

Thankful for the Cross

Galatians 6:14

This particular epistle of Paul was written to the churches in the region of Galatia. As you read and study this letter, a common theme becomes evident. Many in the region of Galatia had been influenced by the Judaizers, those who insisted the Law must be kept, especially the practice of circumcision, along with faith in Christ in order for one to be truly saved. They believed salvation was achieved partly by faith and partly by works. They insisted that spiritual maturity was only attained through faith and personal effort.

John MacArthur summed up the attitude prevalent in Galatia. He declares there are only two types of religion in the world – one of divine accomplishment and that of human achievement. Christianity stands alone as the “religion” of divine accomplishment. (I prefer to define it as a relationship rather than a religion.) Our salvation was provided by the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, through faith in His atoning work on the cross. It is wholly an act of grace, freely given to humanity. All other religions in the world rest in human accomplishment.

As we meet for worship in November, our thoughts are being directed toward Thanksgiving. For some, the entire month is given to an attitude of thanks and praise. Over the next few weeks I want to examine some of the blessings believers have through a relationship with Christ. As we discuss the [attributes](#) associated with the cross of Christ, I want to preach on the thought: [Thankful for the Cross](#).

I. The Humility in the Cross (14) – [But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world](#). Paul reveals that in himself there is no reason for boasting. There was absolutely no goodness within him. I’m sure he remembered the man he used to be. He was a man who once sought to hinder the church and the work of God. It was the Lord who brought him out of the bondage of sin and placed him into the family of God.

- He was simply the recipient of God’s loving favor. His life had been used of God in a mighty way since that day on the Damascus road, but it was God who had made him the man he was. Paul recognized apart from the Lord he would not have been able to accomplish any of the things he had. It was the Lord who gave him the ability to preach the gospel, to endure the hardships, and reach the world.

- We live in a day of pride. It seems as if everyone wants to be recognized for their accomplishments. Some have to be bragged on and encouraged if they are to continue serving the Lord. Man is a prideful creature, but none of us would be here today were it not for the Lord.

- I have nothing to glory in of myself. I was just a sinful beggar in need of salvation when the Lord came unto me. He has made me what I am today. If there is any reason for boasting in my life, it is only in the Lord and what He has done for me! This church has achieved what it has solely in the Lord. We have not prospered because of who we are or what we've done! I pray that we will see ourselves as nothing and Jesus as everything.

II. The Identity in the Cross (14) – [But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord](#)

[Jesus Christ](#). There were many in Paul's day who refused the cross and the sacrifice of Jesus. They rejected the idea of a suffering Savior. Many were still trying to keep the law and work their way into favor with God. For many the cross was a symbol of reproach and they refused to identify with it. Paul declared the cross was his only reason of rejoicing.

- It was the cross that provided the means for salvation. It was the cross that gave him the opportunity to become a member of the family of God. The cross was the only reason for boasting in Paul. He may have suffered persecution and rejection for embracing the cross, but Paul was not ashamed. He knew it was the cross that men needed to see. It was the preaching of the cross that men needed to hear. [Rom.1:16 – For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.](#) [1 Cor.2:2 – For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.](#)

- We must boldly stand and identify with the cross of Christ today. It is there our precious Lord gave His life so we might live. It was there redemption was secured for the sins of mankind. Without the cross we would not have hope today.

- The world is in desperate need of those who will identify with the cross, those who will glory in the Savior who bled and died for the sins of the world! Men need to see Jesus and learn of Him. They don't need to see us when they come into the house of God. They don't need the gimmicks of modern religion. Men need Jesus. I am proud to identify and glory in the cross of salvation!

III. The Sanctity in the Cross (14) – [By whom the world is crucified unto me.](#)

Paul had been set free from the bondage of sin. He was delivered from the cares of this life. The world had died out unto him and he now lived life anew in Christ. Paul was no longer found in the places of the past. The life he knew before had been forsaken for service unto the Lord. He had turned his back on the man he used to be and began a new journey with the Lord.

- If we are to be what the Lord desires of us, the world must be crucified to us. We must abandon the old desires and seek the right path. It is impossible to live for God while continuing to

live among the world. Many today seek to have it both ways. They want to enjoy the pleasures of the flesh and serve the Lord at the same time. This can never be; we cannot have it both ways!

- If we are to be fruitful in our walk with Christ, the world must be forsaken. There is nothing to look back for or return unto. You will never achieve spiritual fullness seeking to remain among the world. A life lived for Jesus requires the world and the desire it brings be crucified, or put to death. God has called us to come out from among the world and be a separated people. Jesus desires and deserves those who are committed to live for Him, having forsaken the lusts of the world. Have you crucified the old, sinful desires?

IV. The Stability in the Cross (14) – [By whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.](#)

The old way had died out, and the old man was now dead also. The man Paul used to be no longer existed. He died there on the Damascus road. Paul was a man just as we are. I'm sure there were days when the flesh rose up within him. There were days when he desired the old paths. In those times, Paul had to crucify the flesh. There were times when he had to suppress the lusts of the flesh. Through the power of the cross, in the grace it affords, Paul was able to maintain his faith and walk with the Lord. [Gal.5:24 – And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.](#) [Rom.6:6 – Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.](#)

- The bodies we live in are our biggest hindrance. We often like to blame Satan and the world for our problems, but we are our biggest hindrance. If we are to be all that we should be, we must learn to crucify the lusts of the flesh. We must learn to overcome the temptations of this life. We will never be able to do that without a close walk with the Lord. [1 Cor.10:13 – There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.](#)
- There is another aspect we must consider within this text. Paul was crucified unto the world. He was no longer accepted by many who knew him before. The friends he once knew had forsaken him. Living for the Lord will not bring you the favor of men. There will be those who will reject your walk with Christ. You may be labeled a fanatic or “too religious” by some.
- We cannot expect the world to embrace the life we live. Their lives have not been transformed by the cross of Christ. They don't understand our desire to live for Him and refuse the lusts of the flesh. If you are determined to live for the Lord, you might as well expect some “friends” to abandon you! As believers, our stability is in Christ alone, not through acceptance or affirmation of others!

Conclusion: Those who do not know Christ as their Lord and Savior would not be thankful for the cross. They may accept it as a historical fact, but have not been transformed through Christ's atoning work on the cross. I am truly grateful for the cross and all it provides. Not only did our Lord provide the means of our salvation on the cross, but He also provided all we need to live in a way that pleases Him! The value of the cross cannot be overemphasized. Our relationship to Christ is the only thing we can boast of in this life.

Have you been transformed by the power of Christ? Do you know Him as your personal Savior? What are you depending on for acceptance to God and the hope of life beyond the grave? Christ alone is the means of salvation and sanctified living. Are you thankful for the cross? If not, I urge you to respond to the Lord's call today!