

The Cross of Christ – Part 12

Why do I keep putting this poster up here? It is for the following reason. If we don't operate from the bedrock foundation of the Holiness of God, the "other thanness" of God, then every single thing in spiritual pursuit thereafter will be watered down and diluted and less effective. If we don't regard God as "other than", we're not going to walk in the fear of the Lord. And the Word of God Himself, tells us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, the beginning of understanding, the beginning of wisdom; so you can't even function in the beginning of knowledge, understanding, and wisdom if you're not walking in the fear of the Lord. And you're not walking in the fear of the Lord if you're not regarding Him as Holy, as "other than". So, it's the single bedrock foundational revelation of God Himself. Only by regarding God as Holy, do we receive the progressive illumination of the magnitude of our own sin in comparison with a Holy God. If we don't receive those revelations, then when we look at that equal sign, the printout called judgment, we will constantly live, spoken or unspoken, questioning the reality of judgment, the harshness of judgment, the totality of judgment, the finality of judgment, the fairness of judgment. Same in regard to Hell—if we're not living in view, standing on the rock of the Holiness of God, we will end up (intentionally or unintentionally—overtly or covertly) watering down and diluting the meaning and revelation of Hell. We'll question its existence; we'll question its totality; we'll question its eternity; we'll question its finality; we'll question its fairness. And if we don't receive those revelations, we can't receive the revelation, at least the fullness thereof of the one remaining variable called the cross of Christ. Because if we're not walking in those revelations, we will water down and dilute the revelation of God, as Jesus, leaving the glory of Heaven, condescending to come to Earth as a man, to go to the total shame and degradation of the cross, going far beyond the whips, and thorns, and nails, and so on into that darkness. If we're not walking in the revelation of the Holiness of God, we will just say there was darkness.

But when we see God as Holy, His Son as Holy, we will know that something incredible took place in that darkness to the point of the forsakenness of the Son by the Father. And it's only those revelations that really allow us to more fully grasp and understand the incredible love and grace of God that was manifested on the cross of Christ. And that's the grace that's amazing; that's the grace that is sufficient; that's the grace that transforms. And anything less than that will leave us in self determining how impressive God is in doing that.

So when we took that journey to land at the cross, remember, we prepared to land. This is holy ground. What He did is "other than". The suffering is "other than". What took place in that darkness is "other than". Forsakenness within the Godhead Itself, is "other than". Then back to an Earthly level—the God man in the Garden. Then the sweet suffering, remember, I've defined for you several times, the key revelation for me because I used to criticize Christians as being masochistic? And then after getting saved, I got the intuitive revelation that masochism is the willful seeking of pain because of feeling unworthy of pleasure. But the self-crucifixion of the Christian, the crucified Christian life is the willing *acceptance* of pain out of devotion to a greater pleasure, the

glorification of God, the fulfilling of our very reason for having been created. Then the targeted tears—“Don’t weep for Me, weep for yourselves and your children.” The forgiving of ignorance - even to the revelation of why we forgive ignorance. Remember, ignorance is not excusable; if it were, our Lord would not have said forgive them. We are ignorant of what we ignore. So we’re fond of saying we are accountable for what we know. Well, that’s true; but that’s one side of the apparent paradox. The other side is we’re responsible constantly for knowing more. And that’s called hungering and thirsting after God. That’s called seeking His face. So whatever we remain ignorant of, we are ignoring, giving a lesser priority; and therefore, require forgiveness.

And then the paradise promised to the thief on the cross—remember, the two thieves as a model for all human beings. The one who received the revelation in the few hours on the cross started out cursing Him and then received the revelation and then says, “Lord remember me when You come in Your Kingdom.” Though, remember the mob was there saying, away with Him, crucify Him. Remember the religious authorities of the Jews were there to see that He was crucified unto death. Remember the civil authority of Rome was there to see that He was crucified unto death. And in spite of all that testimony in the circumstances, as the thief is about to die, as he’s witnessing Jesus about to die, he said “Remember me when You come in Your Kingdom.” ‘You have the power over death. You are the resurrection and the life. The grave cannot contain You, you see.’

