

## THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS

By Lloyd E. Schuetz

TEXT: Galatians 6:14: "But God forbid that I should boast except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I to the world".

INTRODUCTION: The Apostle Paul and those working with him, had brought the Message of the Gospel of the Grace of God to the Galatians and many had accepted it and were saved(justified) by grace through faith in the finished Work of Jesus Christ on the Cross of Calvary; However after Paul had left, some false teachers had come to Galatia and taught these believers that they would also have to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses, if they wanted to be truly accepted by God. See Galatians 1:6-12 & Chapter 3. In this Epistle to the Galatians Paul sets forth in very strong and plain language that we are Justified (Made Righteous before God), on the basis of Grace through Faith in the Finished Work of Christ on the Cross. Then in Chapter 6:12-14 Paul said, "As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the Cross of Christ. For not even those who are circumcised keep the Law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may BOAST in your flesh"; Then Paul makes this Powerful statement; "BUT GOD FORBID THAT I SHOULD BOAST EXCEPT IN THE CROSS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, BY WHOM THE WORLD IS CRUCIFIED UNTO ME AND I TO THE WORLD".

Paul could have boasted in his 'National heritage':

He had been "circumcised the eight day", according to strict Jewish teaching.

He was "of the stock of Israel, and of the tribe of Benjamin, A Hebrew of the Hebrews" Philippians 3:5.

He could also have boasted in his 'religious achievements' prior to his conversion to Christ: He was a very religious Jew, adhering to the strict teaching of the law and all the Jewish traditions, and he was also very zealous in his religion, persecuting the Church.

Compare Philippians 3:4-6; Galatians 1:13-14 & Acts chapter 9.

He might also have boasted in his 'educational achievements': For He had been educated "at the feet of Gamaliel," (Acts 22:3; Compare Acts 5:34-40), one of the most highly respected educators of that time.

But Paul refused to boast in any of these: Compare Philippians 3:4-12; He would only Boast in the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ: WHY WOULD PAUL ONLY GLORY OR BOAST IN THE CROSS OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST?

THERE WERE AT LEAST FOUR REASONS:

- a) Because of the very Special PERSON who died on that Cross!
- b) Because of the terrible PAIN He suffered on that Cross!
- c) Because of the great PRICE He PAID for us on the Cross.
- d) Because of the POWER there is in The Message of the Cross!

### 1. BECAUSE OF THE VERY SPECIAL 'PERSON' WHO DIED ON THAT CROSS.

A) The Romans had executed hundreds and even thousands on cruel crosses. However this Person Paul was speaking about here is the Pure Son of God, the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Oh Yes, that Very Special Person who died on that Cross made it a very Special Cross. We note that Paul called it "the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" Galatians 6:14

B) However, the natural, unconverted, unbelieving people of that day saw nothing special about the man on that cross! They mocked and ridiculed Him and hurled insults at Him! No wonder Isaiah the prophet of redemption prophesied that "He had no form or comeliness, and when men saw him, there was no apparent beauty that they should desire him ... He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: Men hid their faces from Him... He was despised and rejected of men"! [These saw Him as just an ordinary man]:  
Read Isaiah chapter 53

C) But there is another important side to our Lord Jesus Christ!

Isaiah prophetically declared that He would be "Immanuel, God with us;"

Isaiah 7:14 compare Matthew 1:23. Isaiah further described the coming Messiah, saying, "Unto us a child is born: unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: And His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" Isaiah 9; 6.

John declared that Jesus was the "Eternal Word made Flesh...dwelling amongst us ... and we beheld His Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" John 1:1-14 John in his gospel portrays Jesus as the very Son of God.

John the Baptist cried, "Behold the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world". John 1:29

Paul declared in 1 Corinthians 2:8 that Jesus Christ who was crucified was none other than "The Lord of Glory"! Compare also Philippians 2:6-8. 'The Lord Jesus Christ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the Cross".

