

# ***The Greatness and Centrality Of The Cross***

**By  
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(Shared in Costa Rica – August 2010)**

It is a privilege and a blessing for me to have this opportunity to share with you the Reality of our “So Great Salvation” now in Christ Jesus. And I emphasize the word NOW. This is important because our Salvation is eternal, it is real, it is secured for us in the heavens, and it is **now in Christ**. We may not all be experiencing the fulness of this great Salvation, but the Scriptures declare a Salvation that is full and complete: not by what we do, but by what Christ has done, and that is by THE CROSS. And this is what I want to discuss with you. It is the knowledge of The Cross as a Finished Work and all that The Cross of Christ has accomplished that is sadly lacking in the Church today. It is true what the prophet Hosea said of God's people in **Hosea 4:6**: *“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.”* We fail, we are brought to silence, of none effect because of the lack of knowledge. This is why the Apostle Paul's prayer for the Church was always that they would come to knowledge... that they would know what is... that they may come to know **HIM**. We have made Salvation all about US – what we get from God. But to God it all about **HIS SON**.

So I come to you with the same heart as the Apostle Paul had when he wrote in **I Corinthians 2:1**: *“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. 2: For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him*

*crucified. 3: And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. 4: And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: 5: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."* And it doesn't matter whether I am in Costa Rica, or in the Virgin Islands; whether I am talking to young people or to Viejitas: the determination of my heart is still the same: to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And the word "know" here means to see, be aware, consider, understand, be sure. This is not just head knowledge: learning things about Jesus and about The Cross. This knowing is an experiencing of the very Person of Christ and His Cross in my soul; and the working of that Reality in me continually. And this "knowledge" never changes. There is so much uncertainty in the world today, and even our Christian doctrines seem to change. But the reality of CHRIST AND THE CROSS remains true and secure, and we can have FULL assurance in that Work. This is the essence and the greatness of our Salvation. We have a great Salvation because we have a great Savior and because of the greatness of The Cross, by which the Lord Jesus accomplished and eternally secured this Salvation for us.

The reason that most of us as Christians are not experiencing this "So Great Salvation" daily is because our knowledge of The Cross is so small. Now I am not questioning your Salvation or your love for the Lord and your commitment to Him: but I am challenging the knowledge we have of The Cross. Our Salvation is perfect IN CHRIST, but our knowledge of that Salvation is imperfect. So I am urging us to go on to full knowledge so that we may be filled with all the fulness of God. This is what the Father desires for us, and we only attain this by coming to a full knowledge of the Finished Work of The Cross. To many Christians, The Cross is something that we only deal with

during Holy Week. We feel sad when we consider what Jesus suffered on The Cross, but then when Easter is finished we fold up The Cross, put it away until next year, and we go on and consider and preach other things: happier things like prosperity or gifts. But The Cross: the Reality of what that Cross has done is to be ever before us and ever working in us. This is how God views The Cross and we must come to His knowledge of it. Many Christians just see The Cross as an emblem of their faith, and they put it on their church buildings, or in a picture in their house, or as a piece of jewelry around their neck. But The Cross is not something that is to be on the outside. It is to be borne in our souls: and in order for us to experience the fulness of our Salvation NOW the Work of the Cross – the death, burial and resurrection of Christ must be working in us continually and mightily.

And let me just say that The Cross is not a pretty thing! We may make crosses out of gold and put pretty flowers on them, but although The Cross is a glorious thing, it is a bloody thing! And our flesh does not embrace The Cross of Christ because it will bring an absolute and violent destruction to me: it brings a sure death! The Cross will bring us to a death: but out from that death comes the glorious liberty of New Life, His Life. This is the GREATNESS of The Cross! The Cross brings death AND Life. So I pray that during this time together our comprehension of The Cross of Christ and Him crucified will increase. And that we will come to see The Cross as God sees it, and to God it is a tremendous thing!

Let us look at God's view of the Cross in the Scripture.

The Cross is essential and central to God's Eternal Plan of Salvation. The Cross is not just some pieces of wood, it is not a torture tool that the Romans used, it is not an historical event:

but it is the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ according to the very Plan and Purpose of God.

*- **I Corinthians 1:18:** "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God...**23** But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; **24:** But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."*

This is NOT man's wisdom: the intellect of man would not have devised such a Plan. This is God's Wisdom. **I Corinthians 2:7:** *"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: **8:** Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."* Jesus' enemies thought they were getting rid of Him when they sent Him to The Cross. But they didn't know they were being used of God to MAKE KNOWN God's wisdom and power that had been hidden.

Christ Crucified is the power and wisdom of God. And we must see Christ and The Cross as one. God's wisdom and power was made known by The Cross. Christ without The Cross is meaningless, and if He didn't go to The Cross we would have NO Salvation! Many in the Church today are seeking power but without The Cross. Without Christ Crucified working in their lives they lack the power of God. And we see this sadly because even though they "preach the Gospel", their lives are not changed! The Church, the true Body of Christ should be the strongest and most powerful force on the earth today but sadly, that is not true. Could this be because we have removed The Cross with our man-made doctrines and theologies from its proper place in God's Plan of Salvation? And without The Cross having its rightful place, we have made Salvation all

about ME rather than all about HIM. And our religious efforts are just the work of the flesh rather than The Work of God.

