

The Cross

Sunday School Lessons

Bancroft Mission

These lessons are adapted in part from Dr. Tony Evans book entitled *"The Power of the Cross"*, Dr. Evans teaching series entitled *"Returning to the Cross"*, and our personal studies.

We did not obtain permission from Dr. Tony Evans, and we are not profiting financially from his teaching.

All scripture is from the NKJV unless otherwise indicated.

Lesson 1

The Centrality of the Cross

Introduction:

"Centrality" has to do with the quality of being essential.

When we talk about the cross, we are not talking about a piece of jewelry or a symbol on the top of a building designating it as a place of worship.

"The Cross" is referring to what was accomplished on the cross.

What makes "the Cross" the cross is Who was on the cross: Jesus.

Our lessons today are from the book of Galatians. Primarily Galatians 6:11-15, "See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand! 12 As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. 13 For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. 14 But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. 15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation."

I. Finding "meaning."

A. All of history and all of the future find meaning in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

During the early 1960's, every Sunday afternoon, during football season, a group of guys would meet in the yard of Saint Patrick's Catholic church in Bancroft, or in a vacant lot beside C. B. Hackett's house to play football. Gary Arthur, Freddy Burgess, Danny McClanahan, C.B. Hackett, Jerry Hedrick, Gene Davis, Tony Williams, Tommy Sergeant, Mike and Johnny McKneely, me, and more would gather (sometimes Pedro Gibson would play but we dreaded that. He was stronger than any of us and was extremely hard to tackle). We would choose sides (then argue about who got to be Jim Brown [the great Cleveland Browns running back]). We had the field and the players. Only one essential thing was needed: the football. Without the ball, it was just a bunch of guys gathering and running around.

B. Over and over Paul brings up the cross.

C. The cross is more than something that gets us to heaven.

D. If we don't understand the cross, life is just mundane.

II. The Main Thing.

- A. What was accomplished on the cross is the main thing.
- B. Without the cross there is no resurrection.
- C. Without the cross there is no power, no freedom, no forgiveness, no authority, no victory, there is nothing at all.
- D. Galatians 6:11 NLT, "NOTICE WHAT LARGE LETTERS I USE AS I WRITE THESE CLOSING WORDS IN MY OWN HANDWRITING."

1. Paul writes in capital letters because he wants to emphasize something. Then he writes verses 12-15, "As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. 13 For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. 14 But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. 15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation."—THE MAIN THING.

2. This summarizes the entire book of Galatians—The Cross.

3. Paul had been saved and had been preaching for many years. He spoke four languages in a day when the literacy rate was about 80%. he studied under Gamaliel, one of the greatest rabbinic teachers of the day. YET, IN VERSE 14, HE SAID, "BUT GOD FORBID THAT I SHOULD BOAST EXCEPT IN THE CROSS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST..."

4. His whole life, his thoughts, his teaching were centered on the Cross.

1st CORINTHIANS 2:1&2, "AND I, BRETHREN, WHEN I CAME TO YOU, DID NOT COME WITH EXCELLENCE OF SPEECH OR OF WISDOM DECLARING TO YOU THE TESTIMONY OF GOD. 2 FOR I DETERMINED NOT TO KNOW ANYTHING AMONG YOU EXCEPT JESUS CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED."

LET US RETURN TO THE CENTRALITY, THE ESSENTIALNESS, OF THE CROSS

III. The problem in Galatia.

A. Galatians 6:12, "As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ"

1. Circumcision was the external symbol of religion and covenant before Jesus died on the cross.

2. Circumcision would have prevented persecution (Galatians 6:12).

3. Circumcision was an attempt to earn salvation (Galatians 2:21, "I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness *comes* through the law, then Christ died in vain.").

4. Circumcision was an attempt to control people (Galatians 6:13, “For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.”).

B. The thing that kept the Galatians from experiencing the fullness of the cross was religion. Circumcision was the external symbol of religion.

C. The Judaizers or Legalizers.

1. The Judaizers were a group of religious people who followed Paul around declaring that after receiving Jesus as Savior it was necessary to be circumcised and follow the law of Moses.

2. The Judaizers had religion but no relationship with God.

ONE OF THE GREATEST DANGERS IN THE CHURCH IS WHEN RELIGION REPLACES RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS. IF WE CAME HERE TODAY BECAUSE OF FEAR, THE “RELIGIOUS” THING TO DO, OR WHAT OTHER PEOPLE WILL THINK OF US...THAT IS RELIGION WITHOUT RELATIONSHIP.

