

“The Cross: When Love Changed the World”
Resurrection Sunday, April 16, 2017

“Now brothers and sisters, let me remind you [once again] of **the good news [of salvation]** which I preached to you, which you welcomed *and* accepted and on which **you stand [by faith]. 2 By this *faith* you are saved [reborn from above—spiritually transformed, renewed, and set apart for His purpose]**, if you hold firmly to the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain [just superficially and without complete commitment].

3 For I passed on to you as of first importance what I also received, that **Christ died for our sins according to [that which] the Scriptures [foretold]**

4 and that He was buried, and that **He was [bodily] raised on the third day** according to [that which] the Scriptures [foretold], **5** and that **He appeared to** Cephas (Peter), then to the Twelve. **6** After that He appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, the majority of whom are still alive, but some have fallen asleep [in death]. **7** Then He was seen by James, then by all the apostles, **8** and last of all, as to one untimely (prematurely, traumatically) born, He appeared to me also.” **(1 Cor. 15:1-8 AMP)**

CORE: The Cross of Jesus is the most pivotal event in human history—making the world a different place.

[Through the ultimate display of what love can do—He achieved something!]

1. Not everyone sees the Cross this way.

1 Cor. 1:22-23

- **Scandalous to the Jews**
- **Foolishness to the Gentiles** [NOTE: 1st Century Roman political cartoon depicting government leader who became a Christian. Caption reads, “Alexamenos worships his god,” depicting a man kneeling before a crucified figure with a donkey’s head.]

2. Crucifixion—“the most cruel & pitiable death.” (Josephus)

Phil. 2:8- “Obedient to death...even death on a cross!”

- **More than execution—it was about humiliation.**
- **Old Rugged Cross: “...the emblem of suffering and shame.”**
- **Even to say the word “cross” was considered vulgar in Roman society.**
- **Roman historian wrote: “Everything cruel that could be done to a person—was done on a cross.” (Reserved for rebels & slaves)**
- **“He *tasted death*”—everything that could cause us to feel separated, abandoned, alienated, and alone**

3. He was crucified at PASSOVER

- Considered the greatest of Jewish festivals
- Detailed remembrance of 1st “Passover”—hardship of slavery, plagues & protection, Red Sea, wilderness journey, the Law, the tabernacle.
- “Freedom festival”—looking back...yet looking ahead to a greater act of being completely free (“free indeed”).
- Vengeance seeks to “make someone pay”—Love “paid it all” (Gave His life as “a ransom”)

4. He died “for our SINS.”

- SIN is more than “FALLING”—i.e., moral failure
- SIN involves missing our CALLING—playing our part in God’s purposes

NOTE: At Passover, Jesus turned a “remembrance meal” of events from 1,500 years ago—the defeat of Egypt and the release of Israel—to a present/future time when His “Passover” sacrifice (“*My blood/My body*”) would release people from the inside out—to turn the world “upside down” (Acts 17:6).

- He’s NOW able to forgive us and KEEP US FROM FALLING (Jude 24)...
- He’s also able to EMPOWER US to FULFILL OUR CALLING...
 - 1st & foremost—to BE WITH HIM (1 Cor. 1:9- “*Called you into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ.*”)
 - Then, to “co-labor with” Him (1 Cor. 3:9)
- OUR HOPE is TWO-FOLD:
 - Going to Heaven when we die...AND...
 - Having Heaven invade earth as we live!

SUMMARY

- Widen the scope of our “mission” (Greater than “going to Heaven when we die”)
- “Image-bearers” of God’s glory while we live...by the way we live & love & serve & humbly lead the way. [At the Cross—“the power of Love overcame the love of power!”]

-J. Vernon McGee- *“Trying to change the world is like polishing the brass on a sinking ship.”*

Jesus rose—not with a resuscitated body, but with a resurrected one—gloriously alive, vibrantly empowered to go new places in amazing ways. Through the NEW PASSOVER by His sacrifice on the Cross—we are His glorious Body joining Him in restoring our world...until He comes to take us Home!