difference lies in His nature (He was God in human flesh) and in His purpose (He was dying in behalf of and in the place of guilty and condemned sinners that He might rescue them from death and hell). He died on the cross in perfect innocence of any sin or crime. His death is different from all other persons who have died. He died for our redemption and rose again for our justification.

Principles

There are three basic Bible principles which must be understood to appreciate what Jesus did for us in His death and resurrection. First, God decreed that personal guilt rested upon every person who knowingly and willfully broke the law of God. The law of God is for man's good. Any violation of it is inexcusable and irreconcilable to God's holiness. Guilt for willful sin separated the sinner from God against whom he sinned.

Second, God decreed that punishment must be meted out upon every person who sinned against Him. That punishment was solemnly announced in the words: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4, 20). Death means separation. The person who sins is separated from God.

Third, God decreed that an innocent one could take the place and suffer the penalty of a guilty one, thereby freeing the guilty one so he could approach God in peace. Since the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), only death could pay the penalty for sin. God effected a way which He announced in Leviticus 17:11: "The life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."

Illustration

That divine principle was illustrated over and over through the Old Testament scriptures. A man would bring an innocent animal (lamb or ram or bullock) to be offered unto death. He would identify himself with the animal by laying hands upon it, as if transferring his personal guilt for sin over to the animal itself. When the animal was killed and its blood sprinkled before the Lord, the offerer went away with a sense of forgiveness of sin and acceptance before God. That principle underlay every sacrifice offered for sin in all the Old Testament period. God was careful that we might understand what was happening. There was no merit in the blood of an animal. "For it is not possible that the blood of bull," and of goats should take away sins" (Hebrews 10:4). The person who offered the innocent animal was but acknowledging his faith in God to deal in mercy and grace toward his personal sin and forgive him because of his repentance and faith.

God made the matter clearer and clearer through the Old Testament revelation. In the beginning of human history, each person had to offer sacrifice for himself (Genesis 4). Later, God showed that it was possible for one person to offer sacrifice for an entire family (Genesis 9). God instituted a priesthood in ancient Israel, with a system of sacrifices in the prescribed order of worship, to show one man could offer sacrifice for a whole nation (Leviticus 14). All that was to bring us to the understanding that Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, was able to offer sacrifice for the whole human race (I John 2:2). God was bringing us to the place that we might be justified by faith in Jesus Christ.

Fulfillment

All that God foretold in the Old Testament concerning sin and guilt and sacrifice and forgiveness is wonderfully fulfilled in Jesus Christ our Lord. He came into the world as the perfectly innocent, absolutely sinless, Son of Man and Son of God. He joined the nature of God and the nature of man in the same human body. He underwent every temptation and testing which humans undergo, but He did not sin in any point nor to any degree. The Bible says of Him, "He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth" (Isaiah 53:9). Jesus challenged His opponents, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" (John 8:46). That is to say, "What indication of sin can anyone of you point out in my life?" They could identify nothing wrong, for "He knew

no sin" (II Corinthians 5:21). "For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). "For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Hebrews 9: 10). Jesus Christ died for us as the lamb was killed in the place of the ancient worshipper. Not only was He "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), He was "a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 2:22).

It was the sinlessness of Jesus Christ which qualified Him to suffer for our sins. A guilty sinner can never make atonement for another guilty sinner. Jesus was sinless and could be the innocent Sufferer in behalf of us who are sinful.