3. In Galatians 2:4 they had no relationship with Jesus and were bringing others into the same bondage, “And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage),”

4. The cross is the difference between a vibrant life and a dead, empty religion.

From Dr. Tony Evans’ book *The Power of the Cross* page 11, “In the same way it isn’t enough to gather together at the right place each Sunday—the church—or with the right people in our lives—fellow believers. And it isn’t enough that there is a program or that there are books, seminars, and worship celebrations on Sunday and throughout the week. All of that is good and helpful. But all of that means nothing without the centrality of the main thing, the cross. If we leave out the cross, we are only left with the empty shell called religion.”

We are left with an empty set of rules, requirements, and judgments to try and legislate spirituality leaving behind the intimacy, grace, and power to live spiritually victorious lives. As a result, believer after believer finds themselves in perpetual draft—never measuring up, never fully overcoming their struggles, never rising above their circumstances. They are unable to fulfill their destinies and achieve their own significance because they are operating without the power and deliverance of the cross. They are trying to live the Christian life without the main thing—the cross.”

D. Religion and rules get in the way of a relationship with Jesus. Galatians 5:2-4, “Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. 3 And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. 4 You have become estranged from Christ, you who *attempt to* be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.”

1. Religion says “do”, the cross says “done.”

2. Religion will wear us out. Matthew 11:28-30 The Message Bible, “Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show

you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

IV. Freedom in Christ.

"Freedom" in Christ, not "slavery" in Christ.

A. Religions achievement versus Divine accomplishment.

1. Religious achievement emphasizes what "we" must do. Divine accomplishment acknowledges what God has done.

2. Religious achievement depends on us. Divine accomplishment depends on God.

IF WE TRY TO GAIN ACCEPTANCE OF GOD BY AN EXTERNAL LIST, WE ARE ACTUALLY MOVING FARTHER AWAY FROM HIM RATHER THAN GETTING CLOSER TO HIM. THE THINGS WE TRY TO **DO TO GAIN ACCEPTANCE**; GOING TO CHURCH, READING THE BIBLE, PRAYING, SERVING FOR EXAMPLE WILL NOT RESULT IN RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS. OF COURSE, THESE THINGS ARE GOOD. THE PROBLEM IS IN MOTIVATION. IF THE MOTIVATION IS FEAR BASED, PRESSURE BASED, OR TO GAIN ACCEPTANCE IT WILL HAVE THE OPPOSITE EFFECT AND LEAVE US FRUSTRATED AND FULL OF GUILT—WE CAN NEVER DO ENOUGH. IF THE HUSBAND OR WIFE DOES CHORES AROUND THE HOUSE BECAUSE OF THREATS IT IS ONE THING. IF THEY DO THE SAME THINGS MOTIVATED BY LOVE IT IS SOMETHING ELSE. ONE IS MOTIVATED BY FEAR; THE OTHER IS MOTIVATED BY LOVE.

B. Galatians 6:14 NLT, "As for me, may I never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ..."

LET US RETURN TO THE CENTRALITY OF THE CROSS.

Lesson 2

The Necessity of the Cross

Introduction:

The cross is more than a piece of jewelry.

The cross is the essence of our faith. The cross was not an accident or a plan B; it was the centerpiece of God's eternal purpose to reconcile humanity to Himself.

The unsaved do not understand the cross—1st Corinthians 1:18, "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

I. Why the Cross?

A. The standard of God.

1. 1st Peter 1:16, "because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."

a. God's holiness is His nature.

- The sun doesn't try to be hot—it is the sun's nature to be hot.
- Water doesn't try to be wet—it is the nature of water to be wet.

b. When God makes His holiness known it is called righteousness.

2. The Mosaic law (found in the first five books of the Old Testament. The ten commandments are found in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5).

a. These are guidelines that God put into place to reflect His righteousness.

b. He looks at our actions and our hearts.

c. Doing righteous acts with the wrong heart violates His holiness.

- Matthew 5:21&22, "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' 22 "But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire."
- Matthew 5:27&28, "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 "But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

B. An un-adjustable standard.

1. He does not reduce His standard so we can feel good about ourselves.

2. He does not compare us with other people so we can be “better”, or “not as bad” as some.

C. The sinfulness of man.

1. Romans 3:23, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

a. No exceptions.

b. To understand the sinfulness of man we must be measured by the standard of God—absolute holiness and righteousness.

2. When we don’t reflect His holiness in attitude, heart, or actions, it is sin.

3. Romans 3:10-12, “As it is written: “There is none righteous, no, not one; 11 There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. 12 They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.”

