

What the Cross Tells Us

First United Methodist Church in Dallas had a huge, crude wooden cross on the lawn in front of the church during Lent. One day the pastor received a telephone call -- and when he answered it, a voice on the other end said emphatically, "For God's sake, Reverend, can't you do something with that dreadful cross out in front of your church? The caller was a woman who had visited the Dallas Museum of Art across the street, and was bothered by the contrast between the loveliness of the culture in the Museum and the ugliness in front of the church. "For God's sake, Reverend, can't you do something about that dreadful cross? There have always been folks who do not understand why we erect crosses, much less preach about them. Human wisdom has never comprehended God's purpose in using the Cross. Yet for over 2,000 years, that ugly symbol of execution has been the focal point for one generation of Christians after another. That is why the Apostle Paul wrote in I Corinthians 1:18: *"For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are involved in this dying world, but to us who are being saved from that death it is nothing less than the power of God."*

First, the Cross-tells that Jesus had a choice and he offered himself as a sacrifice for us!

There are few scenes, if any, in the New Testament, which show us so clearly the qualities of Jesus as the scene in the Garden of Gethsemane prior to his arrest. It shows us Jesus courage. Jesus did not run away or hide when his enemies came with their torches looking for him in the garden. They did not need torches. He was there in the moonlit openness for all to see. Not only courage, it shows us his authority. Jesus was one, lonely, unarmed figure. They came in numbers and power. He asked them, "Who are you looking for?" They responded, "Jesus of Nazareth." With boldness, Jesus said, "I am He." What happened then? Scripture says, "They drew back and fell to the ground." There was authority in his very being. The scene shows us that Jesus chose the cross. He could have escaped death if he had so wished. He could have walked through them and gone his way, but he did not. He even helped his enemies to arrest him. He chose the cross! The scene also shows his utter obedience. "Shall I not drink the cup that God has given me to drink?" This was God's will, and that was enough. Jesus was himself faithful unto death" The destination of the Cross reveals to us the ultimate glory of Jesus.

Second, the Cross tells us that there is more love in God than sin in us! Jesus did not die on Calvary simply to fulfill prophecy from the Old Testament. The Bible clearly says that ours is a God of love and mercy. Jesus died on the Cross to show the extent to which God will go to reveal to those of us in the world just how much we are loved. The Cross is one of the most dramatic reminders of God's unmerited and unending Grace. Jesus was stripped of all his earthly possessions, and hung on the Cross to die. In addition, it was there that he shed his own blood so we could understand that *There is more love in God than sin in us.*

Third, the Cross tells us that it was the throne of his saving power! Our salvation was made possible over two thousand years ago on the Cross of Jesus. The Cross is the throne of Christ's saving power. Jesus Christ who made there, by the offering of Himself, a full, sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

That is all there is and that is all we need. The Cross confronts the sin of our life, shows us there is more love in God than in sin in us; and becomes God's gift for our eternal salvation. Therefore, it is; so it shall always be. The Cross is the throne of Christ's saving grace and as the revelation of God in Jesus dying on that cross, it tells us that there is more love in God than sin in us.