Jesus suffered for us! That is a marvelous statement, isn't it? Think of it. God Himself, in the person of His only begotten Son, suffered and died in the place and on the behalf of guilty sinners. Yet, that is the evident teaching of Holy Scripture. Consider these typical statements to be found here and there in the New Testament. Jesus was "delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification". (Romans 4:25). "Christ died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:6). "Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3). "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (Hebrews 9:28). "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18). There can be no denying the evident teaching of the New Testament: Christ the sinless died in the place of the sinful. Why did He do it? The Bible answers, "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God" (Ephesians 5:2). Did you catch the key word? Listen for it "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us" (1 John 3:16). "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). He did it because He loves us! You can safely trust in one who loves you as God loves you. He loves you so much that He did not spare His only begotten Son but delivered Him up to death to save you. That is the glory of the cross of Jesus Christ. It was on that vehicle of execution and shame that the sinless Son of God gave His life as atonement for guilty and sinful men. Now He invites each one to come to Him personally and receive forgiveness of sin because of what He effected in His death and resurrection. "Whosoever will may come" is God's invitation. And "whosoever will" includes you!

THE GLORY OF ITS SURPRISING REVELATION

We humans have a natural element of pride in our nature. We like to hear our names called, to be complimented on our appearance or performance, to see our names in print or otherwise be pointed out as superior to others in one point or another. Some people take pride in their body, for others are not so well proportioned as they. Some take pride in their wealth, for others have accumulated less than they. Some take pride in their knowledge, for others are not so intelligent as they. Some even take pride in their religion, for others are not so diligent as they. Are you surprised, therefore, to read the words of the Apostle Paul, "God forbid that I should glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Galatians 6: 14)? Why would anyone "glory" (take pride) in the cross? No one would unless it was the "cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Something wonderful and life-changing has happened because Jesus was crucified and rose again from death. It is in the victory gained through His cross that the Christian finds reason to take pride. In developing the theme "The

Glory of His Cross" I suggest that we find reasons to glory in the cross of Jesus Christ in view of the great truths it reveals. These are truths concerning God and man. An understanding of them can be a life-changing experience to the person who acts upon them.

The cross reveals man's condition

The cross of Jesus Christ reveals great truths concerning man's real condition and need. That is a truth which man needs to understand clearly. Ask the average man, "What kind of a person are you?" He will reply, "I am not perfect. of course, but I think I am a pretty good person. You know, just an average guy." That means he compares himself with people around him and meets the general standards common in human

society. But II Corinthians 10:12 reads, "We dare not make ourselves of the number. or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." It is not enough to be as good as most other people. We must be as good as God wants us to be.

The cross of Jesus reveals the truth that not one of us is good enough within his own self. Our iniquities have separated us from God and our sins have hid his face from us (Isaiah 59:2). "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of u~ all" (Isaiah 53:6). Here is God's estimate of us: "We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God" (Romans 3:9-11). Those who are not trusting Jesus as personal Savior are "without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2: 12).

That is why the cross of Jesus was necessary .He died for those who were lost, dead in their trespasses and sin, that He might bring each to God and reconcile him by establishing the Father-child relationship between God and man. The fact that He went to death for us indicates how serious our sin really is.

The cross reveals the consequences of sin

The cross of Jesus Christ reveals the truth about God's law concerning sin's consequences in the life of the sinner. What does sin do to a person?

Sin separates the sinner from God in such a way that the sinner cannot seek and find his way back to God. Ezekiel 18:4 states it this way, "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father so also of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth. it shall die." That separation from God is called spiritual death. It means a person can be separated from God in spiritual death at the same time he is in vigorous, good health in his physical body.

When Job 11:7 asks the question, "Canst thou by searching find out God?", the expected answer is "No." No man can find God without divine aid. Sin has separated him from God so that God's face is hidden from him.

Sin defiles all the deeds of the unbeliever so that none is good enough to recommend himself to God. Isaiah 64:6 reads, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we do all fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." Deeds which are like "filthy rags" cannot recommend a person to God. Sin defiles all our deeds.

Sin can be covered only by the blood of an innocent substitute. "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). The

cross of Jesus Christ was necessary for our salvation because of the law of God concerning sin and the sinner. That law is made clear by His cross.

The cross reveals God's mercy

The cross of Jesus Christ reveals the truth about God's great mercy and pardoning love. It shows how God loves us so much that He even gave His only Son to death in order to save us from our sins.