GOD WANTS US TO CLEARLY SEE HOW SINFUL WE ARE SO WE CAN FULLY APPRECIATE THE CROSS

4. If we haven’t seen ourselves as sinners, we haven’t seen the need to be saved.

D. Recap.

1. The absolute holiness of God.

2. The standard of righteousness which is expressed through His law.

3. The sinfulness of man in his failure to measure up to the holiness and righteousness of God.

II. The Cross.

A. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

1. Romans 5:6 NLT, “When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners.”

2. Romans 5:8 NLT, “But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.”

3. Romans 5:10 NLT, “For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son.”

THE CROSS REFERS TO THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS FOR SIN AND SINNERS.

- Understanding the absolute sinfulness of man causes us to appreciate the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.
- Romans 5:6 NLT, “When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners.”

B. Why Jesus died.

1. Sin is a debt—Matthew 6:12, “And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.
2. The debt, or bill, is too much for us to pay.
3. God cannot compromise His character of holiness and righteousness. The wages, or debt, of sin must be paid.
4. God loves His creation but cannot compromise His character.
5. Romans 6:23, “For the wages of sin *is* death...”
 - The person who pays the debt can’t be in debt themselves.
 - The only person not in debt is God.
 - God cannot die.
 - Someone with perfection, absolute perfection, of God, but is human like us has to die.
 - John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”
 - John 1:14, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

ROMANS 5:8, “BUT GOD DEMONSTRATES HIS OWN LOVE TOWARD US, IN THAT WHILE WE WERE STILL SINNERS, CHRIST DIED FOR US.”

6. 2nd Corinthians 5:21, “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

- Hebrews 4:15, “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, **yet without sin.**
- Matthew 1:23, “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.”
AND
- Romans 5:12, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.”

HE BECAME EVERY SIN, PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE OF EVERY PERSON THAT HAS EVER LIVED OR EVER WILL LIVE.

MATTHEW 27:46, “AND ABOUT THE NINTH HOUR JESUS CRIED OUT WITH A LOUD VOICE, SAYING, “ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?” THAT IS, “MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?” THE DEBT, THE SIN DEBT THAT WE OWED, HAS BEEN FULLY PAID. WHEN WE CAME TO JESUS BY FAITH, HE CREDITED OUR SIN TO JESUS AND CREDITED HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS TO US. A DIVINE TRANSFER.

Lesson 3

Accomplishments of the Cross

Romans 3:24, “Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”

There are some key accomplishments of the cross: Justification, New Creation, Sanctification, and Glorification.

They correspond to the past, present and future tenses of salvation. So, we can say “I have been saved” (justified); “I am being saved” (sanctified); and “I will be saved” (glorified). All three statements are correct, and the Bible uses the word “saved” in all three of these contexts.

Many of these terms are used by different authors of the New Testament. In this lesson we will examine how they are used the majority of the time.

I. Justification.

A. Justification is a Theological and technical word, a legal concept.

1. Justice—Fair and equitable treatment.
2. “Just as if I have never sinned.”
 - a. Problem—we **have** sinned.
 - b. God had to provide a way for man to be “just as if they never sinned.”—
Justification.
 - c. God had to come up with a way to acquit the sinner without overlooking the sin.

Colossians 2:13&14 NIV, “When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, 14 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.”

3. Jesus, who did not sin, became sin for us, who had sinned, so we could be the righteousness of God in Christ.

2nd Corinthians 5:21 NLT, “For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, (or, *to be sin itself*) so that we could be made right with God through Christ.”

B. Jesus not only paid for our past sin but our future sin also.

1. Luke 19:30-35 NLT, “Jesus replied with a story: “A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road. 31 “By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. 32 A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side. 33 “Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. 34 Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. 35 The next day he handed the

innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, 'Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I'll pay you the next time I'm here.'"

2. Hebrews 10:10, "By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

3. Revelation 13:8, "All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

a. In the mind of God, Jesus was crucified before the foundation of the world.

b. Jesus' crucifixion occurred in history 2000 years ago.

c. The crucifixion covers all eternity.

Example:

Warren Wiersbe tells the story about a man who purchased a Rolls Royce and decided to tour through Europe. As he was enjoying his drive looking at the sights, suddenly his Rolls Royce broke down with no one around who could fix it. He sent a cable to the company in England, and they flew a man over who did the repairs. The man thought to himself, "This is going to cost me a ton of money." He waited for a bill, but it never came, so he sent a letter to the company telling what had happened, how the mechanic had fixed his car, and wondered what the charge would be. He got a letter back from the Rolls Royce Company which said, "Dear Sir, Thank you so much for your letter. You need to know that we have no record in our files that any Rolls Royce has ever broken down at any place, at any time, for any reason."

