

# WHAT CAN I DO WITH THE CROSS?

## INTRODUCTION:

1. We are thankful to Paul in centering our thoughts around the cross of Calvary through the songs of praise we have sent before the Father's throne this morning.
  - a. The cross is the single most recognized symbol of Christianity.
  - b. One man wrote, "There is no way to adequately describe the tremendous value and blessings at the cross...It stands even today as a monumental landmark separating the two testaments."
  - c. It can be said that all of the Old Testament is fulfilled and all of the New Testament is revealed in the cross.
  
2. Despite its enormous value, many in our world misunderstand true purpose.
  - a. Even Paul knew some like this (I Corinthians 1:23).
  - b. Some claim to find a universal, unconditional salvation in the cross, without regard for any God-given requirements one man's part.
  - c. Others view it as a historical event without spiritual or eternal consequences.
  - d. Many wear or carry with them a crucifix as a "good luck charm" to guard them from evil and steer them from harmful situations.
  - e. Needless to say, we need a society and religious world that knows more about the true nature of the cross.
  
3. Understanding the nature of the cross means understanding its universal application.
  - a. **"For *there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.*" – 1 Tim 2:5-6**
  - b. **"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,"**
  - c. **"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And *that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.*" -- 2 Cor 5:14-15**
  
4. Understanding the nature of the cross means understanding, its personal application.
  - a. Galatians 2:20 makes Calvary as personal as it can be! He died for me!
  - b. Christ was there because I sinned—had I been the only sinner in the world, Christ would have died so that I might live.
  - c. Because the cross is so personal, I have a personal responsibility to that cross.
  
5. But what can I do with the cross and, thus, fulfill my personal responsibility to the cross?

## I. I Can Take Up The Cross.

- A. One of the most terrible things about the crucifixion of Christ was the fact that they made Him carry His own cross to the hill of the execution.
  1. After the humiliation of a corrupt trial, the unimaginable pain of the Roman scourge and the mocking of His kingly claim with the crown of thorns and the robe of purple; they then demanded that He carry his own cross to Calvary.
  2. **"And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called *the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha:*" -- John 19:17**

- B. Despite their inhumane command, Jesus was not able to bear the cross very long.
1. **"And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross."**
  2. **"And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear *it* after Jesus." -- Luke 23:26**
  3. Simon the Cyrenian is a picture of us—we are called to bear the cross.
- C. Command concerning this were often given by Christ Himself.
1. **"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Mat 16:24**
  2. **"And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." -- Luke 9:23**
  3. **"And when he had called the people *unto him* with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." -- Mark 8:34**
  4. **"And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." -- Luke 14:27**
- D. While I might not bear the actual cross of Christ, I do bear the cross that He commanded me to bear.
1. My bearing of this cross shows my humility—to deny myself is not popular nor is it easy, but it is required in bear the cross.
    - a. **"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:" -- 1 Pet 5:6**
    - b. **"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up." -- James 4:10**
  2. It was humility that led Christ to Calvary.
    - a. Before the cross: **"Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." -- Luke 22:42**
    - b. After the cross: **"But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."**
- E. In taking up the cross, I must put down some other things.
1. Pride: **"The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek *after God: God is not in all his thoughts.*" -- Psa 10:4**
  2. Family: **"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." -- Mat 10:37**
  3. Opinions: **"O LORD, I know that the way of man *is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.*" -- Jer 10:23**
- F. Taking up the cross is a choice that we all must make because of The Cross.

## II. I Can Preach About The Cross.

- A. The late brother Winfred Clark, gave several things (proven from Scripture) that are involved in preaching about the cross. Preaching the cross...
1. Sets forth God's plan of redemption: **"But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you," -- 1 Pet 1:19-20**
  2. Defines the difference between the Old and New Testaments: **"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;"**
  3. Emphasizes Unity: **"for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:" -- Eph 2:15-16**
  4. Assures Christians that cleansing is still available: **"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."**
  5. Magnifies God's Love and Grace: **"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."**
  6. Measures the worth of the church: **"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." -- Acts 20:28**
  7. Encourages the Fainthearted: **"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." -- Heb 12:2**
  8. Emphasizes the need for holy living: **"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." -- 1 Cor 6:20**
- B. You may ask, "How does this apply to me?"
1. We all have the responsibility to teach about the cross (Matt. 28:18-20).
  2. We all have that responsibility because Christ died for us all!
  3. We must understand in talking to our friends, neighbors and family members, Christ and His Cross should be our subject matter!

## III. I Can Glory In The Cross?

- A. Man takes glory or pride in a lot of things.
1. Business success.
  2. Heathy and happy family.
  3. Personal accomplishments (diplomas, degrees and awards).
  4. Earthly possessions.
- B. Religiously men also take pride in a lot of things.
1. New found discoveries or teachings.
  2. Number of followers and/or converts.
  3. Years of faithfulness and service.
  4. Positions and prestige.

- C. While taking a certain amount of pride in the right things is needed for establishing self-worth, the only thing we have to glory in, religiously, is the cross of Christ.
1. **"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." -- Gal 6:14**
  2. Paul was writing to people who had been misled by those who did not glory in the cross: **"For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh." -- Gal 6:13**
  3. To keep their aim, they needed to realize that glory was only found in the cross—and there was nothing that they did to deserve the cross!
- D. Friends, if you and I are going to keep our aim and put our trust only in God, then we too can only glory in the cross: **"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is the gift of God:*" -- Eph 2:8**

**CONCLUSION:**

1. What can I do with the cross?
  - a. I can take it up.
  - b. I can preach about it.
  - c. I can glory in it.
2. In fact, not only can I do these things I must do these things with the cross.
  - a. If you are not in Christ, you must take up the cross—leaving all others behind.
  - b. If your sins have been forgiven, you must preach to others the soul-saving message in the cross.
  - c. If you come doing either of the two, you will be able to glory in that cross and that cross only.
3. Are you lost? Have you wandered away?
4. Why won't you come home, now!