

**Pastor Mark Driscoll, The Cross of Christ**  
*Adapted from the transcription of a message given in the UK*

I'm going to speak to you about the person of Jesus and his work on the cross. I'm not assuming that you do not know about Jesus and his work on the cross, but I think it is so important for us to continually come back to the centerpiece of all that we believe and all that we've received.

**Prayer:** *Father God, I begin by acknowledging that I have no right to proclaim your word. It is solely and utterly and totally by grace that I have any relationship with you, that I have a new nature and new heart. That I have the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. God, it is humbling and it is exceedingly joyful to be used for your kingdom purposes. So God as we open your word, it is our prayer that Jesus would be the center and sum of all that we learn and that the Holy Spirit would make that possible as we invite him to do his work in us, through us, for us, and in spite of us as we ask this in Jesus good name. AMEN.*

I'll start by reading from the amazing chapter 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 2. Paul says this. "When I came to you brothers I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaim to you the testimony about God, for I resolve to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified." The crucifixion of Jesus is the absolute centerpiece of our faith and it is absolutely in every way the centerpiece of the good news of the gospel.

What we have learned is what is terrifying to know that in history we see that it takes only three generations to lose the centrality of the gospel of Jesus Christ. That one generation believes something, the next assumes it, and the third forgets and denies it. Even in Europe after the Reformation 1517, ensuing generations assumed the truth and then had forgotten what it means to even be Christian and/or are denying it all together. We cannot assume that when we say Jesus people know who we're talking about. When we say, bible they know what it means. When we say God that they understand our definition or when we use words like cross or sin that there is any assumption that anyone has any idea what we are saying. We must be clear and teach clearly if we are to maintain multiple generations of believing and following Jesus Christ and do not allow a generation of assuming to set in because that is the inevitable, a decline toward denying what was once believed. This is particularly true about the cross of Jesus Christ, the centerpiece of the gospel.

On that point Martin Luther commentating on Galatians 2:14-20 says this. He says "The truth of the gospel is the principle article of all Christian doctrine most necessary is it that we know this article well, teach it to others," and "Beat it into their heads continually, So they we don't assume anything. So, they don't forget it, and they subsequently do not have an opportunity to deny it.

When we speak of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the great jewel of our faith with 10 aspects of the cross, we are also including his incarnation, God became a man, his sinless life, his substitutionary death, his bodily burial, and his resurrection, as well as his ascension back into heaven where Jesus is seated on the throne ruling over all tribes, languages, nations, peoples, colors, races, sexual orientations, over all times, places and circumstances as King of Kings, Lord of Lords and El Shaddai, God Almighty.

First of all, Crucifixion was created about 500 BC by the Persians, and it continued until 300 AD when it was stopped by the Roman emperor Constantine. So, for about 800 years crucifixion was practiced and it was the most horrendous mode of death. A word was actually invented to articulate the pain experienced through crucifixion that being excruciating. That word literally means from the cross.

We read in Deuteronomy 21:23 that "Cursed is every man who is hung on a tree,". On the day that Spartacus fell in battle 71 BC, 6,000 of his soldiers were captured crucified along the shoulder of a highway in one day. This was done openly and publicly. People were crucified in the equivalent of parking lots or entrances to our shopping malls and grocery stores. They literally were crucified in a public manner to humiliate them. This was such a horrible mode of death that they generally did not crucify women, but on the occasion that they did they would turn the women around so that the women actually faced the cross because no one, even in that barbarous society wanted to see the face of a crucified woman.

Deut 21:23 *"Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."* Crucifixion though rarely practiced is occasionally practiced in the modern era. Adolph Hitler had Jews crucified in Dachau. It was Nazi soldiers who crucified allied soldiers. Today crucifixion is also practiced in Sudan, and it has been practiced by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. It is rare, but it still occurs and some Christians to this day are still crucified.

Now perhaps what is most curious about crucifixion is that the cross became the most popular symbol in the history of the world identifying the heart of our Christian faith. It is told that the crucifixion was adopted as a symbol by Tertullian, one of the early church fathers, and there were early competing symbols to brand our faith. There was a fish and there was loaves and such things, a dove, and it was the cross that became the marker of the true Christian.

It is good for us to understand why the crucifixion of Jesus is good news we must move from the historical facts of the murder of Jesus to the theological significance that is revealed to us through scripture. We will do this by looking at the 10 facets of the Cross of Christ.