That's what justification has done in the life of the Christian.

II. New Creation.

Introduction:

2nd Corinthians 5:17 AMPC, "Therefore if any person is [ingrafted] in Christ (the Messiah) he is a new creation (a new creature altogether); the old [previous moral and spiritual condition] has passed away. Behold, the fresh *and* new has come!"

New=Unprecedented (never done or known before).

God gives man a new nature. Unlike bullfrogs and butterflies who go through metamorphosis. Born again people have a new spiritual DNA.

A. Not physical change but spiritual.

1. Romans 5:15, "But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many."

2. Romans 8:10, 16&17, "And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness...16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we

are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”

3. Ephesians 2:14-16, “For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, 15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, 16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.”

B. New Creation, Reconciliation (to God) is by the Cross.

III. Sanctification.

A. Sanctification is the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers.

1. Holy Spirit is changing our nature and character to be like Jesus.

2. Sanctification is the act of setting apart for a specific purpose.

a. In the Old Testament items were set apart, or sanctified, for a specific purpose.

b. In the New Testament, believers are being set apart for a specific purpose.

- Relationship.
- Service.

B. Sanctification occurs when we place into the hands of the Holy Spirit the proper “tools” to set us apart to be like Jesus.

1. 2nd Corinthians 3:18 AMP, “And we all, with unveiled face, continually seeing as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are progressively being transformed into His image from [one degree of] glory to [even more] glory, which comes from the Lord, [who is] the Spirit.”

2. Romans 12:2, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

IV. Glorification.

A. Glorification is the end result of progressive sanctification.

1. Glorification is a state of total redemption.

a. We are totally saved spiritually.

b. We are being saved in our mind or soul.

c. We will be saved in our body.

d. WHEN ALL THREE ARE REALIZED, THAT IS GLORIFICATION.

B. Philippians 3:7-14, "But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. 12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

1. In these verses Paul is telling us his quest: to be completely like Jesus (verses 12-14).

2. The key is verse 10, "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death."

a. Living in the power of the Resurrection is required.

b. "Fellowship of His sufferings."

- Referring to the Cross.
- Participation in the Cross by identification and death of the old man.

Lesson 4

Accomplishments of the Cross

Part II

Introduction:

The cross is the centerpiece of our lives.

Illustration from Dr. Tony Evans, “Vince Lombardi, the legendary football coach of the Green Bay Packers, became very frustrated with his team’s play one season and decided to address their performance. He did not think that they were living up to the level of their abilities. So one afternoon he called the men together in the locker room.

‘It is obvious to me that we are missing something here. We need to get back to the basics.’ Then, holding up a football, he continued, ‘Gentlemen, this is a football.’

Now that statement may seem elementary to professional football players who have been playing the game for years. But his point was that they were not performing at the level that they should. The Packers players were out on the field of play, but they had missed the basics—the fundamentals of the game.

As Christians, many of us are not living our lives at the level that God has enabled us. We are not expressing the fullness of the abundant life that Jesus Christ died to provide. One reason this is so is because while we have focused an inordinate amount of time and resources on creating a culture of Christianity, we have forgotten the basics. We have neglected the foundation.

When we fail to understand the core of our faith, and upon what that rests, we likewise fail to respond appropriately to life’s scenarios.

I want you to envision in your mind’s eye the cross of Jesus Christ as you hear these words: ‘Friends and fellow believers, this is the cross. It is the foundation upon which all else rests. It is the centerpiece of our faith and of all we are to think and do.’

The cross is the irreducible, substantive essence of our faith.”

I. Sin and Sins.

The scripture refers many times to sin and also to sins (plural).

A. Sin (singular) refers to what man inherited from Adam.

1. Romans 5:12-17, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—13 (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. 15 But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man’s offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. 16 And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from

many offenses resulted in justification. 17 For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)"

2. John 1:29, "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

The act of forgiving the "sin of the world" or, the sin we inherited through Adam, is called Justification—review justification in lesson 3.

B. Sins (plural).

1. Individual thoughts, deeds, and actions: everything that has been, is, or will be contrary to God's holiness was borne by Jesus on the cross—this is also Justification.

II. Sanctification (see lesson 3).

God transforms the life of the sinner who has become a saint and is now part of the family of God.

