

## The Cross, The door of decision P.P.

### I. The cross

- A. The cross stands alone as one of the most recognizable and controversial symbols in world history.
- B. Without question it has been—and is Abused, Misused and Worshipped Some of the world's greatest abuse has been done in front of the cross. YET the cross is seen on the top of church and on the front of most bibles.
- C. The cross is popular among believers and non-believers as a part of their wardrobe. Cross rings, cross earrings, cross necklaces, cross tattoos, cross grave markers, etc.
- D. It is worn by priest, prostitutes, soldiers, Christians and even terrorists. The sign of the cross is made by some before ball games, by some before battle, by some at meals and by many in church. Cross carrying **had never** been viewed in the historical sense 'a pleasure' or in the early years, 'a work of art' or an 'object of beauty'.
- E. People died horrible, bloody, agonizing, tortured death on crosses. It was a symbol of the worst in man.
- F. Even most of the ancient Christian art is full of blood in the scene of the crucifixion. The art shows suffering and agony and more of an ugly picture.
- G. Now the modern cross is cleaned up and the blood is gone.
- H. And the cross is gold or silver and maybe even studded with diamonds or emeralds.
- I. In the early days of the cross people would see one and turn away with disgust or ridicule. Today we say; Oh how lovely, How beautiful, It looks so nice. Where did you buy yours? What did it cost? (These are things you would have never heard in the first century)
- J. What did it cost? It cost the Father His Son—and the Son—His life.

### II. The Evidence of the cross

- A. Josh McDowell "Evidence that demands a verdict" Law student. As a teenager coming out of an abusive family situation would be hounded by these 3 questions in his life. Who am I, Why am I here and where am I going? In his pursuit to find answers, he tried religion, and it left him feeling worse (bad church). Then he noticed a small group of students that he described as disgustingly happy. (joy). They brought up the topic of Christianity and he responded, "That's for unthinking weaklings, not for intellectuals." Then he asked them. what made them so different and what changed their

lives?" Then a girl, without hesitation or embarrassment looked him straight in the eye, deadly serious, and uttered two words he never expected to hear in an intelligent discussion on a university campus: "Jesus Christ." His response was, I'm fed up with religion, church and the bible. She shouted back, I didn't say religion, I said Jesus Christ.

They then challenged him to make rigorous, intellectual examinations of the claims of Jesus Christ – that He is God's Son; inhabited a human body, died on a cross and was resurrected from the dead and is alive changing people's lives.

"I took the challenge seriously. I spent months in research. I even dropped out of school for a time to study in the historically rich libraries of Europe. And I found evidence – evidence in abundance; evidence I could hardly believe with my own eyes."

1. The broken seal. 2. The Empty tomb. 3. The large stone moved (2 tons, uphill) 4. The roman guard goes AWOL. 5. The grave clothes. 6. Jesus' appearances confirmed. Over 500 witnesses. One of the earliest records of Christ's appearing after the resurrection is by Paul. The apostle appealed to his audience's knowledge of the fact that Christ had been seen by more than 500 people at one time. Paul reminded them that the majority of those people were still alive and could be questioned. A professor at Miami university said, "if 500 people testified for only 6 minutes, including cross examination, you would have an amazing 50 hours of firsthand testimony.

### III. **The 5 miracles at the cross.**

- A. Sometimes we forget some of the miracles that happened at the cross. We could add the empty tomb and the graveclothes.
- B. **Matthew 27: 45 NLT** At noon, darkness fell across the whole land until three o'clock. 46. At about three o'clock, Jesus called out with a loud voice, "*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*" which means "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" 47. Some of the bystanders misunderstood and thought he was calling for the prophet Elijah. 48 One of them ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, holding it up to him on a reed stick so he could drink. 49 But the rest said, "Wait! Let's see whether Elijah comes to save him." 50 Then Jesus shouted out again, and he released his spirit. 51 At that moment the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, rocks split apart, 52 and tombs opened. The bodies of many godly men and women who had died were raised from the dead. 53 They left the cemetery after

Jesus' resurrection, went into the holy city of Jerusalem, and appeared to many people. 54 The Roman officer and the other soldiers at the crucifixion were terrified by the earthquake and all that had happened. They said, "This man truly was the Son of God!"

