

S. M. May 2, 71 A.M.

THE THEME OF THE CROSS

1 Corinthians 2:2

INTRODUCTION

I want us this morning to think in terms of something of the (theology of the cross,) some of the things that I have discovered in studying that I feel will be helpful as we think about this subject today.

It has often been said that the cross is the (center of all history.)

Now, some people may say that by such a statement, it being the center of history, that every time we write (a date) we pay tribute to that fact, that everything dates from that time.

And of course we (understand that (all) men) even those (before the time of Christ, must be (saved in the same way) as all men are saved through the Redemptive Christ. And those who were to be saved (after the time of the ~~xxx~~ cross. So this helps us to somehow see how people were saved in B.C. time as well as in A.D. time.

In this event in all of history we can say that (God was more revealed than at any other time which we have knowledge of history. We might also say that His (purpose) that day was made plainer when what happened that day on Calvary than any other event in all of history.

Now, some people may ask, Did God want the death of His Son? Did God

deliberately plan to offer up His Son on the cross? We know that the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world, and that the poet said that the cross was in the heart of God from the fall of man.

When we think how that man could be so wicked as to want to put Christ to death, then we think that that is the most horrible deed that ever happened in all of history. For the only perfect man, the Son of God in history, was rebelled against and was met with hate on the part of man, and yet the scriptures tell us that it was on the part of God His will that he should redeem man, and that His Son offer up his life a ransom for many. For the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.

Now, what that means I believe was that a holy God was willing to show forth his love to sinful mankind, and His righteousness revealing His grace which grace came at great cost.

Now there are some scholars who talk about cheap grace, and they seem to think that God's grace is given out to men very easily (without very much cost.) And they feel that it is God's (business to forgive) as one great aethiest expressed it, as if God could forgive, it is His business to forgive, and He wants to forgive, and so it comes in a very cheap way.

Now, sin reminds us that the cross costs God greatly. In fact, it cost

Him His only begotten Son.

Now there is one way in which we can see the cross before Calvary and after Calvary. I think by story told by ~~Wesley~~ Leslie Weatherhead many years ago which goes something like this: He described an experience which aboard he had ~~XXXX~~ one of his majesty's ships during war time experience in the Mediterranean Sea. As they passed by the boot of the Italian nation, they came upon an island, I believe the name was Stromboli. There was (a volcano) that erupted just as they came into view, and he said that all along the rail of the ship men were crowded to get a glimpse of that volcano in all of its glory. It was a great volcanic eruption, and as the ship passed on and the sun was setting in the west, Weatherhead said that they were held spellbound as they watched the lava flow down the mountain and curl its way and finally hit the sea, and there was a geiser of steam carried up as ~~XXXXXXXX~~ the molten lava hit the water. Now as he watched that scene, he said the idea came to him, how many centuries, how many years has that molten lava been boiling in the heart of the earth, but at this one moment, I happen to be here and passing by, and that molten lava boiled its way up to the surface and made its way down the mountainside into the sea? He said I just happened to be there at that moment.

Now, we might apply that same figure to the cross, for holy love was

always burning in the heart of God. Because some men did not understand, they did not understand the wrath of God, and some men tried to silence the wrath of God with certain types of sacrifices which they made. Men also brought other offerings trying to please God. But then somehow the (prophets) came, and the prophets brought a message telling about how this Saviour was going to come, and they ~~speak~~ spake the Word of God. But men had (never) seen the word of God, and they did not know in fullness and completeness what God was like. And then when Jesus came incarnate in the flesh, then they saw the Godhead in completeness and in fullness.

Now in the cross of Christ we see truly the nature of man's sin. Man's sin rebelled against the nature of such love. The love which Jesus embodied required a great sacrifice. He had placed a heavy demand upon those that would follow Him. You remember when Jesus said, If any man will come after me let him (deny himself) and take up his cross, and follow me. This was showing what the cross really means. It means that (one) must die to himself and deny himself. And when he takes up his cross, that means that he will follow the will of God in complete obedience, no matter what that cost may be. Now, this (cross) may take one form or another for any person who may be here today. For one person, it may mean death. And this death may be on a foreign mission field. Or somebody else it may be pain or imprisonment for the glorious truth of the cross, because this person may have stood up for what he

thought was right in God's will within the realm of the cross. Now, the man who
really takes up this cross is going to be a man who has counted the cost and who
 is willing to follow this cross at all costs wherever it may lead him.