III. Glorification (see lesson 3).

The consummation, or full realization, of sanctification.

IV. The Cross is effective today.

A. Justification, Sanctification, and Glorification.

B. Overcoming in this life.

1. There is a battle between the "flesh" (human lust) and the Spirit.

a. James 1:14&15, "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death."

b. Galatians 5:17, "For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish."

Many people blame the desires of human nature on the devil. It is not the devil. It is the same desire that caused Adam and Eve to sin in the garden—before they "fell."

C. It is through identification with the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus that always causes us to triumph IN THIS LIFE.

1. Romans 6:1-14, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! **How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?** 3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised 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 united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,** 6 **knowing this, that**

our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin. 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. 11 **Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.** 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”

2. Galatians 2:20, ““I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

D. Many ponder if they have sinned.

1. God has given us a wonderful gift, the gift of the Holy Spirit. He will immediately alert us to sin.

2. Hebrews 12:6-11, “or whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.” 7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? 8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. 11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”

Lesson 5

Identifying with the Cross Part I

Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

If we don't know who we are in Christ, we will not function as God designed.

Romans 6:1-11, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? 3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised 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 united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin. 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. 11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The Romans were looking at grace as a license to sin rather than the power not to sin.

When we received Christ we merged, or united with Him in His death in order that we might experience the effect of His resurrection.

The reason we died with Him was to live out of and manifest His life.

I. Physical death and Spiritual death.

A. Physically, we live in anticipation of death—we will all die someday.

B. Spiritually, we are dead so that we might live—be spiritually alive.

1. The cross is not just a 2000-year-old historic event.

2. If we want to really live now, we must continue to identify with His death as our death.

3. 2nd Corinthians 4:10, "always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body."

II. Present age.

Galatians 1:3&4, "Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this **present evil age**, according to the will of our God and Father,"

A. This "present evil age" refers to destructive influences.

B. 2nd Timothy 3:1-8 NLT, “You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. 2 For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. 3 They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. 4 They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. 5 They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that! 6 They are the kind who work their way into people’s homes and win the confidence of vulnerable women (and me) who are burdened with the guilt of sin and controlled by various desires. 7 (Such women (and men) are forever following new teachings, but they are never able to understand the truth.) 8 These teachers oppose the truth just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses. They have depraved minds and a counterfeit faith.”

1. This “age” offers:
 - a. No eternal hope.
 - b. No lasting peace.
 - c. No continuing freedom.
 - Freedom from sin.
 - Freedom from self.
 - This “age” promotes self.
 - “Self”, or “flesh” always puts “me” first. Always desires, focuses on what will magnify “me.”
 - WE CANNOT BE VICTORIOUS OVER THE PROBLEM BY MAGNIFYING THE PROBLEM.

2. This “present evil age” no longer defines us.

B. Jesus died to rescue us from sin and self.

1. Identifying with the cross of Jesus daily causes us to live in victory daily.
2. Life comes out of death.

III. Romans 6:3&4, “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

A. In physical baptism we are totally wet. In spiritual baptism we are totally dead.

1. We have a new identity.
2. Galatians 2:20, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

B. 2nd Corinthians 4:7, 10&11, “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.” 10&11, “always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.”

1. The “treasure” inside of a believer is fighting to come out; fighting through the flesh, or self. Self, with all of its “me” ways.

2. 1st Corinthians 3:3 NIV, “You are still worldly (present evil age). For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans?”

Lesson 6

Identifying with the Cross Part II

Paul gives us a beautiful picture of what it looks like to be a “dead man walking.”

I. 2nd 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. 8 We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed— 10 always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.”

A. Let’s take a deeper look at these experiences.

1. “Hard-pressed.” Sometimes we have extreme pressure and stress: financial challenges, children, marriage, work—many others.

But we are not crushed or smashed—we are still moving forward.

2. Sometimes we are “Perplexed.” No resources. We don’t see any way out of a situation.

But we are not in despair. We have hope.

3. We are “persecuted.” Sometimes we are mistreated and experience injustice.

But we are not forsaken. We are not abandoned or helpless.

4. We are sometimes “cast down.” This is a shepherd term that refers to sheep when they are lying on their side. Their internal organs shift, and they cannot get up. They are totally dependent on the shepherd.

But we are not destroyed. We are not dead.

B. Christians will have problems. But the problems are not the last word.

1. 2nd Corinthians 4:7, 10&11, “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.” 10&11, “always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.”