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (II Corinthians 8:9). That's it! "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

Hey, I like that! That gives me hope, in spite of my sins. It tells me that God does not love me because of my good deeds or high ambitions but in spite of my faults and my failures. God's love does not come by my merit but by His grace.

."Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).

At no place is the love of God manifested so wonderfully as in that occasion when Jesus Christ died in the place of guilty sinners (1 John 4:9). The cross manifests the love of God in a way no other thing reveals it No wonder we Christians glory in the Christ of the cross.

The cross reveals divine justice

The cross of Jesus Christ reveals how God can forgive guilty sinners and still be a just God. It is explained in the third and fourth chapters of Romans. God can forgive the guilty sinner, and still be just, because the sins of the sinner have been borne under judgment by Jesus Christ. He died as if He were personally guilty for them. The sentence has been meted out on our sins. We can come to God and receive a "paid in full" verdict because of what Jesus has done. Now, think about what we have seen in these four statements. We Christians glory in the Christ of the cross because the cross has revealed our true condition apart from God as lost and doomed, it has set forth God's law of death to the sinner because of sin, it has revealed God's great mercy and pardoning love which is willing to endure the suffering which the sinner deserves, and it has revealed that God can and will forgive every sinner who comes to Him in repentance and faith. If you are a person who is trusting Jesus Christ, you can join me in rejoicing at what He has done in His death and resurrection. If you are not trusting Him personally, you can enter into the benefits of grace by repentance and faith.

THE GLORY OF ITS PRESENT POWER

It would be a tragic mistake to approach the Bible as if it were a mere book of history .It is a record of historical events, of course, but it is more than history. It was written by men, but it is more than a book by men. It deals with religious principles, but it is more than a book of religion. The Bible is a book written by men under the direct supervision of God so that what has been produced is not a human book but a divine revelation.

The theme of the Bible is redemption. It is concerned from beginning to end with the salvation of sinners. It begins with the account of creation--how men and things came to be. It continues with the record of man's fall into sin--why redemption is necessary. That much is recorded in the first three chapters of the first of its sixty-six books. The rest of the Bible is concerned with a record

of how God has provided salvation in Jesus Christ and how man may receive it by repentance from sin and faith in Jesus.

That revelation has the cross of Jesus Christ at its very heart. All the Old Testament is a revelation given to prepare men for the day when the only begotten Son of God would give Himself a ransom for sinners. The New Testament is a revelation given to explain the substitutionary sufferings of Jesus and show how the message of it is to be given to every human being in all of human history .

The cross of Jesus Christ is more than a historical fact, though it is a historical fact. It is more than past events, though the crucifixion did occur almost two millennia ago. The effects of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, on that cross outside Jerusalem continue to exert powerful influence today. That is why I say that we Christians glory in the Christ of the cross because of the present power His death exerts over men in their relationship with God. Let us investigate the present power of the Christ of the cross.

Understand, first of all, that Jesus did more than die on a cross. His ministry was not confined to his 33 years upon the earth and His three- year active teaching work. Not at all. At the end of His earthly ministry

He ascended back to heaven. He sat down there at the right hand of God. He is busy there in heaven now effecting the power of redemption secured by His death and resurrection to those who come to Him in faith. He is present Savior and only intercessor between God and man today.

Power to effect a new creation

The Christ of the cross has the power to effect a new creation in any person who comes to Him in faith. That is the truth reflected in these words recorded in II Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Notice that expression "a new creature." It means "a new creation, a new being, a new person altogether." It speaks of the change wrought in the person who trusts Jesus Christ as personal Savior. How is that new creation possible? It is possible because of what happens to a person when he is saved. His sins are forgiven, of course, and he is no longer condemned. But more than that happens. He is joined to Christ so that He actually becomes a member of Christ (I Corinthians 12: 12-14). He is indwelt by the Spirit of God so that it is no longer he who lives but Christ who lives in him (Galatians 2:20). He receives the very nature of God Himself, besides his own human nature which he already has (II Peter 1:4). He becomes spiritually alive with a life which is totally unharmed by physical death; he has eternal life. I think that is enough to make a person a "new creation," don't you? I do not speak of mere reformation by which a person quits his bad habits. I speak of a spiritual transformation by which a person becomes a different person from what he was before. He is no longer a guilty and condemned sinner who cannot help himself. He is a justified and free saint, a child of God by Jesus Christ. That is possible because the Christ who died on the cross lives to be the Savior of those who believe.