- C. **The miracle of darkness.** The darkness was not local but "over the Whole land" for three hours (Luke 23:44).
- D. No sun eclipse has ever lasted over fifteen minutes. No natural event can explain this.
- E. The first three hours on the cross were hectic with the enemies, soldiers, mockers, even one of the criminals on the cross...
- F. The first three hours belonged to enemies; the next three belonged to God.
- G. B. The sun went down at noon, which was frightening, silent, overpowering! Three hours
- H. **The miracle of the torn veil.** Talmud which is a compilation of ancient teachings regarded as sacred by Jews from the time it was compiled until modern times. *Talmud* informs us that the heavy veil was sixty feet long and thirty feet wide and the thickness of the palm of a man's hand or four inches, and was composed of 72 squares woven of thick fabric. Teams of oxen couldn't pull it apart.
- I. No man could have torn it. It was as if the great hand of the LORD God ripped it apart. It was torn in two equal pieces, down the middle, "from the top to the bottom."
- J. When did the tearing of the veil take place? It was torn in two pieces at the precise moment Jesus died on the cross. At the precise moment that Jesus died the veil was torn from top to bottom.
- K. **Jesus Christ is the only way into presence of a holy God**
- L. Access to the presence of the God was now available to all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. The presence of God was thrown open to all mankind. Our sin problem had been resolved by the payment of the price of our redemption. Sin had been dealt with by our real High Priest who had entered into the true Holy of Holies and made the perfect sacrifice for sin. Jesus removed every possible obstacle, and we now have an intimate fellowship with a holy God.
- M. **Hebrews 10:19 NLT** And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain (veil) into the Most Holy Place. 21 And since we

have a great High Priest who rules over God's house, 22 let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.<sup>23</sup> Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise.

**N. The miracle of the earthquake**

- O. We read that the rocks were split apart. The hardest substance on earth were destroyed.
- P. This is when God gave Moses the Law. Exodus 19:18 All of Mount Sinai was covered with smoke because the LORD had descended on it in the form of fire. The smoke billowed into the sky like smoke from a brick kiln, and the whole mountain shook violently.
- Q. Colossians 2:14 NLT He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. 15 In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross.
- R. In death Jesus took the power of death from death, and death was ended by death. Hebrews 2: 14 Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death.
- S. Mount Sinai represents the law and Mount Calvary represents grace. Mount Sinai represents sinners defeat, Mount Calvary represents sinners' victory. Mount Sinai was swallowed up by Mount Calvary. John 1:17 For the law was given through Moses, but God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ.

**IV. Miracle of tombs opened and Godly men and women raised from the dead.**

- A. The earthquake was brute force but selected graves, that has design. Acts 2: 22 "People of Israel, listen! God publicly endorsed Jesus the Nazarene by doing powerful miracles, wonders, and signs through him, as you well know." God put on a show.
- B. Vs. 52 and tombs opened. The bodies of many godly men and women who had died were raised from the dead. 53 They left the cemetery after Jesus' resurrection, went into the holy city of Jerusalem, and appeared to many people.
- C. What would have the headlines been in the Jerusalem Gazette?
- D. Jerusalem, the city that stoned the prophets and crucified Jesus, was still given an opportunity to believe and change.
- E. The miracle of the Roman officer testifying