1. **Substitutionary Atonement**, is the central theme of Jesus death. Many liberal theologians are encouraging us to abandon substitutionary atonement altogether. They have feminist interpretations of the cross. They have Marxist interpretations of the cross, but what we need is a rigorous biblical understanding of the cross.

Substitutionary Atonement is a hill on which we must stand firm. J. I. Packer, Leon Morris, great theologians who have written extensively on the cross say that this is the issue regarding the cross of Jesus, but if we lose this, we lose the Gospel. D. A. Carson, one of the greatest New Testament scholars in the world said "If words mean anything I believe that those who have denied the substitutionary atonement have essentially lost the Christian faith."

- Isaiah 53:5. *"He was wounded for,"* that little word "for" is incredibly important. All scripture is God breathed and profitable. Even little words like *"for"* have big implications. *"He was wounded," "for" what? "Our transgressions, our sins. He was crushed for our iniquities, our sins. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace and with his stripes we are healed."*
- Romans 4:25, *"He was delivered up for our trespasses."*
- Romans 5:8, *"God shows his love for us in this while we were still sinners Christ died for us."*
- 1 Corinthians 15:3, the shortest summation of the Gospel in the New Testament *"Christ died for our sins."*
- 1 Peter 3:18, *"For Christ suffered once for sins, the righteous, for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God."*

God said in Genesis 2 *"When you sin you will die."* The wage or penalty for sin as Paul echoes *"is that sin results in death"*.

When we're talking about substitution or atonement what we're talking about is really the whole fulfillment of what was intended on the day of atonement Yom Kippur which was the great high holy day of the year and that that day was all about substitution and that the Old Testament was in many ways simply foreshadowing, anticipating, leading up to the coming of Jesus.

On Yom Kippur there was the high priest who would bring forth an animal that would act in a substitutionary way and the high priest would name the sins of the nation over that animal that was to be without blemish showing the blamelessness and sinlessness of Jesus. The high priest would confess the sins of the people and then he would slit the throat of the animal and it would twitch and it would bleed, and it would die as a substitute.

In this substitution, sin was atoned for until the coming of the Messiah (Jesus) at which time what had been done in faith was ultimately realized in the perfect substitute. God's people were waiting for their substitute and every year they sacrificed during Yom Kippur awaiting the coming of their messiah to die for their sins. But we know that God came on a mission to rescue us. He died for my sin and in so doing he paid my penalty of death and as my substitute he endured what I deserve to give me what I could not do for myself. If you lose substitution you lose any real gratitude for Jesus. So Jesus is our substitute, that's the big idea.

2. **Victor. Christ Victor**, Jesus conquered Sin, Death, Satan and demons. Colossians 2:13-15, *"And you who were dead in your trespasses,"* we were alive to sin, but we were dead to God, *"and the uncircumcision of your flesh."* However, *"God made us alive together with him having forgiven us all our trespasses"* past, present, and future *"by canceling the record of death that stood against us with its legal demands this he set aside nailing it to the cross, He disarmed all rulers and authorities"*, that's satan and demons, *"and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in him"*, that Jesus Christ the promised seed was made Genesis 3:15 would come and he would put a boot to the head of satan. It looked in every way as though Jesus was defeated and satan had conquered him. *"But thanks be to God, who gives us the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"* 1 Cor 15:57

Martin Luther liked to meditate on Isaiah 45:15 which says *"Surely, you are a God who hides."* God hid victory in defeat because God is humble and because satan is proud he didn't see it. What happened on the cross is that our sins, the sins that satan and demons rightly have against us. They rightly consider us conquered foes. In sinning we have aligned ourselves with satan. One of the great tragedies of modern liberalism is the denial of the supernatural and the denial of the demonic. One of the great tragedies of pop spirituality is you are told that being spiritual is good and spirit is synonym for demon. If it's not the Holy Spirit or an angel (not a fallen angel) then it's satan and/or a demon. It's not good to be spiritual, but satan came to disarm the spirits. Jesus came to crush evil spirits.

You must not be embarrassed to tell people that there is a real satan and there are real demons and there is a real spiritual war and they are really at work in the world and their work includes Revelation 12:10 says *"Accusing people,"* particularly in the third person. You are a loser, you are a failure, you should die, you are not forgiven, you are not a real Christian, you should kill yourself. Satan loves to accuse the children of God Revelation 12:10 says and he accuses them day or night. There are people who are haunted and you can tell it's satan and demons and also negative self-talk in 1<sup>st</sup> person I am ..

this may well be demonic accusation. It's not them talking to themselves. They're not always bipolar, paranoid, schizophrenic and/or multiple personality. They may well be under attack by a real enemy who really is speaking to them, really is accusing them, really is condemning them, really is haunting them with past sin, really is causing them to doubt the sufficiency of Jesus Christ. As the father of lies he keeps keeps lying to them and is one who loves death and wants to kill them.

