

# The Complete Cross of Christ

Most everyone has seen a cross and most know that's it's a symbol of faith. Some pay no attention to the fact and merely wear it as jewelry or just as a decoration without ever thinking of the true meaning behind its simplistic design. Fashion moguls use it for a fashion design, jewelers use it for adornment, celebrities use it for a fashion statement, rock and metal bands use it for a prop, cemeteries use it for a marker and even some religious institutions use it for a decoration of righteousness. But those who are of the true faith see it much differently. To us, it's no mere design for clothing, not a piece of adornment, not a means to make a statement about our looks, no musical or theatrical prop, not a grave marker or a decorative ornament to symbolize our holiness; no it is much more than these things to us.

But too often we look at the cross wrongly even as Christians because we see it as something just for us. But the cross wasn't meant just for insiders and people of faith. The cross is meant for everyone, sinners and saints, insiders and outsiders, societal pillars and social outcasts, religious folk and pagan, the young and the old, learned and unlearned and every one of all walks of life, nationalities, races, backgrounds and cultures. Jesus died once for all, that all may be saved who put their trust in Him! Jesus often went looking to bless the saints and found them full of pride with no faith and found sinners who were humble and full of faith begging Him to receive them in their broken condition. The perfect sacrifice paid for all to be free of the wrath of God for whoever would receive it.

As we approach this Easter season, the cross is the centerpiece of our focus until Easter morning when we move from the cross to the empty grave to celebrate a risen Savior and not some dead, man-made idol formed and fashioned after man's own lustful desires. For we do not worship a dead object, we do not worship a creation of our own making, we do not worship something created but the One who stands without origin, the only One true and living God, Creator of heaven and earth and all that is within them, for we worship the living and risen Christ! Give Him praise and glory in the house this morning!

When Jesus was crucified, He was in the center with 2 others on each side. When God put the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life in the Garden of Eden, He put them in the center of the garden. When sin entered the scene it was the center of the garden just like it stemmed from God not being the center of their lives for that moment in time. Therefore God brought Jesus into the world to restore things to a right order. The seed of disobedience was sown in the center of the garden from a tree and God sowed the seed of obedience in the earth and the fruit of obedience was put back on a tree to restore righteousness, relationship and covenant with God and mankind.

I remember a day not that long ago when the cross was a symbol of power and hope. People looked to it for their strength, knowing what took place there nearly 2000 years ago. The problem is, we've grown complacent and cold. We've allowed life to distract us and take us away from the centerpiece of the one true faith. We've stopped going to the cross because we stopped seeing Christ there on the cross remembering His suffering. Instead we've replaced Christ on the cross with our own guilt and shame and we cannot look at that because it's too much to bear! We stopped carrying our own cross daily as Jesus said is required of His followers in Luke 9:23. We stopped carrying our own cross because it got too heavy. It got too heavy because we've used our own strength to carry it rather than relying on His all sufficient, enabling grace to perfect His strength in our weakness. The cross is the source of life for us through His means of death. His ultimate sacrifice paid for you to be free. The cross of Jesus Christ changed everything and brought hope in the midst of despair. How long has it been since you've been to the cross? Some won't come to the cross for shame and guilt that makes them feel unworthy of God's love and mercy. "You don't know what I've done! How could God ever love me?" Yet others refuse to embrace it because of pride thinking they don't need it. "Of course Jesus loves me enough to die for me, I'm awesome! He should die for me! I don't need forgiveness! I never do anything wrong!"

Do we really understand crucifixion? It's hard for us to imagine and grasp the reality of what takes place when someone is hung on a cross because today it is no part of our justice system or societal norm. Let me describe it to you so you understand what the most barbaric and violent means of execution ever invented is like. It's even more brutal than what is portrayed in the most graphic of scenes.