2. We live everyday dependent upon the “treasure.” We are “DEAD MEN WALKING.”

II. Romans 6:10&11, “For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. 11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

A. Paul says to “reckon” or consider ourselves to be dead indeed to sin.

B. The “present age” is no longer our reference for identity.

C. This word “reckon” is a beautiful verb.

1. It is used in Romans 4:3, “For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”

2. It is a verb in the present tense. It is an action that is in our everyday life.

3. It means to “apply to one’s account.”

THE DEATH OF JESUS HAS BEEN APPLIED TO OUR ACCOUNT. OUR EVERYDAY, WALKING AROUND LIFE.
REALIZE THAT IN JESUS WE ARE DEAD BUT AT THE SAME TIME WE ARE ALIVE IN HIM.

Lesson 7

Committed to the Cross

Introduction:

“Committed” is not a legalistic term. Jesus constantly called for a commitment to discipleship.

Salvation is free. Faith in Jesus’ finished work on the cross makes us righteous before God. Romans 3:22-24 says, “even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,”

Now we are on our way to heaven.

However, many Christians live a miserable defeated life—going to heaven but not experiencing heaven while on earth. Matthew 6:10, “Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.”

A.B. Simpson, founder of the *Christian and Missionary Alliance*, wrote a beautiful song sometime in the late 1800’s.

I’M LIVING IN HEAVEN TO-DAY

They tell of the bliss of the ransomed above
In the Land that is far, far away;
But Jesus so fills my glad heart with His love
That I’m living in heaven to-day.

They tell of the pleasures that never decline
And the treasures that never decay;
But Jesus Himself and His riches are mine,
And I’m living in heaven to-day.

No sorrow e’er comes to that beautiful shore,
And their tears have been all wiped away;
But Jesus has taught me to sorrow no more,
And He fills me with heaven to-day.

For heaven is Jesus and Jesus is mine,
And His presence is with me alway;
He fills me so full of His glory divine
That I’m living in heaven to-day.

I now have a joy that they never can know,
In that Land that is far, far away;
I’m seeking and saving poor sinners below,
And this is my heaven to-day.

John 6:60 KJV, “Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard *this*, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?”

I. The price of discipleship.

A. A disciple is one that follows Jesus—His way and His will.

B. Luke 10:38&39, “And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 “He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.”

1. Jesus is speaking of discipleship.

2. Another interpretation, “He whose goal is his own way will be useless to Jesus. But he who does not seek his own will, but seeks the will of Jesus will experience the abundant, resurrection life—right here, right now!”

C. Peter meets Jesus.

Luke 5:1-11, “So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, 2 and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets. 3 Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon’s, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat. 4 When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, “Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.” 5 But Simon answered and said to Him, “Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.” 6 And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. 7 So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. 8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!” 9 For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; 10 and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men.” 11 So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.”

1. In verse 5 Peter, a professional fisherman, was confronted with a decision: what he knows versus what Jesus knows.

2. In verse 8 Peter faced his own attitude and declared he needed mercy.

3. Verse 11 says they “forsook ALL!”

D. We can live the “regular” Christian life and die and go to heaven someday. OR, we can choose to be a disciple and experience eternal, resurrection life. A life that has a relationship with Jesus and bears much fruit.

II. Jesus and His followers.

John 12:23-26, “But Jesus answered them, saying, “The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. 24 “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. 25 “He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 “If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him *My* Father will honor.”

- A. Jesus' death would produce much fruit.
- B. Our "key" to eternal life.
 - 1. Eternal life is not just in heaven but experiencing the abundant life now.
 - 2. Investigating verse 25.

a. "He who loves (is committed to) his own way and will, will not experience a relationship and bearing of kingdom fruit. He who loves less (this is the same word used in Luke 24:26, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."—we know that Jesus does not want us to hate our families. He is speaking of priorities.) his own way and will, will keep it (guard it—Proverbs 4:23 NIV, "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." AND 2nd Corinthians 4:7, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.") resulting in eternal life."

b. The greatest joy is to put Him, His way, His will, His relationship, first place in our lives.

III. Dying is an ongoing event.

2nd Corinthians 4:10&11, "always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh."

A. Paul gives us his life's goal in Philippians 3:10-14, "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. 12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

1. In verse 10, Paul says he wanted to experience the fellowship, the one-ness of the cross so that he could experience the life of the resurrection. He wasn't talking about earning the life (verse 9, "and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;")

2. In verses 12-14, he said that he had not fully attained the resurrection life, which happens through relationship and identification, but this was his goal.

B. In Luke 9:23, Jesus said to take up our cross DAILY, if we want to be His disciples, "Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."