When Jesus went to the cross, he paid the penalty for our sins and in so doing canceled any right that satan demons have toward the children of God which is wonderful so now Jesus victory is our victory and Jesus conquering of our enemy is the victory.

The language here is taken from antiquity that when two kings would go to war and they would collide when one king conquered the other he would disarm the king and all of his soldiers, strip them naked, chain them together and then drag them back into his kingdom and the king would ride up front and the whole nation would declare a holiday and they would gather around to celebrate the victory of the king and the conquering of their enemy and the defeat of their foe and the liberation of their lives and they would celebrate as a national holiday and following the king and following the victorious soldiers and warriors were all the defeated foes and last to be drug into town was the defeated king. In Colossians 2:15, that satan has been defeated by Jesus, that he and demons have been disarmed by Jesus and that through Jesus Christ there is victory over satan and demons, for the children of God.

- 3. Redemption. Jesus is our redemption.** *Titus 2:13 and 14 ... "our great God and savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who were zealous for good works."* Jesus is our redeemer. This comes from the Exodus not Roman paganism slave market of sin reference as commonly referred to. If you want to study this do a word study on redeemer, redemption, redeem, just take it from Genesis forward. It keeps continually, dozens of times going back to the Exodus where God's people are in slavery. They have been for more than 400 years. They're ruled over by a cruel taskmaster who despises them and disrespects them and disregards them. Then, the real God shows up just absolutely destroys the Pharaoh and then liberates his children to be free to worship him, that's redemption.

You're a slave to sin, you're a slave to death, and there's no way you could possibly escape. Jesus went to the cross and there He conquered satan, sin and death and just like the children of Israel ran out of Egypt to go worship God led by Miriam singing with songs of gladness and redemption. So we, likewise, the children of God are freed by the cross of Jesus to be liberated from sin, addiction, compulsion, idolatry, selfishness, whatever they are enslaved to they are liberated through the cross of Jesus to run free and live new lives and have joy and sing songs and worship God together as his people.

- 4. New Covenant Sacrifice.** 1 Peter 1:18 and 19, "You were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers." that's a good definition of tradition. "not with perishable things such as silver or gold, with the precious blood of Christ like that of a lamb without blemish or spot." Blood is something that is spoken of continually in the bible. More than 450 times the bible speaks of blood. Almost every time the bible speaks of blood it does so in conjunction with death.

Who was the first person to shed blood in the bible? God. Adam and Eve sinned and God slaughtered to cover their sin. The slaughter and the bloodshed is always to cover the sin. From that point forward it is a bloody book. Noah gets off the ark and the first thing he does offers a sacrifice. Why? Because he knows that he's a sinner. He knows that he should have died in the flood. He knows that apart from God's grace he, too, should have perished.

Genesis 6, Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord and then it says he was a righteous man. Noah was saved by imputed righteousness just like you and I. He found grace in the eyes of the Lord so as soon as he gets off of the boat after the flood he offers a sacrifice saying "I should have died too, God should have shed my blood. I'm just as sinful as everyone who died," and then he proves it by getting naked and passing out drunk in his tent.

That is how the Old Testament works and then we get to the New Covenant, foretold by Jeremiah, and described by Paul in the New Testament. They distinguish Old Covenant and New Covenant. Old Covenant is foreshadowing. New Covenant is fulfillment. All of a sudden, the New Covenant in Hebrews is almost entirely written on these points: We don't need a priest. Who do we have? We got Jesus. We don't need a temple to be God's presence. What do we have? Jesus. We don't need a lamb, we have Jesus. "Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world," John the Baptizer says.

When Jesus went to the cross and he declared in John 16:30 "It is finished," all of the work of the New Covenant was completed and that was the final bloodshed that was necessary for the remission of sin.

In real life when someone is deeply hurt or betrayed, they often say "I want blood." The response should be, "you've already gotten your blood." Jesus died for our sins. You've already gotten your blood so now you treat them the way Jesus treats you with grace, forgiveness and redemption. That's the gospel, that's Jesus, and there are people who love justice and they want blood, and we tell them, you know what, you get it at the cross. You'll get your blood. Jesus shed his blood. You get your blood.

