

I. INTRODUCTION

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Phil. 2:5-8

- A. The seeming height of mans wisdom is that we try and explain *how* things are. This is true in Christian and non-Christian circles alike. The Scientific community rejoiced at the discovery of the Higgs Boson two years ago, the smallest known particle, humorously called the “God particle” discovered in the Large Hadron Collider in Switzerland. The jubilation at such a discovery filled the news headlines around the world exclaiming that this discovery could be the substance of all life.
- B. In the same way, our hearts leap when we watch Ron Wyatt discover the real Mt. Sinai or the Red Sea Crossing since we are seeing fleshly facts put upon the skeleton of Scripture. To stand in Jerusalem and behold the place of the skull with your eyes is far more piercing than reading the Gospel of John.
- C. When we look upon the Cross we see vividly the *what* in the equation, yet the *why* remains veiled in mystery. We seek to theologically explain the Cross by observing in the Scriptures words such as justification, redemption, and propitiation and then relaying them to what we know about man’s state of sin, condemnation, and enmity. It is beautiful to understand these principles, and necessary for being in accord with sound doctrine. But, there is a greater controversy the further you get into the story of the Cross and God’s redemptive plan that has features no man can properly explain.
- D. No man can articulate *why* God chose the plan of His own death in the most brutal form imaginable to be the means by which to reconcile men to Himself. For God to do things in such a dramatically paradoxical way in relation to who He Himself is is stunning. This is why the Cross and Christ Crucified actually remains shrouded in such glorious mystery. We cannot explain as if we’ve heard from God *why* He planned it this way, we can only behold this glorious truth in our Creator—that He is astoundingly *nothing* like us.

Who has measured the Spirit of the LORD, or what man shows him his counsel? Is. 40:13

It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings is to search out a matter. Prov. 25:2

II. THE CROSS TODAY

- A. The symbol that is most recognized worldwide to represent *God* and convey immediate understanding of believers in *God* is the *Cross*. The simple fact that it is this symbol that has been passed down for two thousand years as the primary insignia representing *God* is profound. This must have been the most intentional plan of God Himself.

“The fact that a cross became the Christian symbol, and that Christians stubbornly refused, in spite of ridicule, to discard it in favor of something less offensive can have only one explanation. It means that the centrality of the Cross originated in the mind of Jesus Himself,” (Stott 31).

- B. The God’s of the world proclaim their wisdom, strength, humility and power. Our God chooses to be renown through the image of His broken body, saying, “This is what I’m like! I died on a cross for my people!” This is truly amazing
- Zeus- Strong muscular man holding lightning bolts surrounded by women.
 - Buddha- Overweight gluttonous man reveling in his pleasures.
 - Ghandi- Humble appearance teaching to crowds
 - Mohammed- Not typically pictured, but when He is it’s usually him receiving an encounter from an angel or flying on the pegasus.
 - Jesus- Bloody with a crown of thorns on His head hanging with outstretched arms crucified on a cross.

III. THE PRE-CREATION CROSS

- A. That God has revealed Himself in this way through the life of Christ and onward is wonderful. Nevertheless, the mystery runs far deeper than this dating back to pre-creation.

“Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began...” (2 Tim. 1:8-9).

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. Eph. 1:4

Concerning the hope of eternal life, which The True God promised before the times of the world. Tit. 1:2

As you know that you were redeemed from your worthless works which you received from your fathers, not with silver which wears out, neither with gold, But with the precious blood of The Lamb, who has no blemish or defilement in him, who is The Messiah. He was appointed beforehand to this before the foundation of the world and was manifested at the end of times for you; 1 Pt. 1:18-20

And all the inhabitants of The Earth will worship it, those who are not written in The Book of Life of The Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. Rev. 13:8

- B. The Radical nature of YHWH reveals that this cross-centered nature was not something planned after the fact of man’s sin. What makes our God so beautiful, so different, is that the Cross and self-sacrifice is the fundamental nature of His identity. Everything concerning the nature of the Cross that would come afterwards in Creation is intrinsic of Him alone, completely derived of God Himself. The giving of His life on the Cross is *WHO* He is, it is not just something He’s done.

IV. THE NATURE OF GOD'S CRUCIFORM IDENTITY REVEALED IN JESUS

- A. Understanding that the idea of self-sacrifice is not reactionary towards man sin but is derived from the very identity of God before time began is critical to beholding Jesus and His Cross. It begins to shine a helpful light on the totality of Jesus life, since he existed as the revelation of God in the flesh, and that His life as a whole was a complete picture of God's nature from start to finish.

