

## What of This Cross That Paul preached?

*1 Corinthians 2:1-5 ESV*

*(1) And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom.*

***(2) For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.***

*(3) And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling,*

*(4) and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,*

*(5) that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*

## Introduction

***(2) For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.***

As a preacher this is a hard thing...deciding to know nothing but Christ

It has to be a very purposeful thing

As a preacher :

you fight the pull of the world

You fight the pull of the flesh

You fight the pull of the people

You fight the pull to be popular

You fight the need to be accept

You fight the need to be eloquent

You feel constantly caught in the middle

Wrestling God often for a people who don't want to wrestle for themselves.

Straining to hear what it is heaven would say and trying your very best to put it in such a way that people will

And Here is Paul...

He writing to a church he has planted and is passionate about

Here are a group of people he knows intimately

Here is a group of people he is deeply concerned about

They have lost there way

They have gotten caught up in the press of life and the infiltration of culture, the slow seep of worldliness which is slowly drowning out the other worldly aspect of there faith

And he says:

*I didn't not come to you with words to impress...oh I can impress you, I have the greatest training amongst my people. I know of my intellect, they talked of it at school, my teachers praised me, the religious leaders told me of how bright my future was*

*I am self aware enough to know that I am eloquent*

*But I determine I would not go the wrought of my generation*

*For I determined. I made a resolution.*

*This was my fixed, deliberate purpose when I came there.*

*It was not a matter of accident, or chance, that I made Christ my great and constant theme, but it was my deliberate purpose.*

*My deliberate purpose....*

*My deliberate purpose to preach to you one thing and one thing only*

Here is writing a letter to a church that seems to have gotten side tracked.

He is writing to a group of people that started so well but had lost there focus on what was important

He was not interested in how other people perceived him  
If they thought he was educated or uneducated

He wanted to show these people the one thing that mattered to him  
above all else, the one thing that would get their life back on track

You see Paul had had it all.

A successful career in the religious fields.  
A successful businessman  
He was famous in his nation.  
A man of wealth and stature  
But he didn't want the church at Corinth to see that

He didn't want them impressed with his resume, his marketing, his  
reputation

He knew all of things could hinder and not help

They could stop the blessing of God when they were substituted for it

No Paul said...there is one thing...and one thing alone

I need you to see Christ

Now not just Christ the great teacher  
Not just Christ the great rabbi  
Not just Christ the miracle worker

All of those are lovable

All of those are acceptable  
All of those are palatable

But they will not save you

What I need you to see is Christ Crucified

I need you to see that above all else

I will strip myself bare  
I will put myself to one side  
I would rather stutter and you see Christ Crucified, than you be  
impressed with me

I would rather speak in simple terms with simple words and you think  
me a fool and ignorant that you be so impressed with me in your  
head that your heart does not break with the condition of your lost  
soul and sinful state

No friend it is Christ Crucified I need you to see.

I need you to see this Cross of my Christ

This empty Cross  
This empty grave

I need you to see  
To understand  
To perceive what this Cross means  
What this Christ has done for me  
and what my Christ has done for you

Paul was a man of great single focus

He wanted them to see Christ, the Son of the Living God.

He wanted them to have an encounter with the power of God, not the  
power of men's words or arguments.

He was not a man concerned for his own reputation

He cared little for his own comfort

He was driven in all that he did for a cause greater than himself

*1 Corinthians 2:1-5 ESV*

***(2) For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.***

Paul was not interested in Christianity as a social cause

He was not interested in its impact upon the political area

The only thing that matter to Paul in his daily life,

if it was the ministry of business  
or the business of ministry  
was the person and work of Jesus Christ

It was the thing that define his life,  
It was the reason for his business,  
It was the motivation behind his ministry, his very being

I feel we have often forgotten that.  
We have allowed our faith to become Jesus and...  
Jesus and prosperity  
Jesus and healing  
Jesus and destiny  
Jesus and a nice life

But Paul here is saying there is nothing else

Nothing else you every need to know  
Nothing else you every need to pursue

There is one answer to the many questions that you have about your spiritual condition

***(2) For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.***

He put it all to one side

It wasn't a fad he went through  
It was not the focus of a fast or a bible study,  
it was his consuming passion

Is it like that for you friend?

Or does this Cross cause you shame at times?

Do you find yourself embarrassed because of your faith?

Do you find yourself trying to impress someone with your arguments  
instead of simply sharing your story?

Impress them with your preaching instead of your testimony?

Do you find yourself talking of the social justice credentials of the  
church instead of the cross of Christ?

## **This Cross of Christ**

Paul faced the same thing

- It was not the teachings of Christ that man him the Son of God, it was the cross
- It was not the miracles of Christ that confirmed Him as the Son of God, but the Cross
- It was not the life of Christ that cleansed our sin, but the Cross

To the Jews, this Cross was a curse

To the Greeks this Cross was barbarianism at its worst

To the Romans this Cross was the just rewards of criminals

But to Paul this Cross was a place of hope

To Paul it was a second chance

To Paul it was a symbol of opportunity and new beginnings

To Paul it was the place of exchange, the place of transformation

It was the place where the old was gone and the new had come

This cross to Paul was not just something that he had heard about, but something he had experienced

This murderer

This blasphemer

This zealot

This religious nut

He had it all wrong.

His peers had murdered Christ

He himself had slaughtered Christians

Yet this man had not been rejected by God

He had been called by God.

This Cross, this tree of shame was not a theological argument, it was the greatest thing to ever happen to mankind

In the Garden of Eden there was one tree that brought death and destruction

On Cavalries Hill there was one tree that brought righteousness and life

Are you not struck by the majesty of that ?