5. **Jesus is our justification.** Galatians 2:16 says it this way. "A person is not justified by works of the law, that is rule keeping, that is religion, that is making a list of good things to do and bad things not to do, but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus in order to be justified by faith of Christ and not by works of the law because by works of the law no one will be justified." Here's the point God is holy. The imagery here is that God is judge, which he is, and that God is holy and righteous and good and we are sinful, fallen, evil, depraved, corrupt and bad and how could we possibly stand before God and have him declare us righteous so that we might enter into his eternal presence. There is no way that God could just simply overlook our sin and still be just. Some say why couldn't God let all people go to heaven? My point is simply he would not be God, he would not be good, he would be Satan and once we got there we would all complain because it would look a lot like earth, just sin and death, and none of us would say thank you Lord for letting us all in.

In Exodus 34 which is the most commonly quoted verse of scripture in all of the scriptures "the Lord is slow to anger, abounding in love, mercy, faithfulness, compassion, but he does not leave the guilty unpunished." God's heart is love, grace, patience, mercy, forgiveness, but he has to deal with sinners because he's just and we are guilty and to maintain his goodness he must contend with our wickedness. The question of justification this is the issue of the Protestant reformation is how in the world can we stand before God.

Jesus says "Be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect." So the standard is perfection. This is in your thoughts, words and deeds, your motives, your intents. It includes sins of omission where you didn't do the thing you were supposed to and commission where you did the thing you weren't supposed to do. Jesus says it goes all the way down to the heart where lust counts as adultery and anger counts as murder. We stand before God. He knows, sees, judges all justly. How in the world can we become righteous? Now here's the truth. We were made in the image and likeness of God. We were made for righteousness. We desire righteousness and we can't live without righteousness so we pursue righteousness through religion what Paul calls the works of the law.

Paul in Philippians 3 says "I was very religious, Hebrew of Hebrews circumcised on the eighth day, tribe of Benjamin as to the law, faultless," has to zeal persecuting the church and then he says in Philippians 3:8 "All this I consider," what? "Rubbish."

Religion is our attempt to be a good person so that we can have righteousness and God is not impressed. God is not pleased with religion. God hates religion. God despises religion. And I tell you this because, if you only call sinners to repent of their sin, and you don't call religious people to repent of their righteousness, you'll have a church that has no knowledge of the cross.

Because what happens is, when you call sinners to repentance, religious people like to stand off to the side and say, "Yes, those people are very sinful, they're not righteous as we are." When you then turn around to tell religious people to repent of their righteousness, you're calling them all to the cross. All to the cross. And the problem with the truncated gospel is, Jesus died for sinners, yes. And the worst sinners, the guys who murdered him, are the religious people who believe that righteousness is obtained through human effort and works.

So let me tell you this, when you preach the cross, don't just call sinners to repentance; call religious people to repent of their religious righteousness, and see if they don't crucify you, too.

That righteousness is gift righteousness. It comes from Jesus. It's a gift. This is what he says in 2 Corinthians 5:21: "God made him who knew no sin to become sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." Martin Luther calls this "the great exchange." Jesus went to the cross, took all my sin. Luther goes further than most theologians and says, "He actually became the most defiled, despicable, disgusting, depraved thing in all creation. And he gives to me his righteousness, the great exchange." My death for his life, my sin for his holiness, my condemnation for his salvation, my separation from the Father for his intimacy with the Father.

Paul says in Philippians 3, in that great section, he says, "And I have obtained a righteousness that comes only through faith in Christ." Let me tell you what's so wonderful about this righteousness. There's so much, but two things I'll say. One, that righteousness is imputed and imparted. Imputed righteousness is your forensic legal standing, right? And the question is, when you stand before God, what will be on your resume? God looks at you and says, "Tell Me why you are to be declared righteous." Paul says, "I used to have a long resume, I was very religious. And now, it has two words: Jesus Christ." That's what's on my resume.

I stand before the Father, He says, "Okay. Declare to me the source of your righteousness." Jesus Christ. That's it. I trust him, finished work, I got a great gift, I'm taken care of. That's imputed righteousness.

But in addition to that, there's imparted righteousness. And this closes what we'll call "the Gospel gap." The incomplete Gospel is, "Receive Jesus, and then you get to die and go to heaven." It misses life! But if you believe in imparted righteousness, it's for life. Here's what imparted righteousness brings: New heart. New nature. Do you know what that new heart, that new nature, has? New desires. Desires for obedience and holiness and Jesus and Scripture, repentance and

the Holy Spirit and ministry. New heart, new nature, that's the essence of the New Covenant, Jeremiah says. New heart, new nature. And with that comes new desires, and with that comes new gifts to do ministry. Spiritual gifts. This is all the work of the Holy Spirit. The source of imparted righteousness is the Holy Spirit.

