

Living The Triumphant Life – Visiting the Cross

Too many of us desire to experience “resurrection power” without having first visited the “cross.” The truth is, the empty tomb has no meaning without the cross. If we are to live the triumphant life, we must visit the cross daily! **Colossians 2:15** says, *“Having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.”* Because of His death on the cross, and then His resurrection and ascension, the Lord Jesus has conquered all evil powers, making a public spectacle of them and triumphing over them **by the cross**. The cross was the ‘instrument’ of their defeat. By it, Jesus gained total victory!

Upon a great Roman conquest the defeated army would be disarmed and paraded throughout Rome for all to see. The Romans did this to show that the enemy was no longer a threat; that Rome was firmly in control. Likewise, **Colossians 2:15** tells us there was a day just like that; a day when the Lord Jesus paraded Satan and his fallen angels - having triumphed over all the powers and authorities by the cross. Another translation says, *“... He made a public spectacle of them as He celebrated His victory by the cross.”* Because of the cross, they were humiliated and made a public spectacle. Note, this was done for our benefit! To show us that the enemy is no longer a threat.

Christ has secured a life of victory – triumphant living – for every one of us! We have been given the “fullness” of Christ. This should change the way we live. We have been freed from the dominion of darkness. It no longer controls us! There isn't any authority over us but that of our Lord Jesus Christ! And it was all accomplished by the cross. When did you last visit the cross? When last did you come to the foot of the cross? Every time you visit the cross you will hear the **sound of triumph!** The Lord Jesus did not remain silent while He hung on the cross. Just in case we are left to think that Calvary was a place of death and suffering only, in John's account Jesus makes 3 statements while on the cross. These statements enforce the truth that Calvary was a place of triumph.

1. **The Triumph Of Compassion** (**John 19:25-27**). In the middle of His dying hours, with His enemies revelling in His death, and with a little band of faithful followers at His feet, Jesus took the time to make ‘provision’ for His mother. There are many truths here, but the one that I want to highlight is this... Even in death Jesus did not forget others! He was dying (to save men) but He remembered His mother that day. He made sure that Mary would be taken care of for the rest of her life. *When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold your son!” Then He said to the disciple, “Behold your mother!” And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.*

The Lord's actions are symbolic of the fact that through His death, those who receive Him enter into a new relationship with the Father. One in which they too are taken care of “forever” (**John 10:28**). Jesus may not have mentioned our names, but we were in His heart and on His mind that day. And I can assure you; we are still on His mind today!

2. **The Triumph Of Connection** (**John 19:28-29**). The next statement from the Lord Jesus was ***“I thirst!”*** His thirst reflects the agony and the conditions He had endured that day. It is ironic that the One Who created the streams, the creeks and the rivers, the One Who filled the oceans with water, was thirsty that day! *After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, “I thirst!”*

Yes, His body was thirsty that day but there is far more to discern here! If you take all the conditions of Calvary into account. If you consider the darkness, the pain, the isolation, the separation from the Father and the physical thirst, you get a clear picture of Hell (**Luke 16:24**). When Jesus was on the cross, He was in fact enduring Hell on earth. He was suffering our hell so that we might enjoy His Heaven!

Don't misunderstand me, there is a literal burning Hell where the lost will experience pain, torment, thirst, isolation and separation from God forever. That is true! It is also true that Jesus endured all the torments of Hell while He hung on the cross for you and me. He endured Hell for countless billions of humans in His six hours on the cross that day. He took your hell for you, so that you wouldn't have to experience it. All that is required of you is come to Him and be saved!

3. **The Triumph Of Completion** (**John 19:30**). *So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.* The final word recorded by John is **"It is finished."** This is a translation of the Greek word *'tetelestai'*. This was a very common word in that society. It was used by slave who had completed an assignment given to him by his master. He would report back and say, *"It has been finished!"* It was used of an artist who had completed work on a painting. He would step back and say, *"It's done!"* It was used by a merchant who had sold merchandise on credit when the bill had been paid in full. He would write in his ledger book, *"It is finished!"* But note, this word is written in the 'perfect tense' which means something that took place in the past has present abiding effect. Therefore, it could be translated this way, *"It stands finished and always will be finished!"* In other words, Jesus is saying, *"it has been done now and forevermore!"*

When Jesus used this word on the cross, He was saying, *"Father, I have finished the assignment I was given! I have applied the final strokes to the picture of salvation. It is done! I have paid the penalty for sin. It stands finished and will always be finished!"* Thank God, our salvation rests upon the "finished work" of Jesus on the cross. It has been finished! It is done - now and forevermore! To be saved, I have to do nothing but accept what He has already done for me.

That is a major part of the good news of the Gospel. ***It is finished!*** Whenever you visit the cross you are affirming your complete trust in the 'forever finished' work of Jesus Christ, and nothing else! As Christians we shouldn't live a life of defeat, but one of victory. No matter what the situation, we triumph! Is it going to be easy? No! Will we struggle sometimes? Yes! But in the end, when it's all said and done, we will be victorious. Jesus has established the victory by the cross.

I can't understand why the image of the cross has been removed from today's modern church. In **1 Corinthians 2:2** Paul says, *"I made up my mind to pay attention to only one thing while I was with you. That one thing was Jesus Christ and His death on the cross"* (NIRV). Why did Paul pay attention to just one thing? He knew that the cross was the instrument that defeated satan, but he also knew that he could bring all his burdens and leave them at the foot of the cross! You cannot live a life of triumph unless you visit the cross regularly!

To end, I'd like to invite you to visit the cross with me today. I invite you to **bring your heart**. I recognise that this

is a significant moment, because many of us hold back, we give part to God but not all. We want Him to be Lord of some areas, but not all. We want to follow when it is easy and comfortable, but He calls us to follow Him "always."

During the Lord's last week on this earth, a Pharisee came to test Jesus with a question: "*which is the greatest commandment in the Law?*" Jesus replied: "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind ... and love your neighbour as yourself.*" The word repeated three times is "all." Jesus held nothing back from us. He gave it all! And He asks for all in return. So if you decide to come and visit the cross with me today. Bring your sin. Bring your burdens. Bring your thankfulness. Bring your friends. And above all, **bring your heart.**

One of Denmark's leading sculptors had a burning ambition to create the greatest statue of Jesus ever made. He began by shaping a clay model of a triumphant, regal figure. The head was thrown back and the arms were upraised in a gesture of great majesty. It was his conception of Christ the King: Strong, Dominant. "This will be my masterpiece," he said, on the day the model was completed. But, during the night a heavy fog rolled into the area and sea-spray seeped through a partially opened window of the artist's ocean-side studio. The moisture affected the shape of the model so that when the artist returned to the studio in the morning, he was shocked to find a wounded figure. The droplets of moisture that had formed on the statue created the illusion of bleeding. The head had drooped. The facial expression had been transformed from severity to compassion. And the arms had dropped into an attitude of welcome. The artist stared at the figure, agonising over the time wasted and the need to begin all over again. But something came over him that changed his mood. He began to see that this image of Christ was the truer one. So he wrote at the base of the newly-shaped figure: "Come unto Me!"

Jesus is a caring Saviour, who wants to take you in His arms and love you today! However, He wants to meet you at the cross. Will you come?