Now, let us in our thinking about the cross this morning go back and
 discover if we can what some of the great thinkers and great scholars and people
 of all walks of life have thought about the (various theories) which surround the
 cross of Jesus Christ.

I - First, perhaps, the oldest theory is the classical theory which is given
 in the Latin phrase, "Christ the conqueror." You will remember that Paul talked
 about Christ triumphing over the principalities and the powers that be and the
 powers of this world. I think what Paul tried to set forth was that Jesus was in
 a battle with the evil one, with Satan, and that Christ was triumphant in this
 battle through the cross. Really, in this regard, I don't think that you will ever
 understand with any intelligence the cross unless you see it as the evil one, as
sin challenging the Son of God. You must first of all recognize that here is a great
 challenge being given to the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

As you go back in the life of Jesus when he was in the wilderness, you
 remember that story how that Satan x came and tempted him in that experience in the
 wilderness. At one time Satan said, You fall down and worship me and I will give you

all of this universe. Now this was merely a temptation to try to get Jesus to avoid the cross. Now there is another temptation when he said to him, You cast yourself down ~~from~~ from the pinnacle of the temple, and this too was a great temptation of Jesus to avoid the cross. Because Jesus very easily by casting himself down from the temple could have gained public acclaim. Nor did Satan cease his conflict, because you remember that even the trial, Satan used the religious leaders, many of them, of that day to come and to cast insults and to battle against Jesus as the Son of God, and trying to get Him to somehow forget about the cross. So, this has been a popular theory for years, that Christ overcame the tempter, Christ, the victorious one. In other words, hymns and songs were composed to give forth this view of the cross.

Now, there is another way in which we might view Christ the Conqueror theme. I am sure that during war time some of you have read accounts and stories when some soldier in a ~~split~~ split second cast himself, his body, upon a hand grenade or upon some explosive substance in order to protect the lives of many others who were in that area or who were in the foxhole with him. Now, it has happened really more than once that some brave lad has cast himself upon a hand ~~grenade~~ grenade to save the lives of many others who were nearby. Now, this is also a way of thinking

of Christ the Conqueror, for Jesus was able to absorb every thing that Satan
cast at Him, all of the evil of men and all of the willful hatred, all of the
 forces of iniquity, and He was able to bear it all in His body on the tree, and
 he triumphed over it in the resurrection. We have to have the resurrection; hence,

Christus
Cristus victor, means that Christ triumphed through His death and through His
 resurrection. This means that he did not go around death or around the cross,
 but he went through the power of death and overcame the powers of the evil one.

Now, Augustine in thinking about this theory said that the flesh of
Christ became the target of Satan. I think what Augustine had in mind was that
 the human nature which satan had been able to deal with so effectively since
 the Garden of Eden, and Jesus had taken on this human flesh, and that in doing so
 that God had really exposed himself to a great weakness which Satan could exploit.
 Therefore, Augustine said that Satan went to the attack when he opposed Jesus in
 the wilderness and when he opposed him on other ~~many~~ occasions during his ministry.
 When Jesus cast out demons, you know these demons opposed Jesus, and of course
 finally Jesus went to the cross. Now, Augustine said that when Jesus went to the
cross it was like a trap. It was baited with human flesh, and when Satan went and
 attacked Jesus on the cross, that it was actually divine, and this spelled the
great doom of Satan. Now, this theory of Augustine may not appeal to you, but

it was very effective in Augustine's day because the people thoroughly understood this that Jesus had a secret weapon that he was purely man, and that he was also purely God, and through this, He was able to defeat Satan on the cross. In fact, He was able to do there on the cross what no son of Adam had been able to do up until that time or since that time in his own strength.

There is also another view of this same theory that is called the (fish-hook theory). It is very similar in that they say that the hook was baited with human flesh, and yet of course it was the divine which captured and hooked Satan.

