

**Introduction:**

- National Day of prayer Sunday 15, March against Coronavirus.
- **Theme:** The reason for the cross was for the display of God's glory! Today's message will not be a theological treatise but a Biblical truth I feel we must embrace to understand the work of salvation.
- The cross has become the central symbol of the Christian faith. Yet there are many who truly do not understand the significance of it.
- The Nicene Creed declares that Jesus Christ was "crucified for us under Pontius Pilate." What do those two little words (for us) mean? Why the cross? Why did it have to be so brutal?
- Here is a question that is being asked so much by so many who are younger in life:
  - *"...Why do we need a Savior in the first place? I consider myself to be a good person and when I look around at most people, I would say the same about them. I know I am not perfect, and I cannot hold God's law perfectly, but I don't consider my thoughts and actions to be so terrible that they need to be punished by death. Should I really need to die because I disobeyed my parents as a child or told a lie? I have a difficult time seeing myself and those close to me as being wicked and utterly depraved. "There is certainly great evil in the world, such as war, rape, murder, racism, oppression, etc. But the majority of the world doesn't need God to see these things as evil or to make a positive change. I certainly don't see how someone innocent, dying a horrible death, somehow makes my wrongs right in the sight of God. Can you help me make sense of this seemingly twisted justice and come to understand why I need Jesus?"* John Piper - Desiring God.
- The most telling thing about this question is that this person's concept of evil can never be big enough to make sense of hell or the cross of Christ. When we define evil only in relation to what harms man, not by what demeans God, the cross nor hell will never make sense. When we define evil only in human terms we leave God out of the equation. That is the tragedy of our understanding of the cross.

**I. The Heart of The Problem**

- A. Is a problem of the heart. We will never understand the depth of our sinfulness without God telling us what the problem is, which he has very clearly.
  1. A tremendous breach occurred between the heart of God and the heart of humanity.
  2. The issue is that man has rebelled against God and hates his ways. We have despised His ways. I.e. **\*\*\*To despise means to consider worthless.\*\*\*** We have considered God's ways worthless or of no significance to us.
  3. In Eden we have - the banishment, angels at the gate, flaming sword. Death to all living things.
    - a) Corruption that leads to death of all living things.
    - b) Spiritual death, separation from God.
    - c) God moved immediately to give back to creation...sons of God. Romans 8:19
- B. To understand the cross we must understand the weightiness of our sin.
  1. If we fail to see the weightiness of our sin we will never discover the place of humility. I.e. The problem of our question at the start, no weight of sin so no humility. Sin is being viewed from man's perspective.

2. The crucifixion of Christ was the crowning sin of humanity. It is the place of greatest rebellion against God. The place of total disregard of God. We totally despise the Christ.
  - a) We rejected His salvation.
  - b) We abandoned His greatest wisdom.
  - c) IE. the great picture of this in action was when we chose Barabbas over Christ. Hear that again, for this is what we all did. We chose Barabbas over Christ, over God's ways, over God's glory. We exchanged the glory of God for Barabbas! That sin, my sin demeans God.

## II. The Rage of Heaven

- A. *"The heavens are shocked at such a thing and shrink back in horror and dismay," says the Lord. "For my people have done two evil things: They have abandoned me— the fountain of living water. And they have dug for themselves cracked cisterns that can hold no water at all!"* (Jeremiah 2:12-13, NLT)
  1. Jer 2:1-ff speaks of a people who had it all but exchanged it all for meaningless stuff.
  2. God is offended by sin because sin is an offense to His glory.
- B. Sin is an offense to God because it is an offense to His glory.
- C. The cross is not about my value. The cross is all about His infinite value and glory. The cross reveals who He is, not who I am. And by seeing who He is I realize what I am and I humbly cry out for mercy that His glory would be seen in me.

