

GLORIFYING IN THE CROSS

"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." Galatians 6:14.

Glorying in an object implies having a sincere regard for it, a deep interest in it and a real joy from it. Glorying is one of the most characteristic propensities of human nature. This characteristic is seen in every class of society and in every portion of the human race. From the highest dignitary to the lowest beggar, from the enlightened and refined citizen to the savage, all discover something in which they think they can glory. If it is said that one glories in his good name, in riches, or in his friends it is meant that he sets a great value upon them. As a consequence he thinks and talks much about them and nothing excites his indignation quicker than to hear them undervalued or censured. Every man has an object in which he glories. The avaricious glory in wealth; the vain in distinction; the ambitious in power; the self-righteous in virtue; the philosophical in wisdom; and the Christian in his Lord.

Paul, the author of our text was the champion of the cross, and one of the most outstanding men in all history. There was no truer follower of Christ than he. He had a diversity of things in which he might have gloried. He came from one of the most charming families of the Orient. He could have gloried in his academic education and his intellectual prowess, for as a student in the great University of Tarsus he had studied under the profound Gamaliel. He could have gloried in his singular and remarkable conversion. It was a catastrophic intervention of a transcendent God which broke the shackles of sin that bound him and caused the scales of sin to fall from his eyes. He could have gloried in his extraordinary call into the ministry, for no man ever received a call as persuasive as his unless it was the great Isaiah. He could have gloried in his usefulness as a minister in working for Christ. He could have gloried in his Christian achievements, and especially as a writer. Yet in none of these things would he glory. Instead of looking upon any of these as an object in which he should glory, he turned to the cross of Christ as such an object. He protested against glorying in anything else, saying, "God forbid!" It was as if he had said, "Among friends or foes, in liberty or in bonds in life or in death, I will glory in the cross of Christ."

It appears to me that Paul gloried in the cross as in nothing else on account of three things at least,

I. The Position Of The Cross.

1. It holds the central place in the Word of God. The cross is to the Bible what the sun is to the solar system and what the needle is to the compass.
- 2.. It is the most prominent thing portrayed in the Scriptures. It is so prominent that it displays divine love, infinite mercy, resistless power, incomprehensible wisdom, inflexible justice, and spotless purity.
3. It is the foundation of the gospel. Paul summarized the gospel in these words, "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." I Corinthians 15:3-4.
4. It is the heart of the Christian message. We may roll the thunders of eloquence, dart the coruscations of genius, scatter the flowers of poetry, diffuse the light of science, and enforce the precepts of morality; but if we do not make the cross of Christ central in our preaching we have forgotten our mission and shall do little good.

II. The Purpose Of The Cross.

1. It was to meet the demands of a just law.

God's law could not be altered but had to be satisfied. Men had broken God's laws by sinning, so his sin had to be punished. On the cross Jesus paid the penalty for sin and made it possible for God to forgive sinners without destroying His law.

2. It was to teach man his own wretchedness.

The cross destroys the deceiving glass which magnifies one in his own eyes. It uncovers man's sin in such a way that he realizes his hopelessness apart from the atonement which is made for him at Calvary.

3. It was to reveal the love of God.

The cross is the best revelation of the love of God that the world has ever seen. The cross is definite, visual, unmistakable, universal, and eternal proof of God's love for a sinful world and it forever remains the unshakeable proof that God is love.

A certain boy played truant from school for three days, whereupon his teacher went to talk with his father about it. After the teacher left, the father announced that he would punish the boy by making him stay in the attic for three days. The boy was sent to the attic, but that night the father could not sleep with him there. The father said, "I will not go back on my word and lessen the punishment, but I will go to the attic and spend the time with him." He went to the attic and shared the punishment with the boy for the rest of the time. So, God did not set His law aside, but He went to the cross and bore the punishment of man's sin for him.

4. It was to procure the greatest blessings for man.

Among these blessings are reconciliation with God, peace of mind, joy of heart, victory over the world, eternal life and the glories of heaven.

III. The Power Of The Cross.

1. It convicts men of their need of salvation.

The cross of Calvary displays the divine character and reveals the divine perfection in such a way that an unsaved person cannot see the truth and light of these things without automatically seeing his wretchedness and lost condition and crying out for mercy and forgiveness. The basic need of every person is to be right with God. We cannot be right with Him unless our sins are blotted out, our iniquities removed, and our transgressions forgiven. This is where the cross comes in. Our sins are forgiven us because Jesus Christ bore in His own body on the Tree.

2. It draws the convicted ones to accept and confess Christ as Saviour and Lord. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself. But this He said Signifying by what manner of death he should die." John 12:32-33.
3. It enables one to live a victorious Christian life.

The cross supplies the believer with the power of a new motive which is love, and of a new life which is lived in the Spirit.

Let us adore the cross of Christ which is the bond of grace, the title of mercy, the standard of peace, the guardian of faith, the firmament of hope, the soil of charity, and the argument of piety. Let us adore the cross because it overthrows pride, expiates energy, cancels punishment, and cleanses from sin.

IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST

In the cross of Christ I glory,
Tow'ring O'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime.

When the woes of life o'er-take me,
Hopes deceive, and fears annoy,
Never shall the cross for-sake me:
Lo! it glows with peace and joy.

When the sun of bliss is beaming
Light and love upon my way,
From the cross the radiance streaming
Adds more luster to the day.

Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,
By the cross are sanctified;
Peace is there that knows no measure,
Joys that thro' all time abide.