D) Yes indeed, it was He who hung on that cross that made it different from all other crosses! - Indeed a very special cross. It is 'the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ'. This is why we glory or boast only in His Cross.

## 2. BECAUSE OF THE TERRIBLE 'PAIN' HE SUFFERED AS HE HUNG ON THE CROSS.

A) Read again the words of Isaiah chapter 53. The prophet so graphically described the terrible pain Jesus suffered that day on the cross.

Note verses 4-7 "Surely He has born our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His strips we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a Lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth...."

B) No human mind can fully comprehend, nor tongue fully describe the terrible physical and spiritual suffering - the dreadful pain - that Jesus suffered that day on the cross in our behalf as our substitute as He paid the price of our redemption. Read again the accounts in the Gospels of how our Lord suffered in our behalf on Calvary's cross so as to redeem us and save us.

C) We read in 2 Corinthians 5:21 "For He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Paul also declared that the Lord Jesus Christ "Gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world according to the will of God and our father."

Galatians 1:4

## 3 BECAUSE OF THE GREAT PRICE HE PAID FOR US ON THE CROSS.

As Jesus suffered on the Cross and His life's blood was shed, He was paying the great price for our eternal redemption.

A) In John 19:30 Jesus said triumphantly "It is finished" --  
Paid in full!

B) In 1 Peter 1:18-19 we read "knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things like silver or gold from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Paul said in Galatians 1:4 that the Lord Jesus Christ "Gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father".

C) In 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 We read "Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were BOUGHT AT A PRICE, Therefore Glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's."

The price that Jesus Christ paid on the Cross was His Own Precious Blood which was shed to set us free, and to cleanse us from all sin so that we might serve Him in newness of life.

D) In Galatians 3:13-14 we read "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us [for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), that the blessing of Abraham [Justification by faith], might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith".

## 4 BECAUSE OF THE POWER THERE IS IN THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS

A) Paul had personally experienced the 'transforming Power' of the Message of the Cross, as he met the living Lord Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus. Compare Acts Chapter 9 and Galatians 1:13-16; He who previously 'persecuted' the followers of Jesus, became a great 'preacher' of the Gospel of Christ, willing to go through great suffering, and hardships so that others might hear the good news about the Saviour.

B) In Galatians 2:20 he declared; " I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." In 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 "Paul said; " For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus; that if One died for all, then all died; And He died for all that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again".

Compare also Romans 6:1-13.

C) In 1 Corinthians 1:18 Paul said. "For the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the POWER OF GOD."

D) Paul further declared in 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 "And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of Power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of man but in the POWER OF GOD".

E) In 1 Corinthians 15:1-5 Paul clearly states that the message of the Gospel is that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen".

- F) In Romans 1:16-17 Paul teaches us that the very energy-the very power of God is released as the Gospel of Christ is preached and accepted by faith and will result in transformed lives. In 1 John 1:7-9 we are assured that "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin ... when we confess our sins" to Him in true repentance and faith. We are made righteous in the sight of God through faith in the Finished work of Christ. Cp. Galatians 2:16.
- G) Galatians 1:1-5 "Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father". "He was raised again from the dead" and 'ascended to the right hand of the Father" and is alive today! We as believers were united with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection and is alive today. Christ also lives within us through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit and produces the beautiful Fruit of the Spirit in our lives- the very Character of Christ. Galatians 5:22-25
- H) Jesus is not longer on the Cross, but is alive and is seated at the Right Hand of the Father (Hebrews 10:11-14), with all Authority in heaven and earth. Matthew 28:18 and Ephesians 1:18-23 Revelation 1:17-18

Yes, there is tremendous power, in the Message of the Cross!

"But God forbid that I should boast except in the CROSS of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world". Galatians 6:14.

#### CONCLUSION:

The words of a beautiful hymn have come to mind as I have been preparing this message on the cross. The name of the Hymn is "When I survey the wondrous cross", written by Isaac Watt.