

The Effect of The Cross

by

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Purpose: The purpose for the following information relates to the reality that members of the Christian faith benefit from repetitive learning. Since Christ called us to be disciples (learners) and requires leaders to continually train others, it makes sense that we revisit our foundational belief on the necessity of The Cross. We cannot assume that those sitting in the pews have a clear understanding or even a background in scripture which informs them of the symbolic nature of what they wear around their neck, have on the cover of their Bible, stick on the back of their car, tattoo on their arm, or wear as a design on their clothing.

My intent is to provide a framework for students to easily teach/ discuss with others. This is not an exhaustive study of the Cross it is merely the beginning to a broader need for discussing the importance of what Jesus did for all mankind on The Cross.

By the End of This Lesson, students should understand the following:

- 1. The real look of sin**
- 2. The cost we incur and pass on to Jesus**
- 3. The benefit we receive as a free gift from Jesus**

The Pictorial Effect

As we consider the Cross, we cannot forget that it is a memory tool. The Cross is designed to trigger our memories regarding what sin looks like to God. While the popular images of the Crosses with Jesus on them often show a semblance of injury and a few trickles of blood this is not an accurate depiction of sin that we need.

WHAT DOES SIN LOOK LIKE TO GOD?



1. Leviticus 4—It is bloody and nasty and looks like a slaughtered animal
2. Habakkuk 1: 13—It is repulsive to God so much so that He cannot tolerate it.
3. Isaiah 64: 6—Even on our best days we are filthy as rags used for a woman's menstrual cycle

As we explain to our members the look of sin, we must remind them that the picture of sin is a collective picture, but it is also an individual picture. Our (collective sins) are on display at the Cross. WE have sinned. ALL have sinned. And our individual sin is present at the Cross. I have sinned. My sin is present at the Cross.

All of it looks like a tortured man who somehow or another survived being punched in the face, spit on, having his beard pulled out, then flogged. The flogging alone was intended to kill Him and completely ripped His back and sides apart most likely exposing bones in his back and ribs with skin open and torn. This is the picture of Jesus on the Cross to remind us of what sin looks like to God.

The Price Effect

The Cross also enacts a spiritual transaction. In short, there is a price tag for sin, but it is discussed in terms of working. For this, we must understand Romans 6: 23a, and the mathematical equation that Paul describes. A worker deserves the salary/ wage for the work he/ she has done. The daily wage which Paul describes in Romans 6 would have been the money a general would have paid to his soldiers for their work. However, one must actually see what is given. What is given is a bill instead of more resources (like money). The argument then is that sin never pays out. It only takes away. Those who sin deserve what they receive. What we receive is a debt of death.

- **What is Death?**

1. Death spiritually is the distanced relationship with God that cannot be fixed by man.
 - a. Adam, where are you (Genesis 3: 9-10)?
 - b. My God, My God why have you forsaken me (Mark 15: 34)?
2. Death causes death (See Genesis 6:3)
 - a. Mankind's days shall be limited
3. Death is exemplified by those following the ways of the world (See Ephesians 2: 1-3)
 - a. I behave as one who is dead when I disobey God and choose to gratify the cravings of the flesh over submitting to His will.

The Cross transaction pays a wage (death) to a worker (Jesus) who does not deserve the wage thereby cancelling the debt (Romans 5: 19) owed by all of mankind.

Notice, the formula! For every sin, a person owes a death. If there is no sin, there is no death owed. Jesus had no sin but received the death wage. Therefore, because He received what He did not earn He can give to us a gift that we do not deserve; eternal life (Romans 6: 23 b).

This is why we must read the entire thought of Romans 6 because it is only at verse 23 where Paul discusses wages. In verses 15-22, the thought centers on slaves who receive freedom from the servitude to sin through the sacrifice of Jesus. Paul then transitions to describe how we are not just slaves to sin; we are actually willing employees. But, because of Jesus we do not have to receive what we deserve. Fortunately, Jesus gifts us by His sacrifice and provides an avenue of escape from all that Death entails. Jesus pays the price of death and we receive the benefit of life.

The Positional Effect

The Cross also changes our position with God. Romans 8: 6-9 presents two possibilities for Man.

Carnal or Spiritual

⁶ For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. ⁷ Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. ⁸ So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹ But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

Paul argues that we are either at war (enmity against God) and have no ability to please Him or we are His because we have received the Spirit of Christ. As we all know, the only way we can receive the Spirit of Christ is to accept Him as savior. Therefore, by accepting and acquiring His blood covering for our sins, through faith, we move from enmity to His.

Enmity=position of deep-rooted hatred and anger.

The Cross changes the ability of Man to please God. This is seen in the tearing of the veil in the temple. Separation is no longer necessary and we have access because of what occurs on the Cross. Note, Romans 8: 7-8 clearly identifies that of ourselves we have no ability to fix the relationship that is broken. Without the added presence of Christ, we are eternally at war with God. Positionally this means we are on opposite sides. The actions on the Cross change our position whereby we move from adversaries to Children of God, Friends, Sons and Daughters, Inhabitants of Heaven, and a Holy Priesthood.

Conclusion: We must conclude that The Cross is much more than an emblem to be displayed by Christians and used by non-Christians for pop culture style. The most basic understanding that we must help our members to understand is that The Cross is to be used to jog our memories about the magnitude of what Jesus did for us. One might say that magnitude is the reason we must repeat the story. To simply throw it at people at the end of a sermon and not give weight to the meaning allows people to undervalue the amount of danger we were in before Christ died. Further, it cheapens the love God has for us and minimizes how far God is willing to go to save the lost. So, teach The Cross because it is at The Cross where they did not even realize that what they were doing was providing salvation through the shedding of innocent blood,