This Cross, this old rugged cross, this glorious cross, this impossible cross

This Cross is where the old nature is crucified and the new nature is given the power of life and resurrection

Without the Cross you only have a life reformed by teaching  
With the cross you have a life transformed by grace

Without the Cross you have a life bound by religion  
With the Cross you have a life filled with Hope

Without the Cross every day you live you perish  
With the Cross every day you live prosper

That's why Paul when he planted a church in Corinth:

***I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ  
and him crucified***

This wasn't a church planting strategy, this was a rescue mission

This wasn't the final thing in his bag of tricks  
This was the only thing

the Cross was the greatest gift he could give these people.

It was the greatest truth he could share

The greatest revelation he could ever hope they came to understand

*If you could get this church  
If I could help you see this, then I have done more than any  
pastor could hope*

*If I could help you see the possibility and power in this Cross of  
Christ...no greater thing could I do*

That is what Paul was saying

## Let me give you seven thoughts concerning the cross that Paul preached

### 1. The Cross is the place of exchange

*Psalms 30:10-11 ESV*

*(10) Hear, O LORD, and be merciful to me! O LORD, be my helper!"*

*(11) You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; you have loosed my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness,*

The Cross is the place of exchange

It is where you exchange all the consequences and curse of sin for the goodness and graciousness of God

You Take guilt to the Cross	leave with acquittal.
Take repentance to the Cross	leave with faith.
Take sorrow to the Cross	leave with joy.
Take sin to the Cross	leave with righteousness.
Take ignorance to the Cross	leave with wisdom.
Take disease to the Cross	leave with healing.
Take fatherlessness to the Cross	leave with Father's love.
Take old life to the Cross	leave as new creation.
Take impotence to the Cross	leave with power.

How similar is Corinth to Texas

How much store as a people do we put in our politics, in our intellect, in our religion, in our good works or our money

To omit the cross is to make Christianity no different from any other religion in the world.

That's what Peter tried to do

In matt 20, Jesus has just revealed the true nature of His mission and vision, he talked about the need to go to Jerusalem and suffer the shame of death and the cross

Peter tried to talk Him out of it

Peter tried to suggest there must be another way to accomplish the will of God without the cross.

Another way to be savior without the Cross

Another way to heaven without the cross

He tried to take the Cross away from Christ

He tried to have savior without a crucifixion

He was sounding like Satan and every cult and Pharisee between the garden and now

The cross doesn't have to be popular to be right, it is powerful

The cross doesn't have to be pretty to be wonderful, it is beautiful

## **2. In the cross is our reconciliation**

*2 Corinthians 5:18 ESV*

*(18) All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;*

Reconcile:

To come to an understanding

To become consistent and compatible

To end conflict and disputes

Our marriages can be reconciled in the Cross

Our families can be reconciled in the Cross

Our failures can be reconciled with the Cross

Our life can be reconciled in the Cross

It is where you can die to your pride

Your pain

Your bitterness

Your excuses

And come away with

A reason

a future and

a hope

### **3. In the cross our debt of sin cancelled**

Man was born a sinner in need of a savior

we needed a new nature that would escape the righteous judgment of God

The cross is where that is formed

We are Born again because of the Cross  
Born Again into the new image that is Christ

Because of man's inability to achieve righteousness himself,  
Christ came

IN Christ Alone is our Hope  
IN Christ Alone is our Salvation

On this Cross our hope was born  
On this Cross of Christ our salvation took form

On this Cross

Not on the Cross of your own making

Not on the Cross of your own choosing

But on this Cross

On His Cross

The Cross of Christ

#### **4. In the cross we have victory of the principalities and powers of darkness**

*Colossians 2:14-15 ESV*

*(14) by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.*

*(15) He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.*

There was a contract against our name by the transgressions of Adam that had sentenced us to eternal damnation

This contract

This agreement that bound us no longer has sway

It no longer has a hold

It was nailed to the cross along with Christ

This Cross of shame is our greatest hope

This Cross of shame is our greatest comfort

There is a real devil and he hates you

There is a real God and He loves you

Do you notice how it was the cross that brought us victory?

You never have to worry about the power the enemy has or the schemes he maybe trying to hatch

Christ has openly, publically triumphed over them

He not only disarmed them, but he publically made a spectacle of them

By His own arm did he obtain this victory, so he alone triumphed  
He alone as the glory

It is not Christ and works that freed us

It is not Christ and pray that freed us

It is not Christ and offerings that freed us

But Christ and His Cross of Shame that set us free

This Cross of Shame, this might Cross, this powerful Cross, this redeeming Cross

**5. IN the cross we have been crucified to the world - and the world crucified to us - and us to the world.**

*Galatians 6:14 ESV*

*(14) But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*

Life Enhancement Christians have never been to Cross.

They may have regret for there sin, but never repentance

Without repentance that leads to faith - you only have only presumption.

And God is not please with a life of presumption

God wants you friend

All of you

Not the bits you want to give, but the bits your scared to give

**6. In the cross sin is made ineffective, we are no longer slaves to it, but alive in Christ**

Addiction can no longer hold you  
Fear and guilt can no longer discourage you  
Remorse and self-pity have no place any more

**7. In the cross we give ourselves generously to God**

Neither our time, talent or treasure are our own  
We are not entangled in the affairs of this world  
But our gaze is firmly fixed on the banner that is held high above our heads

**You give up a lot to be a Christian**

Sickness for health

Loneliness for a friend who will never leave you or forsake you

Fear for faith

Religion for freedom

License for liberty

Guilt for Grace

Despair for Hope

Morning for joy