

Why the Cross?

1 Corinthians 1:17, 18 *“For Christ did not send me to baptise, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”*

“Why the cross?” Of what does the cross speak, and what does it represent? In the opening verse we are told that the cross has a definite message and its message is this, *“It is foolishness to those who are perishing but to us who are ‘being’ saved it is the power of God.”*

[1] The cross represents ongoing power and might. It’s important to understand that the cross is the power of God *to those who are being saved*. Implying that the power or might of the cross is active and functions efficiently as you work out your salvation. Have you got the message? Without the cross your daily ‘ongoing’ salvation will be void of power!

[2] The cross represents deliverance from past, present and future. Salvation is in three parts; (a) you were saved from the penalty of sin (past tense); (b) you are being saved daily (present tense); and (c) you will be saved from the Great Tribulation (future tense). First, spiritual and eternal salvation was granted to you when you received Christ, but then you must have present and ongoing experiences of God’s power in order for you to be saved from potential danger, etc. Lastly, the Bible speaks of the future salvation of believers, when Christ returns, being delivered from the wrath of God to be executed upon the ungodly at the close of this age.

[3] The cross represents a road to victory. That day on Calvary, it must have looked to everyone (except God), like the crucifixion would represent victory for the forces of darkness. But this was not to be! The cross became the very symbol of victory for God, and the symbol of everlasting life to all of mankind. **1 Peter 3:18** says, *“For Christ died for your sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.”* We could say, *“...To bring you to victory.”* Christ’s work on the cross has brought you to God - into His presence! And where God is you will find His miracle working power. Your progressive success in this life, which was predestined by God Himself, is totally reliant on the fact that you’ve been brought to Him *via the cross*. The cross, where Christ’s body was broken and His precious blood was shed, is your road to victory.

[4] The cross represents a place of intercession. Twelve Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled on the cross, but for me the most powerful was **Isaiah 53:12**, *“He poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For He bore the sin of many and made intercession for His transgressors.”* Jesus willingly poured out His life and even during this harrowing experience He prayed for the ungodly.

The cross has created a situation whereby Christ is constantly interceding for our sins. **Hebrews 7:25** declares, *“Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.”* Your assurance and confidence should rest on this awesome fact - Christ Himself is petitioning on your behalf. Therefore, His intercession is able to effectively and totally save you from the power of sin in your life.

[5] The cross represents death to the flesh. Verse 11, *“In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the*

circumcision of Christ.” Spiritually, circumcision signifies death to the flesh, or the ability to put aside evil, corruption and any characteristic of the carnal nature.

[6] The cross represents newness of life. Verse 12, “***...Buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.***” Baptism speaks of the burial of the old man. Not only have you died with Christ, but all you were as a child of Adam is buried with Him. In this act you acknowledge that nothing in yourself could ever please God, and so you are putting the flesh out of God’s sight forever. But it does not end with burial, for you have also risen with Him to walk in newness of life! Your history as a sinner came to an end, and now you are a new creature in Christ. In other words, your whole lifestyle has been changed!

[7] The cross represents forgiveness of sins. Verse 13, “***And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.***” Every violation, transgression, offence and infringement has been forgiven!

[8] The cross represents a cancelled debt. Verse 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.***” In a sense, the Law was against us, condemning us because we could not keep it. And because we couldn't keep it, we were indebted to it. But in His death Jesus took all this out of the way, nailing it to the cross and cancelling it as a bill is cancelled when the debt is paid. Paul’s language here very likely refers to the ancient practice of nailing the written evidence of a cancelled debt in a public place as a notice to all that the creditor has no more claim on the debtor.

[9] The cross represents authority over all demonic forces. Verse 15, “***Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.***” In what? In the triumph that was the cross! I believe this is the same triumph that is described in *Ephesians 4*, where our Lord Jesus is said to have led captivity captive. His work on the cross was a glorious triumph over all the hosts of hell and of Satan himself. As Jesus passed through the atmosphere on His way back to heaven, He passed through the domain of the prince of the power of the air. Now, every believer has nothing to fear because Christ has disarmed (*paralysed, crippled, immobilised, incapacitated*) all principalities, powers and rulers of darkness!

[10] The cross represents soundness and wholeness of mind and body. **1 Peter 2:24**, “***He Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed.***” The word “stripes” is actually singular in the original, perhaps suggesting that His body was one massive band of torn flesh. What an awesome price to pay for your health and well-being! And what an original and strange method of healing this is. The doctor has suffered the cost, so that the sick can receive their healing.

Why the cross? Because you and I needed it - and still need it!