



The Voice of Truth

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What Does The Cross Teach?

By Jimmy Pettigrew

The fact of a crucified and risen Savior is the very heart of Christianity. It is not within man's power to save himself (**Jeremiah 10:23**). How thankful we should be that we can be reconciled to God, but only through the cross of Christ (**Ephesians 2:16; Colossians 1:20**). May we consider some things which the cross teaches:

1. Man's guilt (**Romans 3:9-10, 23**)
2. God's righteousness (**Romans 3:24-26**)
3. God's power to save (**Romans 1:16; 8:3**)
4. God's gracious offer (**John 3:16; Titus 2:11**).
5. God's love (**Romans 5:8; John 3:16**)
6. Necessity of man's obedience (**Philippians 2:8; Hebrews 5:8-9**)
7. To assure Christians that cleansing is available (**1 John 1:7-10**)
8. Shows the worth of the church (**Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25**)
9. The need for holy living (**1 Corinthians 6:18-20; 1 Peter 1:15**)
10. The need for humility (**Philippians 2:5-8**)

Christ came to earth to do the will of His Father. He willingly endured the persecution and pain that wicked man brought upon Him. He humbly obeyed God, and died on the cross for the sins of mankind. Looking at what the cross teaches should cause us to gladly and willingly give up anything that stands between us and God. It should result in an attitude of commitment and dedication like we have never seen. It should motivate one to be restored. It should cause one to become a Christian.

When Bad Things Happen

By Jeff Belknap

One thing to remember when bad things happen to God's people—"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (**Romans 8:28**). Not all that happens to us is good, but all things can work out for good if we will patiently look at it from the right perspective.

Can good come out of devastating things and deeds? Yes, consider these:

The Lord's Crucifixion

Isaiah 53:11 says, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." Without this horrible injustice, we could not be saved.

The Evil Brothers of Joseph Sold Him Into Slavery

What did Joseph say about this evil deed years later, "And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive" (**Genesis 50:19-**

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20).

Joseph's great faith, noble character, and magnificent patience and courage would have never been brought to light if this evil deed, and the sufferings that ensued, had never taken place!

Persecution

In **Acts 8:1-5** the Bible says, "And Saul was consenting unto his death (Stephen, ch. 7; jhb). And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria . . . As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them..."

The very thing that Satan was using in an attempt to destroy the church, caused the church to grow!

Physical Weaknesses

In **2 Corinthians 2:7-10** it is written, "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."

Trials, Temptations & Tribulations

In **James 1:2-4** the Spirit says, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

In **1 Peter 1:5-7** the text says, "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

The temptations of the devil bring out the great character of those who love God (**1 Corinthians 10:13; Philippians 4:13**), just as the darkness brightens the flickering stars.

"Great occasions do not make heroes or cowards; they simply unveil them to the eyes of men" (Reader's Digest, August 1962, pg. 63). For example, the awful trials, responsibilities and heartaches thrust upon Lincoln by the Civil War did not MAKE his noble and truly great character; they simply unveiled it to the eyes of men. His magnificent character was attained through the lean, long, weary years BEFORE he became the President!

Heresies, Factions, or Parties In The Church

"For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you" (**1 Corinthians 11:19**).

Dissentions and difficulties cause us to "plainly recognize" those who are "genuine and of approved fitness" and "sound."

Trials within the body are helpful to reveal the true character of the individual members of it. We learn who we can count on to be true!

"Giant" Problems In Life

In **1 Samuel 17:32-37** the Bible says, "And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine. And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth. And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee."

David had faith to overcome the giant, because he had a history! Many times there's a purpose for our difficulties!

A Beautiful Life By Gilbert Alexander

The finest adorning in life is not an outward adorning of the body, but rather dressing oneself in the beauty of holiness and righteousness. While the outward adorning of the body is pleasing to the eye and physically appealing, the inward adorning of a meek and quiet spirit appeals to the heart and soul and makes one's life rich indeed.

David speaks of "the beauties of holiness" (**Psalms 110:3**); and Paul, quoting from **Isaiah 52:7**, says, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!" Again, the Psalmist says, "For the Lord takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation." Isaiah says, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels" (**Isaiah 61:10**). How shallow and hollow indeed is a beautiful countenance behind which is a corrupt and immoral life. We often sing, "Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me," but we know that the prophet has said of the Christ, "He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him" (**Isaiah 53:2**).

The beauty of selfless sacrifice is seen in its finest hour in the suffering and death of Christ. "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (**John 15:13**). Of the life of Jesus, Peter stated it simply, "...who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him" (**Acts 10:38**). The people of God can do little to improve their physical appearance, but each one can adorn his life with meekness and holiness, doing good and sharing, "for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (**Hebrews 13:16**).

The beauty of the Lord's church is in its purity as a cleansed body, and the continued purity of the church depends upon the purity of the lives of all the saints. "A little leaven leavens the whole lump;" therefore, we must "purge out the old leaven" so that we may be a new, unleavened lump (**1 Corinthians 5:6-7**). How beautiful is a life of "golden deeds," of kind and compassionate words and works, of pure and wholesome speech, of a meek and submissive attitude (**1 Peter 3:3-6**), of a genuine respect for others and unpretended love of the brethren, of a holy and harmless life of doing justly, loving mercy, and being ready unto every good work, of a heart in which is no guile! How beautiful is the simplicity of worship: hearts that are attuned to the will of God, voices blending together in songs of praise, heartfelt prayers of supplication and thanksgiving, the solemn yet joyful fellowship of the Lord's Supper, the earnest exhortation and edification of the church through teaching, and

the sacrifice of our financial resources to the Lord's work! Let the words of "A Beautiful Life" ring in our hearts as each of us gives himself diligently to the task of being "a worker who does not need to be ashamed" (**2 Timothy 2:15**). Surely the "beautiful people" are the godly people who shine as lights in a dark world of sin and degradation!

Think About It!

When a farmer stops plowing his land, stops planting seed, and stops harvesting his crops, he has stopped doing those things that identify him as being a farmer. When a Christian stops attending worship services regularly, stops studying, stops giving as he has been prospered, and has stopped working for the Lord: he has stopped being a Christian because he has stopped doing these things that identify him as a Christian. "By their fruits ye shall know them," **Matthew 7:20**.

Points To Ponder...

God works through people who work.

You can no more blame circumstances for your character than the
Mirror for your appearance.

People don't plan to fail – they just fail to plan.

Beware of a half-truth; you may get a hold of the wrong half.

The church of Christ

Has:

- One Builder – Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 3:9-11)
- One Purchaser – Jesus Christ (Acts 20:28)
- One Head – Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:22-23)
- One Savior – Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:23)
- One destiny – eternal salvation (Eph. 5:23)

IS:

- The spiritual body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23)
- The kingdom of Christ (Matt. 16:18-19; Heb. 12:28)
- The depository of those saved (Acts 2:47)
- One body, not many bodies (Eph. 4:4; 1:22-23)
- One way to be added to the church:
- One must believe that Christ is the Son of God (Jno. 8:24)
- One must repent of sins (Lk. 13:3)
- One must confess that Christ is the Son of God (Rom. 10:9-10)
- One must be baptized into Christ (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:26-27)

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3

Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24

Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30

Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21

Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27

Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17