- F. **Vs. 54** The Roman officer and the other soldiers at the crucifixion were terrified by the earthquake and all that had happened. They said, "This man truly was the Son of God!"
- G. Think about these miracles for a moment:  
 Jesus touched the sun, and darkness came on the land.  
 Jesus touched the temple, and the veil was torn.  
 Jesus touched the earth, and the rocks split apart.  
 Jesus touched the graves, and the saints were raised.  
 Jesus touched the centurion, and he gave a testimony
- V. We talked about the **miracles** of the cross, now let's talk about the **message** of the cross.
- A. **1 Corinthians 1:18 NLT** The message of the cross is foolish to those who are headed for destruction! But we who are being saved know it is the very power of God.
- B. The cross represents a choice, a door, a decision, a crossroads.
- C. A crossroads, the two beams, my will vs. God's will.
- D. Let me give you 6 words that start with the letter D, to help us remember what the cross represents and what our response to the cross should be.
- E. #1. **Door**
- F. A choice, a decision. Will I go through that door? **John 10:9 ESV** I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.
- G. There is no other door you can go through to get to heaven. There is no other door you can go through to find life on this earth. "Your new real life is hid with Christ in God. Only one door and only one way. **John 14:6 ESV** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.
- H. #2. **Death**
- K. The cross represents death. Of course, the death of Jesus, but if you go through that door it represents your death. You must die to live. Colossians 3:3 NLT For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God.
- I. If you really surrendered your life to Christ you would experience the death to this life, your old life, there would be a change.
- J. We were all dead men walking. **Ephesians 2:1** Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. 2 You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. 3 All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and

inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else. 4 But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, 5 that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!)

- K. Some of you experienced some sort of death and because of that death you came to Christ. It could have been a divorce, an addiction, a life out of control. It was through that death or hurt that you got a revelation that you needed some supernatural help and that was Jesus.
- L. There was a point in my life that I learned about the door, the cross and said a prayer and would visit the door, pray to the door when in trouble **but never went through the door**. Never repented, never died to self. I didn't experience the death of the cross, so I never experienced the life and victory of the cross.
- M. **\*\*\*Picture\*\*\*** (100 bible verses about dying to self)
- N. **Galatians 2:20** ESV I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
- O. **Galatians 5:24** ESV And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.
- P. Have you gone through the door?

## **VI. 3. Decision**

- A. The cross, the door represents a decision.
- B. Not have you knocked on the door. Or knelt at the cross. Or said a prayer.
- C. But have you make a decision to go **through** the door, to get **on** the cross, to **surrender** your life to Jesus and make Him Lord and master? Jesus is either Lord of all or He is not Lord at all. He's not burger king
- D. Yes it is as easy as saying a prayer, but that is not the end, that is the start. It's like a key to start a car, but now you need to put it in gear and move toward the cross, toward Jesus and follow Him.
- E. For many of us, when we make that decision it is like all hell comes against you.

## **F. 4. Dedicated**

- G. Once you make a decision, come to the cross, say a prayer. Then you commit your life to Him. Surrender to Him and He becomes your master.

- H. **Romans 6:14** NLT Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of God's grace.
- I. We were slaves to sin and doing whatever it wanted us to. Now we are slaves/servants of Jesus Christ, and He is our master.
- J. We must be dedicated to Him. Our bodies a living sacrifice..
- K. Dedicated means you are all in. You are not doing this half-heartedly. He wants our whole heart. The enemy wants you to keep that little piece of land, just that one acre. (Legal access)
- L. Another word for dedicated, is committed. He wants us to be fully committed. **Matthew 22:37 NIV** *Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment."*
- M. **2 Chr. 16:9 NIV** *"The eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him."*
- N. Our commitment to Him is our witness. It shows the world how important God is to us.
- O. If something is important in our life, we dedicate ourselves to it.
- P. 1. If you like or love something, you dedicate to your time to it.  
2. If your job is important to you, you dedicate yourself to it.  
3. If your family is important, you dedicate yourself to it.  
4. If your health is important to you, you commit yourself to working out.  
5. Whatever it is important to you, you will dedicate yourself to it.
- P. We live in a society that sometimes discourages commitment. "We want to live together, but we don't want to marry." "We will be there, if we are able." The pressure of this kind of environment can very quickly begin to shape who you become.
- Q. Commitment and dedication means that certain decisions are made in advance, irrespective of the circumstances: "I will honor Christ, whatever the pain and whatever the cost.
- R. Fair weather Christians. It takes 90 gallons of water to baptize a Christian and only 9 drops of rain to keep him at home!