IV. How do we become a disciple?

- A. Begins with a decision.

Luke 14: 25-33, "Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, 26 "If anyone

comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he **cannot** be My disciple. 27 “And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. 28 “For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has *enough* to finish *it*— 29 “lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see *it* begin to mock him, 30 “saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ 31 “Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 “Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. 33 “So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has **cannot** be My disciple.”

1. He is not talking about going to heaven, He is talking about being a disciple.

2. Notice in verses 26 and 33 “**cannot**.”

B. Moving from a “groupie” to a “posse.”

1. A groupie is in the crowd. He is a follower but maintains his own way.

2. The posse participates with the purpose of Jesus.

3. John 6:56, 66-68, “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him...66 From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. 67 Then Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you also want to go away?” 68 But Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”

C. Come honestly before the Father in prayer and tell Him our desires.

We no longer want to be a mediocre Christian—just live, die, and go to heaven. We want to experience a life-giving relationship and bear much fruit.

Counsel— “Don’t live in condemnation of sin—we have become the righteousness of God in Christ (2nd Corinthians 5:21).

At the same time, identify with the death of Jesus and submission to the will of the Father. Just as Jesus did:

Luke 22:41-44, “And He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and prayed, 42 saying, “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.” 43 Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. 44 And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” **AND** Hebrews 10:7-9, “Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come—In the volume of the book it is written of Me—To do Your will, O God.’ ” 8 Previously saying, “Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them” (which are offered according to the law), 9 then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.” He takes away the first that He may establish the second.”

Our commitment to the process of discipleship is to die to self by identification with the death of Jesus, submission to His will and allowing the Holy Spirit to work resurrection life both in us and through us.

Lesson 8

The Power of the Cross

1st Corinthians 1:18 KJV, “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”

As has been mentioned in previous lessons, the cross is more than a piece of jewelry or something on top of a building designating it as a place where Christians meet. **There is no power in symbols.**

The cross is different than a crucifix. A crucifix still has Jesus on the cross while the cross is empty; that is, Jesus is no longer on the cross.

I. Problems in Corinth.

A. There were many problems in Corinth: Division, carnality, sexual sins, abuse of Spiritual gifts; just to name a few.

B. Paul dealt with division in chapters 1 and 3.

1. In chapter 3, the solution was understanding whose they were: Christ’s. He wanted them to know their identity.

1st Corinthians 3:22&23, “whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours. 23 And you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.”

2. In chapter 1, the solution was the power of the cross.

a. 1st Corinthians 1:12-18, “Now I say this, that each of you says, “I am of Paul,” or “I am of Apollos,” or “I am of Cephas,” or “I am of Christ.” 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. 16 Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. 18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

b. The power of the cross removes all glory from man and places it solely upon Christ.

- Galatians 6:14, “But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”
- The cross removes the “world’s” influence. That is, the focus on self.

II. Who died on the Cross?

A. Of course, Jesus.

B. Who was Jesus?

1. Son of God.

2. Son of man.
3. Sinless, spotless lamb.
4. Who do you say He was?

III. Why did Jesus die on the Cross?

A. SEE LESSON 2, ROMAN NUMERAL I

B. 1st John 1:5, "This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all."

1. God is not "like" light, He is light, pure light.
2. Man, without Jesus, is pure darkness.
3. Jesus is the light of God.

a. John 8:12, "Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, 'I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.'"

b. Jesus was not "like" light, He was light; pure, unadulterated, holy, and righteousness.

B. Jesus died on the cross to remove all darkness from man and make him light, as He was light.

1. Through faith in the finished work of Jesus on the cross, man has been made as pure as Jesus was.

a. 2nd Corinthians 5:17, 21, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new...21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

b. Romans 8:17 NIV, "Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings (that is, His suffering on the cross) in order that we may also share in his glory."

2, 1st Corinthians 1:20-25, "Where *is* the wise? Where *is* the scribe? Where *is* the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23 **but we preach Christ crucified**, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

IV. Result of the Cross.

A. As stated above, through faith in the finished work of Jesus on the cross, man has been made "right" with God.

B. Although Jesus' death on the cross was over 2000 years ago, the effect is still alive today.

1. Believers are the "light" of the world.

a. Matthew 5:14, "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden."

b. 2nd Corinthians 4:4-6, " whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. 5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. 6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

c. Revelation 21:9-11, "Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, **I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife.**" 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God. **Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.**"

2. When a person puts their faith in the finished work of Jesus on the cross, the Holy Spirit moves him into a realm allowing them to discern things of the Spirit.

a. 1st Corinthians 2:2-14, "For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 3 I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. 6 However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, 8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him." 10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. 13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned."