~~There~~ There is another theory that has been worked out by a man called Anslem which was worked out many years ago in which this man wrote out day after day his idea of the cross. His idea is that there is something in the cross that demanded a (full justice) concerning the (sinful nature) of man. In other words, a full payment for sin. What he tried to set forth was that the goodness, the love of God, could not at the same time ignore the evil which was in the nature of man. It was a view that even God must suffer here in the face of sin. Many times we think of God as being above and beyond all suffering, and we even think of Him as being untouchable. Even though we may think of Jesus as being one who was compassionate and loving and merciful, who was bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, and tempted in all ways as we are. Now this may be difficult ~~of~~ for us to think of God the

Father as feeling the ~~agony~~ agony of sin. But what this (satisfaction theory) is that God in His love also feels the weight of the suffering that holiness ~~demands~~ demands satisfaction, that God could not be God and let sin go unpunished and unchallenged.

Now, I think the best way for us to see this is that God was in Christ and Christ was fully God, and ~~in Christ~~ in Christ he was ~~born~~ bearing this sin and this guilt and so here is one who was suffering for us and therefore, when we sin, we hurt God, and we cause the one who loved us most to suffer.

ell - Now, any parent can understand this. We might illustrate it by saying that there are times that any parent would be willing to suffer for his child certain things, but the circumstances are such that the child must bear his own suffering. In fact I think sometimes that the parent may suffer even more than the child as he has a special burden to bear. The child must bear the pain and I think our loving God is like this. He would ~~not~~ bear our suffering and our pain. In fact, I think God is willing to bear for us what we cannot bear ourselves.

III Third, there is the moral influence by Abelard. In the middle ages this was set forth. It has never had a really wide influence in our time. There have been some theologians of a liberal type who have thought of it, and it has been sometimes called simply the moral view. It is constructed on moral principles, that the death

of Christ was meant to exercise a moral influence over man, and insists that God

is love and only love.

This theory is an idea that Christ was punished for our sins, or that he was our substitute is denied. This view denies that the death of Christ was necessary to satisfy the justice of God.

Really, there is only one thing in favor of this theory, and that is that it makes central the (idea of the Love of God,)

What he really says is that this ~~breaks~~ breaks down the pride which is in man. Man, when he looks at the cross, simply says How could He love me so? Really, did He do this for me on the cross?

In fact, there is no person who can stand before the cross and say, How good I am. Or, How righteous I am. Surely the Lord must love me much because I am such a good and righteous person. No, when we stand before the ~~xxx~~ cross, we are amazed that he could love us in our sins, that even He could love us when we are so unlovable and when we are so indifferent to all that God may have done for us.

You remember how that song goes, "When I survey the wondrous cross." And as you ~~smkxkxkxkxkx~~ survey it, you pour contempt on all your pride. And, "My richest gain I count but loss." That's the way a man feels when he stands before the cross.

You remember the first man in the Garden of Eden where man let his pride take over

and he became proud. Man really wanted to be like God. He really wanted to know the difference between good and evil. And of course he had reached the place where he felt that he didn't need God, and so he was going to take charge of his life.

Now, really what we find in the cross is a (complete reversal) of the circumstances which we discover in the Garden of Eden. Now, in the cross man is humble, and we see that the way home for a man is by way of the cross.

Now there are (several theories) that we might consider such as the ransom theory, Christ sacrificed Himself as a ransom, and gave this ransom to the devil,

The (Anselm theory) where God's honor is violated and it is necessary for man to pay back the debt, and Christ as God's man did pay back the debt.

Or the (example theory) in which Christ was God and he died as a martyr, and that Christ is only an example for repentance, and of course the moral influence theory which I have given you.

IV
In the last and final place, I want to bring to you one of the greatest and most influential theories is the (penal theory of substitution.) And this theory is one that has been fostered by strong men like John ~~St.~~ Calvin and has had great emphasis that man is a sinner and has violated the law of God, and that God as a God of justice must punish man for that violated law.

That Christ through his death took upon him that violated law that through

faith man can escape that judgment.

That God's justice is first and it places love secondary.

That Christ must suffer what a sinner must suffer. Of course this may bring on many questions.

Now, there are scholars and preachers and Christians who believe this theory, and it ~~is~~ is simply that Jesus Christ took our place, that the penalty which rightly fell upon us, Christ took it upon himself. Now there is no one ~~tk~~ who can deny this fact. The Bible tells us that he died for us. Again and again the Bible tells us this message. That he loved us and he gave himself for us and that we are redeemed by ~~tk~~ his own precious blood, and that he was led to the altar as a lamb without spot and without blemish. The scriptures repeatedly stress substitution.