So, new nature, new desires, new gifts. Not only that, new power through the Holy Spirit. To live a new life, with new instruction through the divinely inspired Scriptures, with a new community as God's people, the church; with a new source of joy, a new source of purpose, and a new source of power. The result is that imparted righteousness allows the most exciting, passionate, fulfilling, thrilling, joyful life that is possible for any human being on the earth. And if you just say, "Get your imputed righteousness and go to heaven," you miss the imparted righteousness, you miss the joyful, obedient, fruitful, faithful life doing ministry with, for, by, like, through Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

That is imparted righteousness. Theologically, we call it regeneration. We say, "Jesus is my righteousness," we mean all of that. Justification and regeneration. Imputed righteousness and imparted righteousness. Justified before God, whole new life with passion and joy and purpose through the Holy Spirit; and a day when I get to stand before God and be declared righteous because of the finished work of Christ, for a life that continues forever with Him.

6. **Propitiation.** Jesus is our propitiation. This word appears four times in the Greek New Testament. Most translations don't include it, they say, "People don't know what the word propitiation means, so we'll put in other words, like 'sacrifice of atonement.'" People don't know what that word means either, so I don't think it helps. Use the word, it's a good word. 1 John 4:10 is one example: "This is love, not that we have loved God." not that we went first, not that we initiated, "but that God has loved us." How do we know that? "And sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Propitiation IS how a loving God demonstrates His love!" ! We know God loves us, because He propitiated our sin. You're all looking at me like, "Er?" Okay, here's what propitiation is: God hates sinners. You've been told, "God loves the sinner, hates the sin." No, He doesn't, Gandhi said that. Just so you know, he's on a totally different team than us. 14 times in the first 50 Psalms, God says He hates somebody. Says He hates groups, like the Nicolaitans. Hates dudes, like Esau. Hates those in Proverbs with "haughty eyes." He hates all kind of people. And someone says, "I hate the sin, I love the sinner." That's dumb, because we're, by nature, sinners. Like, "I hate the essence, sum, and total of what you are, but I really like you." What the -?! We do what we are. We have an old nature, we commit old acts of sin.

It says it in Psalm 5:5. God says, "I hate" - or it says, "You hate all who do evil." Now, let this settle. People say things like, "God doesn't hate anybody." Yes, He does. He hates tons of people. He does. And somebody will say, "That's not fair." I say, "Of course it's fair. YOU hate people. And God's far better than you, and He knows a lot more people." God hates sinners, and He hates their sin.

What happens with propitiation is that Jesus stands in our place, and the wrath of the Father is poured out on the Son. I want you to see the masculine suffering of Jesus. He is dying by suffering the wrath of God. And the wrath of God is poured out on Jesus, and it is therefore propitiated, diverted, taken away, from sinners who are in Jesus Christ. I love this. People come up to me, they say, "Pastor Mark, how could a loving God send anyone to hell?" My question is, "How could a holy God take anyone to heaven?" That's a mystery to me. Hell I get. You tried, you failed, you lose, you burn, I got it. Totally consistent. You try, you fail, you lose, you get a blessing? That's all a gift.

This is shown in the Passover, when literally the wrath of God was going to visit every home, except those who were covered, literally, by blood. Substitution. "And, as they were covered by blood, so the wrath of God passed over them." Just as we are covered by the blood of Jesus. I think it's, what, 1 Corinthians 5:7, Paul says, "Jesus Christ, our Passover lamb, has been slain." He's the blood that covers us so that the propitiating work of God is accomplished, so that the wrath of God passes over.

7. **Expiation. Jesus also is our expiation.** Do not confuse propitiation and expiation. They're both wonderful, but they're different. Propitiation is where the wrath of God is diverted from me; expiation is my cleaning from sin. And when we talk about expiation, here's what we're dealing with: How many of you have not only sinned, but been sinned against?

See, the problem with incomplete Gospel - is, "If you are a sinner, confess your sins to God, and He will forgive you." I totally believe that, that's substitutionary atonement. But what if you've been sinned against? What if you've been raped? What if you've been molested? What do you do? Do you go to God and say, "God, I confess the fact that I was raped. Please forgive me for being raped." How does that gospel work?