Power to create a new civilization

The Christ of the cross has established a new civilization, a new type of humanity. Hear this word from Philippians 3:20, 21, "For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven; from whence we also look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself " What does it mean that our "citizenship" is in heaven? It means

heaven is our home. Our life is centered there. We Christians are but a colony of heaven here on earth; the commonwealth to which we belong is in heaven. Praise the Lord! The man named Adam, of whom we read in the book of Genesis, was the head of the human race as we know it. His sin against God in the eating of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden brought condemnation and death upon all those who are descended from him. That is what we are by nature.

The man named Jesus, of whom we read in the New Testament, is the head of a new race of people. His obedience to God in His earthly life, and His death in the place of and on the behalf of sinners, has made it possible for men to be saved and adopted into the family of God. That is what we become by grace.

Where is your citizenship? Of course, you are a citizen of the country in which you were born. I am a citizen of the United States of America. I am proud of that citizenship. I would not trade it for citizenship in any other nation on earth. But I am more than a citizen of an earthly nation. I am a citizen in the kingdom of God. That is more important than any other relationship I have. I became a citizen of the kingdom of God while retaining my citizenship in my native land. I became a citizen of the kingdom of God, the domain of heaven, by being translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son at conversion (Colossians I: 12-14) when He forgave my sin and made me His dear child.

That is the present power of the Christ of the cross. He is creating a new civilization, a new kingdom, made up of those who have eternal life. There is a new power working in the world today. It is not a literary power, though more has been written about it than any other subject in human history. It is not a political power, though nations have risen and fallen upon their submission or rebellion against it. It is a spiritually transforming power which makes sinners into saints and makes a new person of each one who submits to God. The Kingdom of God is here. It is inward and spiritual and unseen, but it is here. People are entering into that kingdom by repentance and faith. It is growing by the thousands each day. You are in that kingdom, if you are saved. You can enter that kingdom by being born again through faith in Jesus Christ. Be warned, however, "Except a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit. he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:3, 5). You, just like everyone else, must be born again if you would know the great change effected by the Christ of the cross.

THE GLORY OF ITS GREAT VICTORY

We are investigating the implications of a statement found in Galatians 6: 14: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." We are investigating the statement. I say, because it is such an unusual statement.

The cross was used in ancient generations as an instrument of execution. It was a gruesome thing. It witnessed indescribable sufferings. It was the most horrible form of capital punishment that has ever been devised.

Why, then, would anyone wish to "glory" (take pride, boast) in any cross under any possible circumstance? Ah, that is the point. No one would wish to be boastful about a cross as such. It is not a cross of which the apostle boasts but of "the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Jesus changes

the cross. Because He died on a cross, something new and different and wonderful has happened. It is not in the cross but in the Christ of the cross that Christians glory .

Why do Christians glory in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ? (1) Christians glory in the Christ of the cross because it was announced by prophets long before it was witnessed in history .It was God's fore- ordained event. (2) Christians glory in the Christ of the cross because He went there as an innocent substitute for guilty sinners. He obtained redemption for them by His sufferings for them. (3) Christians glory in the Christ of the cross because by His death and resurrection He has revealed spiritual truth which they could not have known otherwise. He has revealed God as merciful and willing to save all who come to Him. (4) Christians glory in the Christ of the cross because He is still alive, active in the salvation of sinners and extending the influence of the Kingdom of God. He sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven as the only intercessor between God and man. (5) Christians glory in the Christ of the cross because He guarantees great victory for those who trust Him. He guarantees victory over sin, Satan, death and the grave. I glory in Him, too; do you?

