**The cross, part 1**

Galatians 6:14 ESV 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.

Galatians 2:20 ESV I have been **crucified with Christ**. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Luke 9:23 ESV And he (Jesus) said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and **take up his cross**daily and follow me.

The Cross of Christ must become the **centerpiece of our life**.

* The Christian world has an **inkling** that this is so! This is why we see it engraved **plaques**, worn as **jewelry** around our necks, and dangling on our ears. We even **inked** **on our skin**.

For others the Cross is simply a **religious relic of the past**! It has no significance for the present.

Then there are **Enemies of the Cross**. Who see it as a symbol of **religious oppression**.

* Religious oppression is real. And many oppressors have **marched** under the **sigil of a Cross**.

* It comes from man’s desire to control man.

* Leave it to Fallen Man, to take the most amazing expression of God’s love and use it as an **excuse to hurt others**.

For the Christian, the cross means EVERYTHING.  This is why Paul says there is Nothing to Boast in but the cross!

* Nothing can be added to it, there is no supplement that can be substituted for it.

* **Why is this so?** Because, for redeemed sinners, every good thing comes to us by and through the Cross of Christ.

* Apart from the death of Christ on His Cross, sinners get nothing but judgment.

* Apart from the cross of Christ, there is only condemnation.

* Therefore, everything that you enjoy in Christ—every blessing that comes your way --  comes through the **horrifically excruciating** and **excessively** **humiliating** death of Christ on that cruel cross.

* All your blessings were purchased for you at the cost of Christ’s life!!!

For us it is the bloody, love-stained cross of Christ that brought us life!

**His Surrender to the Cross Purchased our Freedom**

* HIs cross our freedom
* His pain our healing
* His agony our Joy!

**His Cross has Become Our Cross!**

* There is for a Union or a Connection for us with Jesus through our Identification with His Cross.

Galatians 2:20 ESV I have been **crucified with Christ**. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Romans 6 tells us when Christ died, we died with Him. When He was buried, we were Buried with Him and when He arose from the grave, we were Risen with Him.

* Luke 9:23 “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and **take up his cross** **daily** and follow me.

His Cross… Our Cross…

***Let's explore the Deep Revelation of our New Identity with His Cross****.*

**His Surrender Purchased our Freedom** and His Surrender to the Cross was no easy task!

We are following the traditional Christian calendar today.

* Today is Palm Sunday… it was a day of celebration… Jerusalem shouted and celebrated Jesus as He entered the city.

* Next Friday is Good Friday and these joy-filled people turned on Him… no longer were they shouting hosannas, now they are shouting kill Him! Crucify him!

* And on Friday Jesus was nailed to the cross.

* Today I want to talk to you about what happened to Jesus on Thursday.

***I Believe in the Spirit, Jesus Died on the Cross on Thursday, before He Was Crucified Physically on Friday! There would never have been a Good Friday if Jesus had not died on Thursday!***

* We find Jesus celebrating the Passover Meal which we now call the Last Supper.

* So much happened in the Upperroom at the last supper… 5 chapters in John are devoted to it.

* Here Jesus instituted the ordinance of communion.

* John 13 says, **Jesus knew that the Hour** had come for him to depart from this world and return to the Father… having loved them… he got up and washed his disciple’s feet.

* Jesus also confronts Judas the betrayer… He knew it in advance.

* **After the meal Jesus leads them to Garden of Gethsemane**.

* The Garden of Gethsemane is outside the city wall across a little valley at the foot the Mount of Olives.

* Its late Thursday night and Jesus knows what will to happen on Friday… the very next day.

* On the walk there he is chatting, giving them a heads up about his leaving.

* I’m gong to the Father and for a little while you will not see me… and its going to hurt. But after a little while you will see me again and then you will be filled with joy.

* He told them they would all fall away, and he told Peter he would deny him soon,

Peter **BOASTED** before them, *others might fall away, NOT ME… I WILL NEVER*.

* Later Jesus prays Father the Hour has come, now glorify your son so that I can glorify you.

* Jesus is calm, undisturbed, and under control. **But things are about to Change**.