People come to church every week; some of them will be ready to confess their sins, but some are more familiar with sins that are committed against them, and that may be the place that the Gospel begins. And here's what happens, I'll read you the verse. 1 John 1:7: "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another. And the blood of Jesus," the cross, what? "Purifies," or cleanses, us, from what? "All unrighteousness." ALL unrighteousness. Sin, in the Bible, is connected with defilement. Right? When you read the Old Testament, you hear words like "defile," "defilement,"

"ritual cleansing," "ceremonial washing," "housekeeping" - what is all of that? It's showing that sin is filthy, it's dirty, it defiles us.

There are people in the Bible who are considered defiled, they're made dirty. How do they get clean? They are working out of identity that's not what they've done, but what's been done against them, not what Jesus has done for them? It's all identity issues. I talked to ... And what happens is, people become defiled, their bodies become defiled, places become defiled.

This is a huge issue. Depression, medication, suicide, kids who cut themselves - they're all crying out for the cross. The doctrine of expiation is shown for us in the second goat on the day of Yom Kippur atonement. The first goat was the sacrificial goat, what was the second goat? Scapegoat. Sins confessed, but not slaughtered, sent free. The sin was laid on the animal, and it was taken away. Well, the sin was laid on Jesus, and on the cross, he took it away. So now we're not defined by what we've done or what's been done against us, but what Jesus has done for us on the cross. And the blood of Jesus, 1 John 1 says, "cleanses us from all our unrighteousness."

That's why, in the Bible, what color do God's people often wear? What color are the worshipers around the throne of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who was slain, back to the cross; in Revelation, those who gather around the throne, what color do the worshipers wear? White. It says, "White linen was given the bride of Christ, the church, to wear." Why? Expiation. She's clean.

This doctrine is hugely important. How many people, their whole life would change if they understood that they could be clean? They don't need to manage, deal with, deny, blame-shift sin that's been committed against them. They don't need to say things like, "I'm fine, it doesn't really bother me." They could actually accept sin that's been committed against them and understand the expiating work of Jesus.

8. **Ransom. Jesus is our ransom.** 1 Timothy 2:5 and 6 says, "There is one God, one mediator between God and men; the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom."

Jesus says this himself in Mark's gospel: "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." The concept here is more banking and commerce, that every time you sin, you accrue a debt to God. You're indebted. Sin of omission, you didn't do the right thing? There's a debt. Sin of commission, you do the wrong thing? There's a debt. You did it out of pride? There's a debt. You did it out of false motive? There's a debt. You did it out of an impure heart? There's a debt. Out of thought, word, deed? There's a debt.

The result is, you have a mountain of debt to God. How in the world are you possible going to pay your debt to God? And the concept in the Bible is, you need a mediator, someone to mediate between you and God.

To do so adequately, that person would need to be fully God and fully human. They would need to mediate the debt. Right, when you get into debt difficulty, you look for a mediator. And then that payment would need to be made. But you can't make that payment. So you would need a mediator who was both divine and human, who mediated between you and God the Father and also was willing to pay your debt. That's the concept of ransom. Our debt is to God, and Jesus is our God-man mediator, and he pays our debt.

9. **Example. Jesus is our example.** 1 Peter 2:21: "Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so you might follow in his steps." Jesus suffered and died, giving us an example. Philippians 2 says that Jesus is our example. The theological term for this is Christus Exemplar.

Jesus Christ is, was, and always will be God. Eternally, fully God, completely. And, he came into human history fully man, fully human being. Fully God, fully man. Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD declared fully God, fully man, they called it the hypostatic union. The question is, how did Jesus live his life on the earth if Jesus is to be, also, our example?

Some people say he was like Superman. It looks like he's suffering, it looks like he's being tempted, but he's really God, and he's kind of faking it. Because God can't be tempted. God can't really suffer. You read Hebrews 4:15, it says, "We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with us in our weakness." Instead, we have Jesus, and he does sympathize with us, because he's been tempted in every way, as we are, yet without sin. It's not Superman.

So how does he live his life on earth, if his life is our example? I would ask you, how does Jesus live his life on the earth, fully human and fully divine? Philippians 2:5-11 says that he set aside his rights, and he set aside the constant use of his divine attributes. Jesus didn't cease to be God.

God doesn't change, but Jesus grows up. Luke 2:42, he grows "in wisdom and stature and favor with men and God." God knows everything, but Jesus has to learn. So Jesus sets aside the divine rights and the divine, constant use of his attributes, though he still possesses them, to live according to Philippians 2:5-11, humbly, to identify with us.