Victory over sin

We glory in the cross of Jesus Christ because through it we have victory over sin. You see, sin is the great problem which separates man from God. God is absolutely holy and cannot approve sin. Man is totally depraved and cannot refrain from sin. That separates them so they can have no fellowship.

If the cross is the solution of the sin problem. Jesus Christ went to the cross as if He were personally guilty of the sin which you and I committed. He bore the full penalty--death--which we deserve because of our sin. Through Him, therefore, we can approach God and be received in peace. Suppose you owed a debt to another person. A friend who knew of the debt and wanted to help you went to the creditor and paid your full obligation to him. You could then approach the person whom you had owed, and he would have no claim to lay against you. The debt had been paid. The account was settled. But let us go one step further with the illustration. You must be willing to accept the gracious act of the friend who paid the debt. You might continue worrying and feeling obligation for the debt, if you did not accept as your own the act of the man who paid out of his own resources. The Bible reports that Jesus has died for us. He paid our sin debt. But that is not enough. The death of Jesus is available for every person, but it is effective only to those who repent and believe. Are you trusting Him as your personal Savior?

What victory over sin comes when one receives Jesus Christ as Savior? Romans 8: 1 reads, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Freedom from condemnation comes through Jesus Christ.

Acts 13:38, 39 reads in part, "Be it known unto you therefore. men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things..." Forgiveness of sins and justification before God are received through Jesus Christ. That is the victory received in Christ. No wonder we glory in Him!

Victory over Satan

We glory in the cross of Jesus Christ because through it we have victory over the devil. Consider this glorious statement of I John 4:4: "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." Who is in you? God is in you if you are a Christian. Who is in the world? Satan is in the world. He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. Christian, rejoice in your victory over the devil. The testimony of

Revelation 12: 11 explains how victory over the devil is received: "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." Satan was defeated at the cross of Jesus Christ. He threshes about in the world today, trying to wreak all the havoc he can, but he knows he is doomed and his time is short. Here is a promise which every child of God can claim with joy. It is recorded in Romans 16:20: "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen." God had promised in the beginning of human history that the Son of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent, the devil. It happened at the cross and will be manifest in the lives of God's people day by day.

Rejoice, Christian, you have victory!

When the time comes, God will send His angel (just ONE angel!) to bind Satan and cast him into a bottomless pit (Revelation 20:1-3). At the end, Satan will be cast into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone (Revelation 20:10). In the meantime, the Christian can claim victory over him by faith in Jesus Christ. The cross of Jesus Christ guarantees the Christian victory over the devil.

Victory over death

We glory in the cross of Jesus Christ because through it we have victory over death and the grave. The Bible states very clearly, "It is appointed unto men once to die..." (Hebrews 9:27). Physical death will come. The body which dies will return to the dust from whence it came, even when the spirit goes to God who gave it (Ecclesiastes 12:7). But that is not the end. The grave can receive only that part of the person which can return to dust. The spirit cannot be confined there. Jesus said a person could continue to live, even though he died (John 11 :25, 26). Physical death does not come to the immortal spirit of the Christian. Jesus promised, "I am he that liveth. and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Revelation 1:18). "Because I live. ye shall live also" (John 14:19).

Jesus will return to earth, saints who have died will be resurrected in a glorious body (at the same instance the living saints will be changed), and we will all meet the Lord to be forever with Him. The atonement effected by His death and resurrection has guaranteed such victory for each one who trusts Him. No wonder the Bible says we are "more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:37).

Deal honestly with this question: " Am I trusting Jesus Christ alone for forgiveness as my personal Savior?" The answer to that question will have eternal consequences for you. "Acquaint now thyself with him. and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee" (Job 22:2