

Colossians 1 –

12. Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

13. Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

14. In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

20. And, **having made peace through the blood of his cross**, by him to reconcile **all things** unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

21. **And you**, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

22. In the body of his flesh through death, **to present you** holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight:

23. If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

Hebrews 12:2

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Why #2 - Why The Cross?

Colossians 1:12-14, 20-23

We continue our series, “Why?”

From the moment a child learns to talk, one word takes over the house.

“Why?”

- *Why is the sky blue?*
- *Why do I have to go to bed?*
- *Why can't I eat ice cream for breakfast?*

Asking why is how we search for meaning.

And it never stops. It is part of the way God made us. In some things, it doesn't really matter. In others, it matters a great deal.

Sometimes God just says, “Trust me. You don't have to understand things that you probably aren't capable of understanding. You just have to know that I do and choose to trust me.

Other times, especially when it comes to the Gospel, the question becomes enormous:

- *Why did God become a man?*
- *Why did that man die on a cross?*
- *Why does the resurrection matter?*

And God, knowing what we need to understand about what matters most, doesn't just tell us what happened; He tells us “Why?”.

Last week, we pondered, **Why The Incarnation?**

God became a man. Jesus was born in a manger. Why?

Philippians 2 gave us insight into **the mind which was in Christ Jesus**- *What He chose to do, and why.*

Then, the text then jumped 33 years from the manger to the cross:

Philippians 2:8 - **And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.**

- When Jesus was born and shortly after **presented in the temple**, Simeon not only saw and worshipped Him – the Salvation he had waited a lifetime to see, the salvation promised since Eden – He prophesied – **“Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also”** Lk. 2:35
- **Jesus was born and lived under the shadow of the cross.**
- **The manger was just a stop on Jesus’ journey to the cross.**

Why the cross?

Today, we solemnly approach Calvary.

The facts alone leave us speechless.

- The **brutality of the physical suffering**
- The **raw anguish of the emotional suffering** – **rejection, shame, hatred, loneliness, abandonment, DREAD...**
- The **unfathomable spiritual suffering** as Jesus **“drank the cup”**, **became our sin and suffered the undiluted wrath and condemnation of God on our behalf...**

God didn’t just leave us the eternal record of the Cross - **WHAT Jesus did**; He told us **WHY. He knew we HAD TO UNDERSTAND.**

This morning, we lean in, listen and learn as our heavenly Father answers the question for each of us, “Why the Cross?”

- I. Because we are hopelessly lost!**
- II. Because we are wondrously loved.**
- III. Because God chose to leave us with a choice!**

Why The Cross?

I. Because We Are Hopelessly Lost.

A. The Cross clears up the confusion of sincere intentions and personal effort. “Works”. “Doing”. “False hope”.

1. Consider God’s explanation of what we intuitively know deep in our hearts: Colossians 1

13. “power of darkness”.

“Power” – “*exousia*” – “authority”, the power of a government or kingdom over its subjects”

Context: Stands in contrast to Jesus’ Kingdom!

Cf. Ephesians 5:8 – “For *ye were sometimes darkness*”

14. “**redemption... forgiveness of sin**”

We are condemned. Sold. Under the penalty of what we are and what we’ve done and powerless to change it.

20. “**lacking peace... needing reconciliation**”

21. “**Alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works**”

Add in other revelations of our condition:

Romans 3:23. “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God”

Ephesians 2

1. “**And you** hath he quickened, who were **dead in trespasses and sins...**

3. “**... were by nature the children of wrath**”

2. Jesus- in the garden – prayed that if there was any other way – “Let this cup pass from me.”

The silence was deafening. The cross was the thundering answer!

3. The fact of the cross is the final answer of God: There is no other way.

B. The Cross is offensive: It is the end of personal hopes and arguments.

Galatians 5:11 – “**the offence of the cross**”

1 Corinthians 1:

23. But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock (“scandalon”), and unto the Greeks foolishness (silliness”);

24. But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

“You are not good enough.

You can’t go to heaven.

You are cut off and condemned.

You are lost.”

C. The Cross cuts through the clutter of religion.

1 Corinthians 1

17. For Christ sent me **not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.**

Galatians

5:11 - And I, brethren, **if I yet preach circumcision**, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.

Jesus to Nicodemus – John 3 - Though he was the poster person for religion Jesus told him - **“cannot enter into the kingdom... Ye must be born again”**

Paul – Ephesians 2

8. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

9. **Not of works, lest any man should boast.**

D. The Cross clarifies the candidates for God’s grace/children.

Text: **Colossians 1**

20. **“...to reconcile all things unto himself”**

21. **“And you...hath He reconciled”**

John 3:16 – **“that whosoever** believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life””

Romans 10:13 – **“For whosoever** shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Why the Cross? - I. Because we are hopelessly lost!

II. Because We Are Wondrously Loved.

Paul – Romans 5:8 – *“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”*

John:

- John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten son...”
- 1 John 4

9. *"In this was manifested the love of God toward us because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.*

10. *Herein in love...*

- I John 3:1 – *"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."*

III. Because God chose to leave us with a choice!

Some people have a difficulty with this issue of choice/The reality of will.

Whatever the arguments, here are His facts -

- God created us in His image with a mind and the ability to choose.
- God Himself has declared that because of the Cross, each person has a choice to make that will affect everything!

The simple Biblical reality, consistent in both the Old and New Testaments, is that Sovereign God has not only loved the world and provided a plan-
Jesus/the Cross/The Gospel - but has chosen to let us choose what to do with it.

I'm reminded of God's plea to His people Israel – Old Testament: You can hear His heart!

Deuteronomy 30 – Their second chance!

19. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: **therefore choose life**, that both thou and thy seed **may live**:

20. That thou **mayest love the LORD thy God**, and that thou mayest **obey his voice**, and that thou mayest **cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land** which the LORD swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

John begins His gospel stressing that choice and its consequence:

John 1

11. He came unto his own, and **his own received him not.**

12. But **as many as received him**, to them gave he power (Kingdom authority!) to become the sons of God, **even to them that believe** on his name:

John 3

16. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that **whosoever believeth in him** should not perish, but have everlasting life.

17. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

18. **He that believeth on him is not condemned:** but he that **believeth not** is **condemned already, because he hath not believed** in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

36. **He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life:** and he that **believeth not the Son** shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Because of Jesus, because of the cross, we each have an eternal choice to make. Perhaps as sobering as *What Jesus Did Then* is **what we each will choose to do with it now.**

- Jesus said, "If I be lifted up (speaking of His death on the cross), **I will draw all men unto me**".
- God tells us – "the grace of God which bringeth salvation **has appeared to every man.**"
- Listen: you'll hear the whisper of the Spirit: **"Choose life! Choose Jesus!"**

There are things I can't tell you about those truths, but this is certain:

- **Every single one of us will be held accountable for what we choose to do with Jesus.**
- **He that believeth... receiveth... calls upon the name of the Lord... will be saved!**
He that chooses not to – is condemned already.

At the cross we see the worst about ourselves and the best about God.

Why The Cross?

- Because we were hopelessly lost.
- Because we are wondrously loved.
- Because God leaves each of us with a choice.

Two thousand years ago Jesus made His choice.

He chose the cross.

Now the question moves from Calvary... to us.

What will you do with Jesus?