So then the question is, if he's living a fully human life, as we do, how in the world is that an example for us? How did Jesus live his life? By the power of the Holy Spirit. You go back to Luke. Jesus is called "Jesus Christ," Christ means "anointed of the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit doesn't drop first in Acts 2, it drops first at - HE drops first at - the baptism of Jesus. Comes down. God the Father speaks, "This is my Son, in whom I am well pleased." There's the whole Trinity. An then Jesus is, what? Luke 4. "Led by the Spirit," into 40 days in the wilderness, for tempting and testing.

They say, "Jesus didn't teach like the other guys, he teaches as one with anointed authority." That's the Holy Spirit. Jesus does miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus heals the sick and casts out demons by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Here's a fun study. Read the book of Acts, but first read the book of Luke, and look at how the work of the Holy Spirit is a thread, right through Luke and Acts. Jesus dies for our sin, rises; in Acts 1:8, he's standing before his disciples, he says, "I'm going to leave, and you're going to keep doing the Kingdom work I was doing; but don't do it yet, first you need the Holy Spirit to come down on you, too. When you do, you be my witnesses - Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the ends of the earth," all the way to Edinboro, we're going to get all the way out there eventually. And then the most amazing thing happens, the Holy Spirit comes, and people start living Spirit-filled, Spirit-led lives, which is the life of Jesus.

The Holy Spirit led Jesus Philippians 1: "It is appointed to you not only to believe in Jesus, but suffer for his name." That Jesus was led into suffering, hardship, and death, and you will be, too.

Now in that, Hebrews 5:8 says that Jesus was "perfected through his suffering." Which means when we suffer, we must suffer like Jesus suffered: By the power of the Holy Spirit. That God would do something good in us to make us more like Jesus and more appreciative of Jesus, and God would do something through us to give the world a testimony of what it means to suffer with, like, for, by, and through Jesus, willing to pick up our cross and follow him daily.

The big omission in charismatic theology is they don't know what to do with suffering and poverty; but if you have a Spirit-filled Jesus who's our example, then even when he goes to the cross, he's still a good example for us. Even when we suffer. Don't waste your pain, your hardship, your suffering, or your death. You pay so much for it, it costs you so much, it comes at such a high expense, use it for a witness, use it for the Gospel, use it like Jesus did. Don't lament and cry, "Where's my anointing? Where's my God?" Right there! Just as He was with Jesus on the cross. Allowing God to do something in you and through you.

One pastor, he suffered under Communist rule. He had this great statement. He said, "Christians are like nails - the harder you hit us, the deeper we go." And it's understanding that, through the cross of Jesus, not only do we get salvation, but we learn how to suffer and die well for the sake of the Gospel.

- 10. Reconciliation. Jesus is our reconciliation.** One of the effects of sin is it separates people from God, and it separated people from other. Genesis 3. They sin, immediately they hide from God, they hide from one another, they cover themselves, they're in shame. Sin has the effect of destroying relationships, separating people. On this point, Ephesians 4:31 - 5:2 says this: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore, be imitators of God as dearly loved children of God; and walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us" - there's the cross - "a fragrant offering" - there's the cross - "and sacrifice to God."

Here's what happens: You will be sinned against. And the Bible says you have two options. You become bitter; or you become like Jesus. Bitterness is oftentimes not caused by the magnitude of the sin, but the proximity of the offender.

That's why Naomi changes her name to Mara, from "Sweetheart" to "Bitter," because, she says, "The Lord has made me very bitter. She loves the Lord. She didn't feel that God treated her right. She became very bitter. You can become bitter against God, you'll become bitter against your spouse, your kids, your pastor. You're most likely to become bitter against the people that you love the most.

"There's only two problems with marriage: The man, and the woman. Other than that, this is perfect." And between the man and the woman will come sin, and they'll have two choices. Bitterness, which leads to wrath, get angry; anger, ready to fight; clamor, yelling at each other; slander, talking behind one another's back; destroying the marriage.

Or Jesus. And because Jesus died for their sin, their sin need not kill their marriage. Because Jesus already died. And since Jesus died, he can take away sin, and he can reconcile sinners; both to himself, and to one another. There's a horizontal and a vertical aspect of the cross. It reconciles us to God, and it reconciles us to one another. You can't do that apart from the cross. The culture is crying out for community, and global harmony, and for peace, and for international unity, and the answer is - Jesus is the only one. We need the Prince of Peace to get shalom.