The Cross is not an afterthought: God didn't add it to His Plan of Salvation because Adam sinned. This was God's Plan eternally, and He doesn't have another Plan. **I Peter 1:18:** *"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19: But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you."* This was manifested, made known at and by The Cross. Man didn't kill Jesus: The Cross was God's instrument ordained even before the world, and He has always kept The Cross in view, even in the types and shadows of the Old Covenant.

Everything in the Bible is in one way or another connected with The Cross: the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. When we read our Bible stories, we need to do that in the understanding of The Cross. For example in Genesis we read the story of Noah and the flood, and as children we focus on the animals 2 by 2 going into the Ark. But we need to see that story as a type of the judgment of The Cross. God saw the evil in man, and only one finding God's grace; God bringing His judgment upon the first creation but Salvation for those who are with Noah in the Ark, who come forth in New Life. Reading the Bible in the understanding of The Cross being essential and central to God's Eternal Plan of Salvation will open up the book to us. It is not all about us, it is all about Him.

The Cross is a Finished Work. He often told His disciples that He had come to FINISH the Work the Father had given Him to do. Jesus doesn't have to come back to finish anything, and you

and I can't finish anything. God determined a Finished Work by The Cross, and Jesus by His death, burial and resurrection finished God's Plan of Salvation to the full satisfaction of the Father. That is our assurance and our rest! And now The Cross as a Finished Work is an ever present Reality to those of us who are saved, and its wisdom and power is always working in us. **II Corinthians 4:10:** *"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body."* God's purpose is to bring forth The Life of Jesus in us, that we would be the witness in the earth of HIM; but that can only be done as we bear His Death. And we are to glory in The Cross and nothing else. **Galatians 6:14:** *"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."* This is the working of the wisdom and power of The Cross continually working in our hearts.

The Cross works in us HIS death, burial and resurrection. And this is important, because The Cross is exclusively HIS, and He accomplished by His Cross what no one else did or could ever do. So many Christians are waiting to experience the fulness of their Salvation when THEY die: but God's Salvation is not dependent upon our death, but HIS. And HIS death was an OBEDIENT DEATH: obedient to the Mind and Will of the Father: obedient unto death, even the death of The CROSS. And now the working in us is to bring us to that same obedience. We know it was the desire of the Apostle Paul's heart to know Christ, but the only true knowledge of Christ that we can come to is by The Cross. The Apostle Paul wrote in **Philippians 3:10:** *"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."* Notice that it is always HIS. And Paul came to realize that religion didn't bring him to a true relationship with God and he was willing to give up his religion; all that he knew and

excelled in, in order to know Him. Paul knew that the only way to truly experience Christ was by experiencing Him by The Cross. Paul counted all of the things of his former Jewish religion as dung, and he was willing to give it all up that he may win Christ. And friends, this is something that we also will have to experience. And I want you to recognize that there is an order to The Cross: it is death, burial, and resurrection. We all want to experience the resurrection side of the Cross: the New Life and the blessings. But in order to do that we first have to know Him in His death. And we also have to experience the burial: the putting away of those things that are brought to a death by His Cross. Then we can truly know Him in the power of His resurrection because then it will be not I, **BUT CHRIST**.

But let us look briefly at what was accomplished at The Cross. Most Christians just know that at The Cross their sins were forgiven, but The Cross went a lot deeper than just the forgiveness of sins. God would deal with the issue of sins, but He desired to bring us to LIFE: and in God's wisdom this Life would only come forth out from DEATH – HIS death on The Cross. Jesus said when He entered into Jerusalem for the last time knowing that the time of the Cross had come in **John 12:23**: *"The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. 24: Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."* In HIM is Life, but that Life could only be released for others if He died. He had taken on a body of flesh when He was born of Mary so that He could die, and in His death He would put off that body of flesh, and then Life would be released. But it would only be done by the Work of The Cross: there was NO other way!

Jesus said in **John 12:27**: *"Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause*

*came I unto this hour."* He was speaking of The Cross. **John 12:31:** *"Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out."* Now by The Cross, in His Son, and by His Son the world would be judged: the whole first creation and all that pertains to it. Judgment means coming to a decision and here God is dividing the living from the dead. This judgment is not between the good and the bad, the right and the wrong; but it is between what is dead and what is alive to God. The book of Romans tells us that all have sinned, all mankind, and come short of the glory of God. And the wages of sin is death. Jesus bore that judgment in Himself: not only FOR us, but AS us. This is God's Love – shown to us at The Cross! **II 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."* And on The Cross Jesus became that man of sin and when God judged that man, He brought all mankind to a death. **Hebrews 2:9:** *"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."* This was a great death – the death of ALL men, and this is the greatness of The Cross that we have to come to see and reckon with. **II Corinthians 5:14:** *"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead."* This is the Reality of God's view of The Cross.