## III. Does The Cross Show How Valuable I Am?

- A. Contrary to popular opinion my answer is a resounding "NO!" It is just the opposite.
  1. The cross is a perfect picture of the hopeless, underserving, dirty, ugly, guilty, sinful, rebellious, corrupted condition of people who were purchased at Calvary.
    - a) Most often when we look at the cross it is self centered. Meaning that we see the cross from our perspective, through our eyes of humanity, based on what we receive.
    - b) We look at it from our perspective with concerns about us:
      - (1) Will my sin send me to hell?
      - (2) Can I be healed of my disease?
      - (3) Is there deliverance for me?
      - (4) What can break this curse over my life?
    - c) These are not wrong questions to ask but they are from a 'What about me perspective?' Like I am the victim.
  2. The reality is that man, having been made in the image of God, has wrecked, destroyed, prostituted his dignity with sin (great or small) to such a degree as to be lower than the trash of the earth.
    - a) A trashed glory is worse than trash itself!
    - b) "The prostitution of greatness is morally worse than the wasting of weakness." John Piper - *Desiring God*. Does the cross show how valuable I am? No, it shows how low I am in the sight of a holy God. Again, most of the time we view the cross from our perspective.
- B. God's perspective of the cross

1. The ultimate evils of sinful humanity is the exchanging of the glory of God for something lesser.
  - a) *"Although claiming to be super-intelligent, they were in fact shallow fools. For only a fool would trade the unfading splendor (glory) of the immortal God to worship the fading image of other humans, idols made to look like people, animals, birds, and even creeping reptiles!"* (Romans 1:22-23, TPT) We failed to embrace the glory of God as our supreme treasure! We thought we were wise but we became fools.
  - b) Even in our so-called moral efforts to do good to other people while giving almost zero attention, zero affection, zero admiration to God and taking no delight in his glory. There we still despise His glory.
2. It is action that reflects or says that God is of lesser value than what He has made. This is the tragedy of sinful humanity!
  - a) IE. It is ascribing power to the idol/god made from a tree created by God formed by human hands.
  - b) The clay can never say to the potter...the pot can never say to the Potter I am better than you. To do so would be to exchange the glory of God for something lesser.
  - c) *"For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard."* (Romans 3:23, NLT)
  - d) We can't measure our sinfulness by human standards (man against man sins). The tragedy is that man has exchanged the glory of God for something lesser. So the question is not "Is my sin all that bad? But rather, How much more glory can I possess to the glory of God?"
3. God desires His glory to be seen in His creation! That is why we were created in His image!
  - a) He does not send His Son to tell us of our prior value. He sends his Son to create Spirit worked/created value.
  - b) *"For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago."* (Ephesians 2:10, NLT) Now that is worth! The new creation! And one that has an internal bent towards worshipping the Creator!
- C. In light of God's infinite value, infinite beauty and infinite perfection...what is He worthy of? This is what the cross is about!
  1. *"Jesus answered him, " 'Love the Lord your God with every passion of your heart, with all the energy of your being, and with every thought that is within you.'"* (Matthew 22:37, TPT)
  2. *"So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."* (1 Corinthians 10:31, NLT)
  3. *"...And I trust that my life will bring honor to Christ, whether I live or die.* (Php 1:20 NLT)
  4. The cross is not about how valuable I am but about how valuable He is in His desire to see me reflect the glory of God I was created to reflect!
    - a) *"In the same way, even though God has the right to show his anger and his power, he is very patient with those on whom his anger falls, who are destined for destruction. He does this to make the riches of his glory shine even brighter on those to whom he shows mercy, who were prepared in advance for glory."* (Romans 9:22-23, NLT)
- D. The cross...

1. Declares the infinite value of the glory of God!
2. Declares the infinite sin of belittling the glory of God.
3. Declares the amazing greatness of God's grace
4. Declares the new creation we become done by the work of God!

**Conclusion:**

- We will never understand the depth of our sinfulness without God telling us what the problem is, which he has very clearly.
- The cross...
  - Declares the infinite value of the glory of God!
  - Declares the infinite sin of belittling the glory of God.
  - Declares the amazing greatness of God's grace
  - Declares the new creation we become done by the work of God!

*"Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the Lord, for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water."* Jer. 2:12-13

The great shock, the great appalling reality in the world, is that humans have turned from God as the all-satisfying fountain of life and joy, and tried to find it not in God, but in what he made.