And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. Mt. 10:38

For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. Mt. 16:25

1. Jesus suggests that each man is to take up his own Cross while living this life in order to be worthy of Him. He also phrases it as forsaking one's own life for His sake, in order to find it. Simply put, the man who forsakes his own life and takes up his own Cross will be found worthy to enter into eternal life with Jesus.
2. The taking up of a mans Cross can also defined as the forsaking of ones own will. If I lay down my rights and my will and let another mans will be done, then I am laying down my life. This is the fundamental call of the Gospel, intrinsic of the nature of God, that Paul quotes in Phillipians 2.

For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. Jn. 6:38

I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. Jn. 5:30

3. It is by this simple principle that we can peer into the life of God on the earth, staring deep into this mystery of self-denial within the Godhead, and understand that the Cross is not just the center of mans salvation—it is actually the way God is. God is the Cross, and the Cross is God, and without understanding the Cross you cannot understand God and vice-versa.

“Christ is to us just what His cross is. All that Christ was in heaven or on earth was put into what He did there... Christ, I repeat, is to us what His cross is. You do not understand Christ till you understand His cross.”¹

V. THE TAKING UP OF HIS CROSS (LAYING DOWN HIS LIFE) IN SUBJECTING HIMSELF TO HUMAN BODY

- A. Phil. 2
- B. The Oxymoron of the Creator God being created

VI. TAKING UP HIS CROSS IN GROWING UP AS A HUMAN

- A. Living thirty years unseen as God in the flesh. Serving His family. Father dead. Brothers and Sisters. Nazareth and the valley of Jezreel.

¹ P.T. Forsyth, The Cruciality of the Cross pg. 44-45

VII. TAKING UP HIS CROSS IN SERVING HIS DISCIPLES

- A. Dealing with their arrogance, pride, and ignorance daily for two years and never lashing out, condescending, or ridiculing them.
- B. Washing their feet

VIII. TAKING UP HIS CROSS IN NEVER ONCE PROVING WHO HE WAS

- A. Never did He do a miracle to prove He was God
- B. Never did He react; Nothing He did was reactionary

IX. TAKING UP HIS CROSS IN SUBMITTING TO THE FATHER'S WILL ON THE EVE OF CRUCIFIXION

And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will." Matt. 26:39

He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done." Mt. 26:42

- A. The Lord's Prayer that the Lord Himself explains to us as the way to pray to Him specifically includes us asking for the Lord's *will* to be done—not our own.

"Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Mt. 6:9-10

X. TAKING UP HIS CROSS ON GOLGOTHA

- A. Details of Crucifixion

XI. THE UNPRAGMATIC AND INGLORIOUS NATURE OF DEATH REVEALING THE GLORIOUS NATURE OF GOD

- A. The sting of death
 - 1. The pit of the stomach feeling when someone dies
- B. The disgust of death
 - 1. No one enjoys beholding death.
- C. The stench of death
 - 1. Lazarus
- D. The distressing nature of death
 - 1. Seeing someone murdered distresses the human heart
- E. The sight of death
 - 1. Seeing a person on the brink of death causes deep emotional things to be stirred.

F. The fear of death

1. The greatest fear of man

G. God chose His own death to reveal the deepest level of His character

1. Open Bibles and read 1 Cor 1:7-2:2

For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified 1 Cor. 2:2

XII. THE IMPOSSIBLE REALITY OF BRINGING ABOUT LIFE THROUGH DEATH

Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive... So also it is written, "The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 1 Cor. 15:21;45

For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life... For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. Rom. 5:10-21

Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. Rom 6:3-7

But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption. 1 Cor. 1:30

Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death... ⁹However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. ¹⁰If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. ¹¹But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Rom. 8:1,2,9-11

But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him. 1 Cor. 6:17

I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. "The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me. John 17:20-23

- A. 160 times in the New Testament Paul uses the phrase- *In Christ Jesus*; Paul's letters take up about 100 pages in our Bible.
- B. Jesus language of "I am the vine, you are the branches" in John 15 signifies junction.
- C. Christ as *The Head of the Church* in Col 1:18 signifies one body.
- D. Eph. 5- The intensity of the analogy of marriage (Hosea and Gomer)

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body. FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Eph. 5:25-32