And even though this was an utter destruction and a complete death to the first man Adam who now is separated from God, we have to see that this was God's Grace. His Grace that was shown at The Cross brought us to a death that we could not die ourselves. Please consider this. We were dead in sin: how could we be dead to sin? The answer is we couldn't! But Jesus gathered us all up at The Cross and bore the death of God's judgment upon all mankind and all men died. This was a



righteous judgment and death that fulfilled God's requirement on all mankind. And now by His burial, by the putting away of that body of sin: in His resurrection He brings forth a New Man who is changed, who is dead to sin and who is alive unto God, having Newness of Life, - His Life. This is the greatness of The Cross! He brought us to a death we could not die ourselves that we might live as One with God with His Life. And even though we were enemies and alienated from God because of sin, by this death He has changed us so that we can come to God and be holy in His sight.

This is what HE HAS DONE by The Cross, but this is what we must come to KNOW. Romans 6 deals with this. And notice how many times in these verses we read the word "knowing": this is what we must know if we are to walk in the Truth and Reality of our Salvation Now, and it is all related to The Cross. **Romans 6:3:** *"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4: Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5: For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7: For he that is dead is freed from sin. 8: Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 9: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10: For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11: Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

But consider how great this is! God did not simply forgive us

our sins: He killed the sinner! He removed the problem: the problem is me! We are planted into His death and we die! The reason we as Christians are still under the bondage and condemnation of sin is that we still see ourselves alive: as human, in the flesh. But the Truth of The Cross brings that man to death and frees him from sin. And now as Born-Again Believers, in our souls there is a process of The Cross working in us, bringing every part of that old man to death. And now as we learn Christ we can walk as those who are dead to sin (sin has no more control over us) because he that is DEAD is free from sin, but in full communion with God. And now if we do sin, we can confess our sins and God forgives us and cleanses us. But this forgiveness is now in Christ: for those who have Resurrection Life in HIM. Now we can walk in Newness of Life.

I know that the issue of sin is still real to us, and the devil still torments us, but this is because we have not come to the knowledge of the Truth of The Cross and what Christ accomplished there. These scriptures speak of the FACTS of what He has done. **1 John 3:8:** *"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."* **Hebrews 2:14:** *"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15: And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."* Jesus destroyed the devil through DEATH! The Apostle Paul recognized that we ourselves could not free ourselves from the evil that was in us: only Christ by The Cross could. **Romans 7:24:** *"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25: I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."* This is the Reality of the Finished Work of The Cross, and the Truth of that Work should now be working in us. **II Corinthians 4:10:** *"Always bearing about in the body the dying*

*of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body."*

This is all real because of what Christ did by The Cross, and the greatness of the sacrifice that He became. We know that for thousands of years under the Old Covenant animal sacrifices were offered, but these never satisfied the heart of God, never changed the people and perfected anything. But Hebrews 10 tells us that Jesus came in a body of flesh to do the Will of the Father, and He became the perfect sacrifice on The Cross. And in this Scripture I want you to see the greatness, the finality, and the depth of this sacrifice. **Hebrews 10:10:** *"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11: And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13: From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. 14: For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."* What Jesus did on The Cross was **ONCE, FOR ALL, FOR EVER!** This was a one time Work - for all, perfected, for ever! What else, or who else can that be said of, but Christ and Him Crucified.

And now because of this sacrifice something wonderful happens for us. Because of our sin, and our flesh, even under the Law and commandments, we were kept out from God's Presence. But now we can have the boldness to come and draw near in full assurance - because of what He has done by The Cross! **Hebrews 10:19:** *"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20: By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21: And having an high priest over the house of God; 22: Let us draw near with a true heart in full*

*assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”* This is NOT because of what we do but what He has done. Remember the Law kept man out of the Holiest. God was veiled under the Old Covenant and man could not go into God’s Presence. But when Jesus died on The Cross, we know that the veil in the temple was rent from top to bottom. That signified that the way into the Holiest, into Heaven, into God’s Presence was now made manifest. This is the greatness of The Cross of Christ! But religious man, because of his lack of understanding of the Work of the Cross has sewn up that veil again, saying that we can’t come into God’s Presence, and has tried to bring us back under the Law which kept us out. But by The Cross Jesus has made the way for us to go unto the Father, and we can now go into God’s Presence boldly because we go in His Son, by the Finished Work of The Cross.

This short lesson only begins to explore the Reality of The Cross, but I pray it will encourage us to see the greatness of The Cross of Christ, and if we truly desire to know the Lord, it will be by The Cross – His death, burial and resurrection. And although this does not excite and feel pleasant to the flesh, this is the true Gospel, and I pray that we will be encouraged to see the greatness and centrality of the Cross of Christ and embrace its full work in our hearts day by day. May we be able to say as the apostle Paul did in **Romans 1:16**: *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17: For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”* That is my prayer for you.

AMEN