

THE CROSS IN MY HEART

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INTRODUCTION:

1. People getting hit song ideas from just following Roger Miller around and picking up catchy little sayings.
2. Jimmy Clark at the lectures *"We must get the cross of Christ in the hearts of the people."* *
2. On a hill outside the city of Jerusalem stood three crosses.
3. On those crosses hung three dying men.
4. 1 Corinthians 2:2ff

I. WHO WERE THEY?

- A. On one side a vile, blasphemous thief. Who even up until his last breath was trying to avoid responsibility for his own action.
 - 1) Matthew 27:41-44 *"Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, 'He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'"* Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing."
 - 2) Luke 23:39 *Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, 'If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.'*
- B. On the other side another thief, who realized that he was getting just what he deserved.
 - 1) Luke 23:40-43 *"But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.'" Then he said to Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.'*
- C. On the center cross hung the innocent, sinless Son of God. Blessing and forgiving people right up until the end.
 - 1) Luke 23:43 *"And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.'*
 - 2) Luke 23:34 *"Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing."*

II. FOCAL POINT OF HUMAN HISTORY:

- A. Nearly two thousand years have passed and yet the cross of Christ stands as the focal point of human history.
- B. It is also the changing point for the lives of all mankind.
- C. 2 Corinthians 4:7-11 *"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed — always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body."*

III. DIFFERENT THINGS TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE:

- A. To the Roman soldiers, the cross was a means of execution for the people they despised.
 - 1) They were often hated by the people they oppressed and they felt no grief about torturing and killing a few Jewish criminals.
 - 2) They even gambled to see who would get the clothes of the dying men.

- B. To the religious leaders, the cross meant that their way of life would no longer be disturbed by the popular rabbi from Galilee.
 - 1) They rejoiced that they would not have to listen to his rebukes and condemnation of their hypocrisy.
 - 2) They had encouraged hatred against him and had black-mailed Pilate, the Roman procurator into pronouncing sentence against him.
 - 3) They even stood at the base of the cross ignorantly mocking their own Messiah.
- C. To the disciples, though, the cross was the end of their hope.
 - 1) Many hours had been spent with their master as he taught them to live with love and joy and a life based on loving surrender to God as a Father instead of legalism and fear.
 - 2) What would happen to them now?
 - a) Some forsook Jesus and fled.
 - b) Some stood by him weeping.
 - c) All of them waited with faith straining under a load of grief.

IV. NOT THE END OF THE STORY:

- A. The cross is not the final chapter in the life of Jesus, for the Father raised him up from the tomb on the third day.
- B. Jesus went to the cross to bear our sins.
- C. He paid the price for sin, which is death, for us, in order that we might live in Him.
- D. Now He has ascended into Heaven where He sits at the right hand of the throne of God until He comes back in glory to receive His own.

V. CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED INVOLVED MANY OTHER SUBJECTS:

- A. The cross: 1 Corinthians 2:1ff
- B. The message of the cross: 1 Corinthians 1:18-24
- C. The whole counsel of God Acts 20:20-27
- D. Kept back nothing that was helpful.
- E. The Gospel to them, that is the death burial and resurrection of Jesus. 1 Corinthians 15:1-4
- F. Preaching Jesus is the same thing as preaching Christ and Him crucified.
 - 1) It involved the plan of salvation (Acts 8:26-39)
 - 2) How to apply what Jesus did through the cross.

VI. THE PURPOSE OF PREACHING CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED:

- A. It takes the focus off the preacher and places it upon Jesus where it should be (1 Cor. 2ff).
- B. It places the cross in the heart of the people.
- C. 2 Corinthians 4:7-11 *“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed — always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.”*

VII. RE-FOCUSING

- A. If we preach on Baptism, we are talking about Christ and Him crucified (Romans 6:3-6).
- B. If we talk about worship, we are talking about Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor. 11:23ff).
- C. If we preach about family values and morals (Gal.2:20)

- D. If we talk about forgiveness
- E. Grace
- F. Abundant life (John 10:10) I came that they may have life and have it more abundantly.
- G. Every thing that pertains to the life of the Christian involves Christ and Him crucified.

VIII. THE RESULTS: GETTING THE CROSS INTO THE HEARTS OF PEOPLE:

- A. Converts the sinner (Acts 2:37)
- B. Keeps the saved moving forward.
- C. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 READ
- D. Galatians 6:14-15

CONCLUSION: You are here today because the cross of Christ means something to you. Others are not here because apparently it doesn't have the significance to them that it does to you.

1. What does the cross mean to you?
2. Is it just a good story with a moral of trusting in God for victory?
3. Is it just a historical event?
4. Or do you see the cross as the ultimate gift of God's love and grace, where Jesus took away our sins and made us forever free to live for him and with Him?
5. Think about the cross and give thanks to God who loved us and gave up His Son for us.
6. If I can preach and teach in such a way as to motivate others and to place the cross of Christ in your hearts, I have done my job.
7. Your family loves you. Your friends love you. But no one ever loved you as did Jesus.
8. Is the cross of Christ in your heart? If it is, you cannot but obey Him and receive the free gift of forgiveness of your sins.
9. The price was just too high to ignore!

- **(NOTE:** The idea for this sermon came from a statement made by Jimmy Clark of Athens, AL at the East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions Lectures, March 9, 2011. The statement was: "*We must get the cross of Christ into the hearts of the People*".)