Now, I think one of the main errors here that many people who claim this theory - they see the substitution. However, they do not see their place in the plan. You remember that hymn, "Must Jesus bear the cross alone? No, there's a cross for every one. Will the world go free? No, there's a cross for every one and there is a cross for me."

Now that is exactly what our text says. For I determine not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Paul was determined not to know anything except the cross.

Now, we say in our own hearts, How can this be? The cross which happened so many thousands of years ago, so many thousands of miles away from us, and this cross was planted on Calvary's hill. And yet there is no fact in all of history that is more definite and more documented than ~~the~~ the death of Jesus Christ on the ~~cross~~ cross. And this by Josephus and all of the historians. And of course we have to know this principle and this theory. Dr. E. Y. Mullins ~~Mullins~~ once said that a theory was a string long enough to tie all the facts into one bundle. If any of the facts spilled out, the string is not long enough. If one fact involved in the case plainly contradicts the principle of explanation, then the theory fails. And so this great theory of the atonement concerning the saving work of Christ on the cross must somehow be understood in the right light. Now what can that mean to me today? Now, that's what I am really concerned about today in this modern day in which we live. What can this cross mean to you and to us in this day in ~~which~~ ^{which} you live?

Shall we just focus our attention upon these theories, these principles that there was (a transaction) taking place between God and between Satan? Or shall we focus on some kind of a record keeping program which we have here in the Bible? Or on some kind of a theory that righteousness is being transferred in some way from one to another? How can we today in our day make men see the relevance of the cross?

Now if we can make this have meaning, we must first of all see that in
this time in which we live, the main thing that the Romans officers did, the same
 thing that Pilate did, the same thing that the mob did, the same thing that many
 of the religious leaders did, are the (same things) that we are doing today.

You remember how that the disciples in that (hour slept) while Jesus
 was in the garden praying through this great matter. There is a parable or picture
 of the perfect (indifference) which we have in our own time. There are people today
 who have had the benefit all these years of history and all of the warning that has
 been given to guide them, and yet the people today do the same thing that those
 people did while Jesus was in the garden.

In fact, we can watch Judas slip into the garden to place the betraying
kiss upon Jesus and we can remember how many times we have betrayed our Lord,
 and quite often we have betrayed him for less than 30 pieces of silver. We have done
 it by the language we have used, by the deeds we have committed, by the filthy
 way in which they have lived, and they have sold out Jesus for less than 30 pieces
 of silver.

We can discover ~~today~~ today that when we take up our cross that we are
not just following Jesus as an example, or we are not following him as an ideal, but
 we must realize that we are taking our place in his ranks with him. I think this

perhaps is the deepest meaning, and this is something that each person here needs to reckon with in his own life, and when you come to this place that you are going to die to yourself, the cross is really ~~go~~ going to cut your life in great power and you are going to be able to say ~~that~~ Christ live within me from this moment on and control my life. And this is the thing that Paul was talking about when he was determined to not know anything else except Christ and him crucified, Christ~~x~~ and the cross.

And this means now that day by day we shall seek to do his ~~we~~ will. I

remember hearing a story told by a seminary professor about an experience that he had that helped him in the matter of cross-bearing. Every morning the first thing when he opened his eyes, he pictures there at the foot of the bed Jesus standing before him, and he starts off each day by ~~imagining that~~ imagining that Jesus is standing there. And it is an experience that has transformed his life, because he said that he begins by saying, ("Lord Jesus, help me today to die to myself, my lust and my ~~sex~~ self-will, my egotistical pride, and Lord, help me to follow you this day, doing your will and bearing your cross, which is now my cross.")

You see, the cross long ago cannot save anyone unless it becomes your cross this day. We need this sense of ~~x~~ direction to go in God's way. Not so long ago a boy tried to ~~break~~ break the record in depth diving in Miami, Fla. with nothing but a small oxygen tank and communication set he went down into the sea. After he

broke the record, he sent word that he was coming up, but he never did. Evidently, the boy became confused by the sameness of his surroundings. He made the mistake of thinking that down was up, and he plunged beyond the point of no return. This has happened to us in America. Suddenly Satan has chipped away the solid view of ethics about the cross, and we have come to the point where we think down is up, backwards is forward, and wrong is xxx right. And we are fast approaching the point of no return. Let us k not lose our fear of God, but turn today and make Paul's commitment ~~andxxxx~~ a reality and determine to know nothing else save Jesus Christ and him crucified.