- In verse 2, Paul declares the importance of the crucifixion of Jesus.
- In verse 8, Paul goes on to say that the "rulers of this age" made a grave mistake when they "crucified the Lord of Glory." This allowed believers to have revelation of the things of the Spirit that the unbeliever, the "natural" man cannot discern (verse 14).

b. 1st John 1:3-7, "that which we have seen and heard we declare to you,

that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. 4 And these things we write to you that your joy may be full. 5 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

- Because of the blood of Jesus (verse 7) we have fellowship with the Father, the Son, and with each other.
- Fellowship is the Greek word *Koinonia*. *Koinonia* is to have something in common and to share the experience of it.

Lesson 9

The Victory of the Cross

I. Galatians 6:14, "But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

A. Paul could have gloried in his education, his ability to speak many languages, his religion, his Roman citizenship, his missionary journeys, the miracles performed through him, the many churches that he founded and oversaw—He gloried in the cross.

B. Paul could have gloried in the teaching of Jesus, the miracles of Jesus, the compassion of Jesus, the virgin birth of Jesus, the life of Jesus, the resurrection of Jesus—He gloried in the cross of Jesus.

C. The cross of Jesus, what was accomplished on the cross, was, and is, the foundation of all eternal life; yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

D. The cross welcomes the "good."

1. When Mother Teresa received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, she said she owed it to the cross, the sacrificial death of Jesus.

2. Martin Luther King Jr. referred to the cross of Jesus as his life source and his motivation.

E. The cross welcomes the "evil."

1. In 1st Timothy 1:15, Paul declared himself the "chief of sinners", "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

2. Romans 5:6-8, "For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

JESUS PAID IT ALL, ALL TO HIM I OWE. SIN HAD LEFT A CRIMSON STAIN; HE WASHED IT WHITE AS SNOW.

II. Victory for eternity....and NOW!

A. Romans 5:6-9, "For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 **Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.**"

1. Saved from wrath.

a. The wrath of eternal hell.

- Hell is eternal separation from God.

- Hell is tormenting.
- All people who put their faith in the finished work of Jesus on the cross are delivered from hell.

b. The wrath that comes on the world through evilness in the world.

- Romans 1:18...3:25&26, 1:18, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,” 3:25&26, “whom God set forth *as* a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, 26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”
- Romans 8:32-39, “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he who condemns? **It is Christ who died**, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written: “For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” 37 Yet **in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us**. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
- 2nd Peter 1:2-4, “Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, **having escaped the corruption that is in the world** through lust.”

B. Victory is by grace.

A. Grace

1. All that God can do because of what Christ has done.
2. What God does without our help.

B. Ephesians 2:8-10, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

C. Verse 10 of Ephesians 2 says we are “created in Christ Jesus for good works.”

1. Good “works” is not a part of our salvation.
2. Good “works” is a result of our salvation. We are not working FOR grace but BECAUSE of grace.
3. Works are a way of showing appreciation and gratitude for grace. Works are a way of saying “thank you.”
4. In Genesis, chapter 29, is the story of Jacob, Laban, Leah, and Rachel. Jacob wanted to marry Rachel (which means Female Lamb) so he made a deal with Laban, Rachel’s father. He would serve Laban for seven years and then he could marry Rachel. Laban tricked Jacob, got him drunk on his wedding night, and slipped in Leah (which means Weary), his older daughter. When Jacob woke up from his drunken state the next morning, he was very angry. He then made another deal with Laban for the one he loved: Rachel. The deal was he would receive Rachel as his wife **and then** serve another seven years.

Here’s the spiritual meaning. When we serve to receive the Lamb (Jesus, represented by Rachel), we will only get weary (Leah). When we receive the Lamb, then we will serve.

D. When we try to work for salvation, the cross has no effect on our lives.

1. 1st Corinthians 1:17, “For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of **no effect**.”
2. Galatians 2:21, “I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.”

E. Romans 8:37, “Yet in all these things we are **more than conquerors** through Him who loved us.”

1. The cross not only sets us free for heaven, the “sweet by and by”, it sets us free in time; the “nasty now and now.”
2. Life’s circumstances, evil people, etc. do not have the final say, God does.
3. Romans 10:9&10, “that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

Belief in our heart brings us into eternity, confession brings eternity to us.

4. Victory has been predetermined. Ephesians 1:7-11, “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, 9 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, 10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. 11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,”