The legs are bent to a 45 degree angle; arms are not level with the horizontal beam but hanging down in such a way that within minutes of hanging there would pull all upper body joints out of sockets dislocating the wrists, elbows, shoulders and shoulder blades. The rib cage would be forced into the most unnatural position possible and make it impossible to breathe without lifting your body up. Your legs would begin to burn in minutes from holding your weight and having to continuously push up your body to breathe. Then your hips, knees and ankles would dislocate from the struggle to push up yourself to catch a breath. You would be dehydrated from being beat prior to being nailed to a cross and would sweat from working to breathe. You'd be cold from being naked, exposed to the elements and massive blood loss. Shall I go on? You'd begin to panic from suffocation and rapid heartbeat from your heart trying to push more oxygen to what blood you have left and trying to spread the blood to your body. Eventually you die from suffocation and heart failure. Jesus went over 20 hours without a drink, had faced 2 trials, 2 beatings, forced to walk everywhere He was taken, carried the heavy cross, His own means of death then strained to stay alive to fulfill everything needed to make your life complete!

We have no idea what took place when Jesus shed His blood. Faith stops where knowledge of the word ends. God said "My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge." We need to understand what took place so we can walk in the power, knowledge and authority that we have in Christ. Did you know that Jesus shed His blood 7 places?

Each place has specific meanings and significance to your life and our relationship with the Father. So let's take a journey to the cross paved in the 7 places which Jesus shed His blood. This will show you how the love of the Father is revealed in the obedience of the Son all the way to the cross.

1. **In the Garden of Gethsemane in anguish, Jesus prayed as He sweat drops of blood from being under such stress.** Jesus didn't want to face the cost but loved the Father and was obedient and submitted to the will of the Father and not His own. In **Genesis 3:17-19** Adam was cursed when he lost his willpower along with the earth and everything changed. **By the sweat of Adam's brow the fruit of disobedience was sown** but by **the blood of Jesus' brow** the fruit of obedience was sown in the garden to redeem us and buy back our willpower reversing the curse of disobedience so we don't have to be subject to sin but can rule over it!
2. **Being arrested and led out of the garden just as Adam was thrown out because of disobedience,** Jesus then was beaten up by the guards after His first trial with the Jews. (**Matthew 26:67-68, Mark 14:65**) They punched Him and beat Him bruising Him. He bled internally to redeem us from the curse of inner hurts and brokenness. **Prophesied in Isaiah 53:4-5 He took up our pain and bore our suffering... He was bruised for our iniquities... and in vs 10 it says "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise & crush Him & cause Him to suffer..."** He took all your hurt, brokenness & mess & bought your wholeness!
3. **Flogged on the whipping post in preparation for His crucifixion** reversing the curse of sickness and disease. **He purchased our healing by the stripes on His back.** (**Isaiah 53:5b, 1 Peter 2:24**) There is no sickness or disease He didn't pay for! You are already healed, just apply the purchase to your account **and be healed by His stripes and the blood!**
4. **Put a crown of thorns on His head, piercing His brow reversing the curse of poverty.** (**Gen. 3:17b-18**) Thorns and thistles were a sign of the curse of sin that took our ability to produce and be fruitful with our labors.

The blood of Jesus shed by the thorns placed on His head reversed the curse of poverty. Everything His blood touched it reversed a curse!

5. His hands were pierced with nails as they hung Him on the cross to restore our authority to bear fruit and the work of our hands. We now have authority to pray for the sick and see them recover, to produce wealth from our labors, to cast out devils and even raise the dead! He gave us the power to be a deadly weapon!
6. Pierced His feet as they nailed them to the cross as Jesus bought back our dominion to redeem where we walk and giving us power over the enemy. We can restore what the enemy has stolen from us and take authority in our homes, in the church, in our communities and the ends of the earth as Jesus gave us the authority and dominion to go! (Is. 52:7; Ro. 10:15)  
**How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Gospel!**
7. After He died the soldiers pierced His side with a spear and a sudden flow of blood and water came out as Jesus in death, gave birth to the church. He bought back our relationship and right standing with God! Just as Eve, the bride of Adam came from his side, we were birthed out of the side of Christ in His death. In a birth there is a breaking of water, a sudden flow as birth is eminent. Blood represents the blood of the new covenant being birthed out of the side of Christ revealing the heart of the Father and establishing the new covenant with all things now being fulfilled.

**So much more than just merely taking away our sins was accomplished by Christ.**

We need to take a new look at the cross and no matter how many times you've been to it, I'd like to show it to you as if it's the first time you've ever seen it. We tend to look at the cross in one of two ways: With Him on it suffering and with Him off of it having died and resurrecting 3 days later. Both are valid and good for reflection about the purpose of Christ, but what about the rest of the cross? We never think to look at the other angles of the cross which Christ served His purpose upon the tree. We tend to observe the cross only from the front, facing the cross and looking at it one dimensionally. If you look at the cross, there is a front, a back, two sides, a top, and a bottom, all of which have significance but is often overlooked. If we would take a look at these angles, we find there are answers to every problem from every walk of life and see all the ways He shed His blood. On the back of the cross we can see the stripes on the back of Christ and the blood stained spine of the cross which is where we find our healing. On the sides of the cross, we find forgiveness, sanctification, and glory in the midst of tragedy. At the top of the cross we find prosperity, will power, and cleansing of transgressions and iniquities. At the bottom we find the blood stained soil where we cast our burdens and sow our seeds, the foundation on which it stands as a symbol of Christ the solid Rock and our firm foundation, and the beginning of life.

As I heard the voice of God speaking to me at my darkest hour in my deepest despair, I began to be taken to the cross. As I get there, I look around and I see the swollen faced and beaten, bloodied, starved, thirsty, ravaged and battered body of Christ hanging on the rugged cruel beam called the cross. I walk around it and see the back where He is striped for my healing, beaten for my wholeness, bruised for my inner hurts and I turn around to look away when I see nothing but an empty chasm of who I used to be. But then I get a glimpse of a shadow of Jesus on the tree and I hear God saying the chasm may be who you were but the shadow is now who you are. I pray we never get so saved we forget to visit the cross. I know it's painful because our sin put Him up there, but our sin didn't put Him up there alone; His love for you did! I know it's hard because it reminds you of your shame, but get in the right shadow! Look past the shadow of who you were in the chasm and look at the shadow of Jesus on the tree who is the source of who you now are!

**2 Corinthians 5:17** *For if anyone be in Christ, he is a new creature; behold the old has gone, the new has come!*

**Romans 8:37-39** *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced nothing can separate us from God's love—not life or death, not angels or demons, not the present or the future, and not powers above or powers below. Nothing in all creation can separate us from God's love for us in Christ Jesus our Lord!*

**Whatever you are facing in life, take it to the cross! There is an answer for everything at the cross!** As we've taken a journey down the blood stained path to the cross just remember the heart of the Father is found in the obedience of the Son revealing the love of God displayed for you to be saved, cleansed and made whole. **If you find yourself needing an answer, follow the bloody road to Calvary and you'll find your answer at the intersection of hammer and nails!** All our brokenness, shame, defeat and mess we find ourselves in is all reversed, paid for and completed by the blood of Christ and the cross of Calvary.

On the cross every need we'd ever have was met with abundance. Every sin short of rejecting Jesus was fulfilled on the cross for past, present and future! Every victory we've ever needed was purchased and every debt we've ever owed was paid in full. He's the God of more than enough! **His amazing great love is establishing, unending, unrelenting, unquenchable, undeniable, unmatched, unthinkable, inconceivable, irrevocable, unconditional, all powerful, overwhelming and overflowing. His love is lavishing, it's ravishing, compelling, entirely sincere, expressing, reaffirming, reassuring, adopting, adaptable, incomprehensible, invincible, irreplaceable, affectionate, compassionate, infectious, audacious, all-encompassing, humbling, abounding and it's astounding. His love is unchanging, comprehensive, absolute, infinite, timeless, preeminent, predominant, unbreakable, unshakable, enrapturing, enchanting, enduring, everlasting, merciful, gracious, indescribable though I'm trying, uncontainable, illogical, unimaginable, unbelievable, indispensable, astonishing, comforting, revealing, renewing, unfailing, conquering, steadfast, abundant, patient, kind, not envious, not boastful, not proud, not dishonorable, not selfish, not easily angered, not begrudging, not delighting in evil, rejoices in the truth, it's always protecting, always trusting, always persevering and full of life.**

**I wish I had more adjectives and superlatives to talk about His love but I think you ought to take about 30 seconds and just give Him some of your own as you praise Him!**

Once you experience it, you won't forget it. You won't be able to live without it. You can't escape it, you can't out run it, you can't diminish it, you can't wear it out, you can't use it up, you can't burn it out, you can't exhaust it, you can't truly love without it, you can't ignore it and you can't get it out of your mind. Do you know Him? Have you experienced this love? Do you want it? Are you ready?