

The Cross: Symbolic or Personal?

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1st Corinthians 1:18 (KJV)

18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

Every facet of the Christian life emanates from the divine act of love that transpired upon the cross; a barbaric instrument of death. The savage and tyrannical execution of ultimate innocence manifest through Jesus Christ wrought justification, salvation, deliverance, and redemption towards a pitiful race of Adam's sons.

2000 years ago the cross held a very different meaning than it does today. This difference in perception has created a chasm alienating us from the Power of God. The perception of the cross today seems to be nothing other than an intriguing religious symbol marking a historical event that transpired in the ancient days gone by. To the individual in Roman times it held an entirely different meaning. To this person the cross was not simply an intriguing religious symbol; it was a terrifying instrument of death.

The man who shouldered his cross in ancient Rome had a death sentence imposed upon him. Once his cross was shouldered, his fate was near and there was no escape. His cross was not a romantic thought of someone else's suffering but a literal and present means of personal suffering.

The cross being projected today has lost its personal appropriation. This simply means that we perceive the cross as an act transpiring historically while omitting the mandate to appropriate it personally. Jesus emphasized the imperative personal application of the cross in Luke 9:23 stating: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."

It is evident that our generation has acclimated itself to the likeness of fallen Adam simply because it has wrongfully perceived the cross of Christ as a historical symbol to reflect instead of a personal engagement to embrace. Our liberal theologians within refined Christianity have willfully omitted the true preaching of the cross because of its confrontational essence.

The true preaching of the cross of Jesus Christ exposes Adam for who he really is; a scoundrel, a rebel, a traitor, and a hater of all that is righteous and good. (Adam, or unsaved humanity, encompasses all of these vial attributes within his nature) Yet our seminaries are manufacturing religious cowards that are void of any Holy Ghost grit, destitute of any spiritual spine, to co-labor with Christ in bringing lost humanity to the cross individually and personally that they might be raised together with Him.

The Apostle Paul cited that he was crucified with Christ. {Galatians 2:20} He was divinely led to that brutal instrument of death to terminate everything his life entailed; his will, his plans, his rights, his sin and his righteousness. Every facet of self was mortally nailed to the cross of Christ and there they stayed until every quivering motion of self-life was mortified.

Then and only then could Jesus Christ remove his crucified, lifeless identity from the bloody timbers upon which it was nailed and breathe life into him, granting him newness of life. This new-man was resurrected having received the Giver of life Himself into His mortal body. To Paul, the cross of Christ was the power of God unto salvation - because his cross was personal and not historical.

If true Christianity is ever to be revived in America our pulpits must once again declare the offense of the cross. Once again we must embrace the bitter realities of the cross's personal application while appreciating the beauties of its symbolic declaration. If your cross embodies only the symbolic beauties while omitting the personal appropriations, the fullness of its purposes will be fatally absent within your life. Christ will not reign within you until His cross is applied to you.

If the cross of Christ brings a smile to your face without producing a tear in your eye I doubt that you have ever made that lonely trip to Calvary with Him. Is your perception of His cross consistent with His perception? Is His cross applied to our lives in appropriate perspective to His Will? These questions deserve serious thought.