#### VII. 5. **Diligent**

- A. Make a steady effort. Steady perseverance. Diligent people get the job done. They don't quit until they have given it their all. **Proverbs 10:4** "Lazy hands make for poverty, but diligent hands bring wealth"
- B. People get wealth by inheritance or by diligence. You can't go to heaven because your grandma is a Christian. Diligent: read your bible daily, praying/talking to God continually, going to church,

even when it rains, or you are a little tired. (because of a relationship)

C. Be diligent to do the daily disciplines of a Christian (disciple)

D. 6. **Disciple**

E. It comes from the word discipline.

F. What does disciple mean?

G. A disciple is a true follower of Jesus Christ.

H. If you are a Christian, you are a disciple; if you are not a disciple as Jesus defines it then you are not a Christian. These two terms (Disciple and Christian) mean the same thing as in the way I would speak of my "spouse" or my "wife."

I. In fact, the term "disciples" occurs 269 times in the New Testament, while the term "Christian" only occurs three times. In the Book of Acts we're told that "The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch" (**Acts 11:26**). This makes it clear that the terms are interchangeable.

**J. The Cost of Being a Disciple**

K. **Luke 14:25** A large crowd was following Jesus. He turned around and said to them, **26**. "If you want to be my disciple, you must, by comparison, hate everyone else—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple. **27**. And if you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple. **33**. So you cannot become my disciple without giving up everything you own. (Unless you forsake all)

L. A large crowd and they were following Jesus, for whatever reason

M. They considered themselves to be followers of Jesus but in reality, they were only casual followers and not committed followers.

N. They were like many people today who do "Christian things" like go to church, pray, sing Christian songs, etc. but are not really committed to Jesus. In a sense they were "along for the ride" but were unwilling to give up everything in their lives that conflicted with following Jesus in a committed way. They were like many today who look to Jesus to solve their money problems, relationship problems, health problems, etc. but who quickly grow disillusioned and unwilling to obey Jesus completely when following Jesus doesn't solve these problems or following Jesus requires real sacrifices in their lives. These "large crowds" were casual followers and not committed followers, which are you?

O. In verse 26, 27 Jesus makes it clear about what it means to be a disciple.



## **To be a disciple of Jesus you must be committed to him above everything else**

- P. In our hearts Jesus must come before our loved ones, self-interest, possessions, careers, hobbies, goals in life, and even our very lives. In practice this commitment to Jesus will be tested and sometimes, in a moment of weakness, Jesus will not come first in our choices.
- Q. The question we need ask ourselves is not "Am I **able** to follow Jesus completely?" But rather "Am I **willing** to follow Jesus completely?" We are all human and sometimes we will fail in our commitment, but the thing Jesus is confronting here is not our ability but our willingness to follow him with our whole hearts

### VII. Doors and Keys

- A. Do you want what's behind door number one?
- B. Did you know that there are over 7000 promises that God has for us. Once you go through the first door, the cross and follow Jesus, it will lead to many doors.
- C. Each door represents a promise and there is a certain key that will open that door or that promise. There is also a devil or a personal issue that stands in front of that door.
- D. Door #1 the cross, salvation, eternal life. The key is the prayer; that if I confess with my mouth... behind that door is peace and purpose. The devil in front to hinder you is fear or pride.
- E. The door of the presence of God. The key; Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise.
- F. The door of financial peace. The key is tithing.
- G. The door of miracles. The key of serving or servanthood. Elijah and Elisha
- H. The door of peace, fear and anxiety issues. The key is prayer and supplication "be anxious for nothing but in everything with prayer and supplication, let...
- I. It takes faith to turn every one of these keys and step through the doorway.

Close: