

"What We Believe"

Session 9

Cross: God Dies

I) INTRODUCTION

- A) For Christians and non-Christians alike, we both have some things in common. 1) Our two major holidays are Easter and Christmas and 2) our calendar is split apart again by both the incarnation of Jesus Christ (B.C.) and His death and resurrection (A.D.). Jesus entered into time and space, walking planet earth, and created no small stir among the nations.
- B) Nearly anything you watch on TV these days has something to do with what Jesus did or didn't do. Jesus is my Homeboy tee-shirts, Jesus bobble heads and crucifixion jewelry. Jesus is all over the news, the History channel and every award show known to man. But what does all this mean?
- C) Last week we covered the Incarnation or that God become flesh, took on meat in the 2nd Person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ. Most people believe that Jesus was a real Person, really lived and did good things for others. The disagreement about Jesus Christ comes into play when we talk about Him being fully God and that He physically died and literally rose from the dead.
- D) Today we will cover the events surrounding the Cross, Jesus' death and His resurrection.

II) What Did Jesus Accomplish On The Cross?

- A) Jesus the God-Man taught the foolish, fed the hungry, healed the sick and counseled the wayward. Yet, Jesus was empathic that the primary purpose that He was incarnated as a Man was to suffer and die.
 - 1) **John 12:27-28** *"Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name".*
- B) The crucifixion was invented by the Persians around 500 B.C., perfected by the Romans in the days of Jesus and outlawed in the time of Emperor Constantine who ruled around the 4th century.
- C) They reserved death by crucifixion for the most horrendous criminals. The worst of Romans were beheaded rather than crucified and the Jews considered death by crucifixion to be the most horrific mode of death.
 - 1) **Deuteronomy 21:22-23** *"If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance; for he who is hanged is accused by God."*
- D) The word that we use to describe the cross is the word **excruciating**, which literally means "from the Cross."

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- E) **Matthew 27:26** *"Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified."*
- F) During this scourging or flogging Jesus' hands would have been chained above His head to expose His back for the whip. This whip was called a "Cat-O'-Nine tails." It was a series of long leather straps with heavy metal balls at the end for the purpose of tenderizing the body of a victim like you would a steak. On some of the other straps were pieces of bone that were intended to dig into the shoulders or the buttocks and the legs tearing the flesh as you pulled the whip back.
- G) This is what Isaiah had to say about this event prophetically 700 years prior; **Isaiah 52:14** *"Just as many were astonished at you, so His visage (face) was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men."* Remember, this is all prior to Jesus actually getting onto the Cross.
- 1) **Mark 15:16-17** *Then the soldiers led Him away into the hall called Praetorium, and they called together the whole garrison. And they clothed Him with purple; and they twisted a crown of thorns and placed it upon His head."* This crown of thorns would have produced a large amount of blood and combined with the sweat, Jesus is now nearly unable to see.
- 2) **John 19:17** *"And He, bearing His Cross, went out to a place called the Place of The Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified Him..."*
- H) Because of the price of wood they often reused crosses in Jesus' day, which means they would be stained with blood, urine and feces.
- I) Jesus was then forced to carry this roughly hewn wooden crossbar of around 100 pounds on His bare, bloodied, traumatized and broken body. Despite Jesus' youthful body and young age of only 33, He was so physically devastated from His sleepless nights, miles of walking, severe beating and scourging that He collapsed under the weight of the Cross.
- 1) **Colossians 2:14** *..."Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the Cross..."*
- J) Jesus who was a carpenter had driven many nails, but would now have 5-7 inch spikes driven into His hands and feet as He was nailed to the Cross.
- 1) **John 19:18** *"...Where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center."*
- K) Jesus, nearly naked, totally exposed in front of His family (**John 19:25** *"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother"*) and nailed to the cross, would've been dropped into the hole where the cross sat, causing His body to shake violently and creating unbearable pain.
- L) It wasn't uncommon for men who were being crucified to lose their bowel movements, creating a pile of urine, sweat, blood and feces at the foot of the cross. The pain was so great that they would lose their ability to control their body.

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- M) **Isaiah 53:3** *"...A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him."* The site of Jesus' death was so bad that they couldn't look on Him because it was so disgusting.
- N) Do you know that the modern day equal of wearing a cross as a piece of jewelry would be something like a bloody, used, HIV infected hypodermic needle? The Cross was a despicable way to die. Which helps us make sense of Paul's passage here in **Philippians 2:8** *"And being found in the appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross(or a criminal's death)."*
- O) In the rare event that a woman was crucified, they would turn her around so she faced the cross, so they didn't have to look at a woman in that kind of pain.

III) Jesus Became Our Sin.

- A) **2nd Corinthians 5:21** *"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Christ."*
- B) On the cross Jesus became sin for us. Jesus was made the worst of what we are, so that we might be made the best of what He is. This is the great exchange.
- C) This doesn't mean that Jesus sinned, but rather that He was made sin.
- D) At the moment that Jesus cried out because the Father had turned His eyes away, Jesus became the most wicked, ugly, defiled, evil, corrupt, rebellious and hideous creation in all of creation. Jesus became a homosexual, coveter, idol worshipper, whore, pedophile, glutton, addict, pervert, self-righteous person and anything else you can come up with.
- E) Jesus was exchanging our imperfection with His perfection. Our disobedience with His obedience and our distance from the Father with His intimacy with the Father.
- F) **Isaiah 52:6** *"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid upon Him the iniquity of us all."*

IV) Jesus Died For Us.

- A) Jesus' death was a substitutionary death because He did it in our place. He took upon Him what was due to us. He was the substitute for us. He endured separation from the Father (Psalms 22) so that we would never have to be separated from the Father for one second in our lives. He did this for us.
- B) This is why the power of Christianity is not like the other world religions that require people to do something for their freedom. God has done it for us. This is why we receive the grace of Jesus Christ as a free gift. We didn't do it, He did it for us. Martin Luther gave us the truth that is by grace alone, through faith alone and in Christ alone!
- C) Jesus didn't benefit from the Cross in the slightest; those that receive it are the beneficiaries. The Cross was for our sakes!
- 1) **Isaiah 53:5** *He was wounded for our transgressions.*
- 2) **Isaiah 53:12** *He poured His soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors.*

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- 3) **Romans 4:25** *He was delivered up for our transgressions.*
 - 4) **Romans 5:8** *But God shows us His love for us, that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.*
 - 5) **1st Corinthians 15:3** *Christ died for our sins*
- D) Some protest that a loving God would never approve the bloody, unjust murder of His only Son. But this is exactly what God has done! **Isaiah 53:10** *"Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him, He has put Him to grief."*
- E) The Day of Atonement explains this concept of God dying for us the best.
- F) "Jesus is not to be pitied like some loser, but crowned with love and admiration as the great hero of the ages. He's a man's man. He didn't back out of what was in front of Him when He was given ample opportunities to say no. Instead He said yes." –Mark Driscoll
- G) The Cross of Christ demonstrates to us the justice of God in how He dealt with sin. But it also shows us the mercy of God as God in Christ is freely ready to forgive sinners.
- H) **John 1:14** *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."*

V) Did Jesus Rise From Death?

- A) Here are some things that others have said about the Jesus' resurrection of the dead.
- 1) "Our Lord has written the promise of the resurrection not in words alone, but in every leaf at springtime." –Martin Luther
 - 2) "Christianity is a resurrection religion. The concept of resurrection is at the heart. If you remove the resurrection, Christianity is destroyed." –John R. Stott
- B) To make the resurrection of Jesus only fact is to remove from it the faith that is needed to receive it. For you can have the facts of Jesus' resurrection and not receive it by faith and end up in hell.
- C) Here is some Biblical, factual evidence of Jesus resurrection from death.
- 1) Jesus' resurrection was prophesied in advance.
 - (i) Roughly 700 years prior, Isaiah told us all about Jesus' death and resurrection.
 - 2) Jesus predicted His resurrection.
 - (i) Jesus personally spoke volumes about where He would die, around what time He would die, that all would betray Him, that His death would be done at the hands of the religious leaders and that He would rise from death.
 - 3) Jesus literally died on the cross.
 - (i) Some say that Jesus really didn't die, but that he went through some sort of death like experience. Here's the facts;
 - (a) He went through a sleepless night of trial

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- (b) He underwent scourging from which many men died before ever getting to the cross.
 - (c) He was publicly crucified and a professional executioner declared Him to be dead.
 - (d) To ensure His death, He was pierced through the side with a spear causing blood and water to flow.
 - (e) He was wrapped in roughly 100 pounds of linens and spices, which if He wasn't already dead would have suffocated Him.
 - (f) He was then laid in a cold, rock hewn tomb sealed off from food, water and medical attention for 3 days.
- 4) Jesus appeared to many just three days after His death.
- (i) Many people touched His body.
 - (ii) His disciples touched His feet.
 - (iii) Thomas put his finger into His hands and His side.
 - (iv) Mary clung to His physical body.
- 5) Jesus' resurrection convinced His family to worship Him as God.
- (i) James, Jesus' half brother, was originally opposed to the idea that his brother was God but was soon converted, pastored the church in Jerusalem and penned a NT book.
 - (ii) Jesus' mother Mary worshiped her Son as God and so did Jude who also penned a NT book.
 - (iii) You might be able to convince a random person that you were God, but your brothers and mother? Some mom's say their kids are gods, but not mine!
- D) And now here is the personal evidence with the changes that took place after Jesus' resurrection.
- 1) The transformation of the disciples.
 - (i) Prior to the resurrection of Jesus, Peter denied that He knew Jesus to a few girl scouts, but after Jesus' rises from death, Peter boldly preaches to the ones who killed Jesus, and says that they killed God.
 - 2) The disciples were loyal to their Messiah.
 - (i) In our day there are many so called Messiah's that promise to save us from hunger, poverty, change taxes and give us more life. But when these promises die, we move on to the next thing and reinvest our hope into another so called messiah. But it wasn't so for the disciples. Long after Jesus died, they would boldly preach and they too would also die a martyr's death refusing to deny Jesus Christ.
 - 3) The day of worship changed.

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- (i) These young Jewish convert’s moved the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday to celebrate Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. These were zealous Jews, who apart from the resurrection would have never even entertained moving the Sabbath.
- 4) The object of worship changed.
 - (i) Again, these young Jewish convert’s would move from only worshipping God, to now worshipping Jesus Christ as being equally God.
- 5) Changes within the Church.
 - (i) Many things changed after Jesus rose from death, which were directly related to His resurrection.
 - (a) Communion—This would now be done in the way that Jesus did during the last supper remembering both His death and His soon return because He rose from death.
 - (b) Baptism—This would also be something they did to identify with Jesus’ death and His resurrection. We don’t only go under the water in death, but we emerge in resurrection life.
- 6) The growth of the Church.
 - (i) The only reason we can assume the Church has grown, reached the earth over and again, maybe even as many as billions is because Jesus has risen from the dead. The same day Jesus died two other men died, in the same place and in the same way. 2,000 + years have gone by and we don’t know their names, but maybe over a billion have confessed the name of Jesus Christ. This is true because those men are still in the grave awaiting judgment! Not Jesus! He’s alive and so are we!