Matthew 26:36-46 ESV Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here, while I go over there and pray.” **37** And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he **began** to be sorrowful and troubled. **38** Then he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.” **39** And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.” **40**            And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, “So, could you not watch with me one hour? **41** Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” **42** Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.” **43** And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. **44** So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. **45** Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. **46** Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.”

**In the Garden Jesus Surrendered to the Cross**

In the Garden we see Jesus in a way we have never seen him.

* It began!

1. Something started to occur emotionally for Jesus that was not there before.

1. The intensity and agony of what happened in the Garden was so Holy and so Extraordinary and Unparalleled in all of human history! it should shake us, awaken us and **bring us to our knees** in worship

1. He knew it was going to be difficult, but the inner trouble **caught him by surprise**!

Mark 14:33,34 KJV “And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be **sore amazed**, and to be very heavy; **34** And saith unto them, My soul is **exceeding sorrowful** unto death…”

1. **Incredibly**: Jesus shared His anguish with Peter, James and John and He asked for their help.

1. Jesus tells them - it’s so heavy - Its more than I can handle – I think I am going to die

1. “*I can’t talk about this anymore… I have go fight through this alone… but I need you to watch with me*.”

* I need you to have my back. Just sit up with meJ ust pray, keep your eyes open… watch out for me.

**Have you ever thought you were prepared for something until it actually began? And then you thought what have I gotten myself into?!** You will have these moments as a Jesus follower.

**Every Christian has a Garden of Gethsemane.** It’s where we fully Surrender to our Cross!

**Application: I am crucified with Christ and there are times when I will be so amazed at the intensity of my surrender to Christ. But for me to live is Christ, therefore I will surrender to God through the pain I cannot escape.**

* It intensified!

He went farther and fell on his face… (v.39)

1. Jesus when he thought it was settled in His Spirit It got worse!

In the gospels narratives, it’s as though Jesus is on his face, then on his feet, then he is kneeling and then face down on the ground again and again.

1. He is wrestling with the Father’s will… **WE HAVE NEVER SEEN JESUS LIKE THIS!**

1. Hebrews 5:7 tell us Jesus in the days of his flesh offered up prayers with tears and loud cries..

* He is praying: *Father are you sure it has to be this way? Does it have to happen like this*?*This is more than I can handle…*

* Luke (the doctor) points out in his account that his sweat was mixed with blood… the stress on Jesus was so massive that his tiny blood vessels began to bleed through pores of his skin.

**Application: There are times when we think we have surrendered ourselves fully to our cross only to see the inner battle get more intense.**

* **There is no one there to help Him**!

1. Judas has gone to betray him for some money, and Peter, James, and John are sleeping while Jesus is dying!

1. Just the thought of Jesus hurting like this bothers me so much, as I was writing this message for you, I began to weep!

* **He did this for me? For you?**

I can’t believe He had to go through this!

* **I guess the Angels felt the same way**… because one showed up and strengthened him… It’s like the angels in heaven are so disturbed at this sight they are in an uproar…

* In my mind’s eye, I see coming to the Father pleading to be released to help, please let me go.

1. Jesus is fighting in prayer for a full surrender to the Father’s will.

* Luke says after the angel strengthened him, he did quit… he prayed more earnestly.

Old timers in the faith use that phrase all the time. “I’ve prayed through, and I’ve got a peace”

**Application:** **No one can surrender to the cross for you! Don’t be offended when your friends are asleep when you need them the most. The battle of surrender can only be fought alone.**

**Jesus suffered on the Cross on Friday, but he Surrendered to the Cross on Thursday**.

**Before the Cross there was a Cup**.

* The cup is a vessel that holds something that is hard to swallow.

* The cup represents the price that must be paid to live for Christ.

Matthew 20:20-23 ESV Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. **21** And he said to her, “What do you want?” She said to him, “Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.” **22** Jesus answered, “You do not know what you are asking. **Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink**?” They said to him, “We are able.” **23** He said to them, **“You will drink my cup,** but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.”

**You will drink… My Cup! Wow!   *Jesus is saying your sons are dead men walking and they don’t even know it.* *In the spirit so are we.***

Many want position but won’t pay the price.

Many want blessing but they run from the battle.

***This Easter Week I am encouraging you to come to the Garden Alone. Embrace the cup of suffering and Surrender your life once again to the Cross and live for Christ.***