



**Sermon Series:** The Cross of Christ, Part 2

**Sermon Title:** The Horror and the Glory

**Speaker/ Date:** Armin Sommer, March 14, 2021

### Mark 15:15-24

The cross is at the center of the apostle Paul's message ([1 Cor 1:23](#)). It is on the cross that payment for sin took place. Also on the cross that He uttered, "[It is finished](#)" ([John 19:30](#)), which literally means, "Paid in full." Jesus' resurrection proved our justification, but the cross provided the payment.

"[And they crucified him](#)" ([Mark 15:24](#)). Rarely have 4 words been more loaded with meaning.

**Big Idea:** We must embrace both the horror and the glory of the cross.  
...Two disturbing but essential aspects. It was both...

#### 1st Aspect: The Horror of the Cross

In the earliest days, the primary symbol for Christianity was not the cross—but the symbol of the fish Why a fish? The Greek word for fish is [ICQUS](#). It was an acrostic, meaning that each of the letters stands for a word.

- i      i – Iesous (Jesus)
- c      ch – Christos (Christ)
- q      th – Theos (God)
- u      u – Uios (Son)
- s      s – Soter (Savior)

The cross didn't become a common symbol of Christianity until the 2<sup>nd</sup> century because it was considered a shameful instrument, reserved for thieves, murderers, and insurgents.

Crucifixion was more terrible than any other method of execution. The pain was extreme designed to prolong death over 2 or 3 days. The executioners provided just enough hydration so that the victim would remain reasonably alert, able even to speak. They even fashioned a rough wooden peg that minimally supported the buttocks in order to prolong their conscious suffering. Death came by slow asphyxiation due to the inability to rise up in order to expel the air from one's lungs and to draw the next breath. If the

executioner was feeling particularly merciful, he'd break the legs of the condemned with a heavy mallet, thus hastening death.

We also fail to recognize the unusual nature of Jesus' burial. **Mark 15:43–45**

A gruesome aspect of crucifixion was that authorities rarely released the body of the victim for burial. The body was often left to bloat until it fell off their cross, of its own weight. Dogs and other scavengers would finish the job, scattering the bones. Sometimes the crosspiece was cast, body still attached, into the local dump. No burial.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Aspect.      The Cross Also Possesses Glory

In what ways?

### a. It is glorious in its prophetic Intentionality

The crucifixion of Jesus was no accident. It was God's plan long before Adam & Eve disregarded God's command. **Acts 2:23**

It was in eternity that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit agreed as One and authored this plan that would display His glory. Jesus knew full well what lay before Him. That's why Jesus tells his disciples, **Matthew 20:18–19**

The cross, though horrible, was no surprise to the Savior. He knew what was in store. It was the plan all along. God even arranged for the crowd, which a week earlier wanted to crown Jesus as their King, to call for him to be crucified. The cross was an act of sovereign and intentional self-sacrifice. glorious in its prophetic intentionality. It's also...

### b. Glorious in its Power.

God is author and artist. He utilizes paradox in the story. Lamb of God... Lion of the Tribe of Judah; 1<sup>st</sup> coming, with suffering... 2<sup>nd</sup> coming, with glory and power. The cross is so much more than the death of an innocent man. It accomplished the defeat of the devil and death. Payment for our sins.

Termination of alienation. **Galatians 6:14**

It is the cross to which our certificate of debt was nailed. **Colossians 2:14**

### c. Glorious in its Effect

A death reserved for the lowest of the low has set us free from the power of death, are seated us in the heavenly places with Christ. **Romans 6:6**

It is through the cross that Jew and gentile, once poles apart and implacable enemies, are made into brothers. **Ephesians 2:14,16**

The cross on the one hand brought death; yet on the other, it gives life.

### Discussion Questions:

- What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?
- Why did Christians replace the cross for the fish as the symbol for Christianity? In the early years of Christianity, the cross was a shameful symbol. What changed?
- The cross was designed to torture – not necessarily kill criminals. Acts 2:23 tells us that the cross was part of God’s deliberate plan. Why would God use that device as the means for Christ to die?
- Share the lyrics of some of your favorite songs that sing about the wonder of the cross.
- Describe how Jesus’ death on the cross challenges you to search for glory in suffering.

### BIBLE VERSES

**Mark 15:15–24 (NIV)** <sup>15</sup>Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified. <sup>16</sup>The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers. <sup>17</sup>They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. <sup>18</sup>And they began to call out to him, “Hail, king of the Jews!” <sup>19</sup>Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. <sup>20</sup>And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him. <sup>21</sup>A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross. <sup>22</sup>They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means “the place of the skull”). <sup>23</sup>Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. <sup>24</sup>And they crucified him.

**Mark 15:43–45 (NIV)** Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus’ body. Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already

dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him if Jesus had already died. When he learned from the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to Joseph.

**Acts 2:23 (NIV)** — This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

**Matthew 20:18–19 (NIV)** “We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!”

**Galatians 6:14 (NIV)** May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

**Colossians 2:14 (NIV)** having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.

**Romans 6:6 (NIV)** For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—

**Ephesians 2:14,16 (NIV)** For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility... and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.