### **Summary or the 11<sup>th</sup> Aspect of the Cross**

**Jesus is our revelation.** Somebody comes up to you, says, "Who is God?" Where do you start? Start at the cross. John 1:18: "No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made Him known." Colossians 1:15, you know the great verse: "Jesus is the image of the invisible God." If you want to know who God is, look to Jesus. That's the whole point. And the centerpiece of Jesus' life is the cross. If you really want to know who God is, look at the cross. Look at the Jesus and the cross.

Here's what you see at the Cross of Christ: You see the perfect, the perfect kissing of love, and justice, and holiness, and mercy, at the cross. God is fully good, fully just, fully holy, fully loving, fully merciful, fully forgiving. You see at the cross, a God that is unlike every other religious concept of God.

"Our God is not a God who asks for blood, He offers His own." That's a great God. Our God is a God who puts Himself in our place, pours out His wrath, His justice, His holiness on Himself, and extends to us unmerited favor, undeserved love, justifies us, imputes His righteousness to us, gives us imparted righteousness with a new heart, new joy, new power, the Holy Spirit, a new life forever with Him through Jesus. No one understands anything about God apart from the cross.

I see all of the attributes of God, all of the revelation of God, all comes together at the cross of Jesus. Jesus is our substitute, our victor, our redeemer, our New Covenant sacrifice, our justifier, our propitiator, our expiation, our ransom, our example, our reconciler, and the revelation of God.

We began in 1 Corinthians 2:1-4 and will end in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. "Now I would remind you, brothers: The Gospel is continual." We must continually remind our people of it. Because if we assume it, it is not long before they deny it. So we must assume nothing. You say, "But I feel like I'm telling them all the time." Paul says, "I'm reminding you." "Brothers" - they're already Christians. "Let me remind you, brothers." Continual. Continual. Continual explanation of the cross, of the Gospel I preach to you. "Which you received," so it must be personal, this is faith, someone has to personally receive this truth. "In which you stand, and by which you are being saved." That regeneration, that filling of the gospel gap.

"If you hold fast to the word I preach to you, unless you believed in vain." It's essential, this is something you must continually believe. "For I delivered to you as of first importance." So it is, in every way, central. It's of first importance. You can't teach marriage apart from the cross. You can't teach parenting apart from the cross. You can't teach friendship apart from the cross. You can't teach work apart from the cross - you can't teach anything apart from the cross of Jesus. Because it is of first importance, that means it precedes anything else you're teaching on. And it makes sense of everything else you will teach on.

He goes on to say, "For what I received, that the Gospel is eternal" - it gets passed from one generation to the next, without any modification. Paul says to the Galatians, "If anyone changes it, they're sent from Satan, they're a demon, and they're going to hell. So don't follow them." That Christ; it's Christological, it's all about Jesus. Say the name of Jesus all the time. It's the name that's above every other name, keep telling them about Jesus.

If you use the name Jesus, your hearers will use the name Jesus. If you answer all the questions with Jesus, they'll answer all their friend's questions with Jesus. The key to evangelism is to make sure it's always, only, all about Jesus. And people will understand, that's how you answer all the questions. Jesus.

He goes on to say that it is penal: "Christ died." A penalty must be paid for sin. "For our sins," that it is substitutional. "In accordance with the Scriptures," it is biblical. "That he was buried, and on the third day, he rose, in accordance with the Scriptures." It is eschatological. It shows us our future and our eternal state, and it reminds us that this life is so exceedingly short; and that forever is a really long time.

#### **Closing prayer:**

Father God, I thank you for the Gospel of Jesus. Lord Jesus, I thank you that you are our substitute. You died in our place for our sins, you're our victor, you conquered our enemies of Satan and demons. You're our redeemer, you liberated us from sin. You're our New Covenant sacrifice, that you shed your blood in our place for our sins. That you are our justifier, that our righteousness is gifted to us from you. That you're a propitiation, that there is now no condemnation for we who are in Christ. That you're our expiation, that we are no longer seen as defiled and impure and dirty, but clothed in white.

That you are our ransom, that you have paid the great debt that we owe. That you are our example, that we can win and lose, we can suffer and enjoy, we can live and die following your example by the power of the Holy Spirit. That you are our reconciler, that we can be loved by you and love you, and that we can have loving, ongoing relationships, including marriage, with those here on the earth.

And that, Lord Jesus, we thank you so much that on the cross, we see the perfect revelation of God. We know who our God is when we look at the cross. And, Jesus, we love you, we thank you for that, and it is my prayer that you would ignite passion in my brothers and sisters through the Holy Spirit, to only and always proclaim everything in light of the cross.

I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.