Then we looked into, “and darkness fell”. And we looked at that as something that no man can see except by the sum of the Word of God, with the Spirit of Truth, called the Holy Spirit, bearing witness to our spirit of what took place in that darkness. Because we know that Hell is the punishment and the wages of sin and we know that the wages of sin are paid, so somehow, in that darkness, Jesus had to pay those wages. Because it didn’t take place any other time because we were witnessing; they were witnessing His body and hearing His comments. So we know that that payment didn’t take place other than in the darkness. Remember the Sherlock Holmes logic: if you list all the possibilities but one and exclude all but that one, it must be that one. And so in that darkness, somehow Jesus paid the wages for all our sin, for all time. Culminating in that incredible statement, “Why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

Now today we’ll move on into: “Woman, behold your son,” “I thirst,” and possibly get into “It is finished.” So we’ll see how we progress as we go along. John 19:26-27 – “He said to His mother, woman, behold your son. And He said to the disciple, John the beloved, behold your mother.” See, Jesus came, the Son of God, yes; but He came as the Son of Man, the seed of woman prophesied going back to early Genesis. And here we see the Son of Man in His gentleness towards His mother, caring for the emotional need of a bereaved mother on Earth watching her son be crucified. You see, that’s agape love. Think about where He has been, coming out of that darkness, just uttering, “Why hast Thou forsaken Me?”; but He’s hanging there, He is still outside of Himself, seeing a need and addressing the need other than His own need, you see. Is *that not* agape love? And in the midst of those incredible, horrible circumstances of Himself, He is seeing a need and reaching out to fill it. Imagine that! Hear Him say, Matthew 5:17 – “Do not think

that I came to abolish the law or the prophets, I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.” Well, how does this connect? Well, Exodus 20:12 – “Honor your mother and your father.” So He is fulfilling the law by honoring His mother as He’s hanging on the cross. Hear Him say, Matthew 22:30 – “For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are like angels in Heaven.” See, that’s because agape love, unconditional love, is not restricted to preconceived and predetermined Earthly relationships. So in calling upon His mother to extend her motherly love onto John as a son, and calling upon the disciple John to extend his love of his mother onto Jesus’ own mother. Get out of your predetermined Earthly relationships with your love, in other words. Hear Him pray, Matthew 5:10 – “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.” As He directs John and His own mother to have the kingdom of God be manifested on the planet Earth in its form of unconditional love, not limited to prior relationships in the flesh. Hear Him say, Matthew 10:37 – “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me”. Jesus Himself is honoring this Scripture right now by obeying the will of His *Heavenly* Father out of love for His *Heavenly* Father more than the cry of His heart as an Earthly being, the Son of Man with an *Earthly mother*. The cry of His heart would be, come off the cross and embrace His Earthly mother, but His drive is to fulfill the will of the *Heavenly* Father more than it is to fulfill the desire of the *Earthly mother*. He has no other gods before His Heavenly Father, not even His Earthly mother, as He fulfills the first commandment. “Thou shall have no other gods before Me.”

Hear Him say, Godly love, agape love is not a zero sum game. We tend to function out of what we conceive as our reservoir of love with finite limits. That causes us to ration our love; because we figure if we give more love to this one, we’ll have less love left to give to the other one. But we need to, of course, progressively let go of that Earthly model of our limited reservoir of love, that tends to be conditional, limited, based on performance, and based on Earthly roles. Instead, we’re to grow and have expansive, unguarded hearts, unrationed hearts that set our love upon people whether or not they are in predetermined Earthly relationship with us. Romans 5:5 – “the love of God has been poured out within our hearts.” See, we’re not to be limited to functioning in our own love. We’re functioning out of the infinite reservoir of the love of God; it is the love of God that is poured out within our hearts. When you limit your love to certain Earthly relationships, you’re behaving like mere men. When you pour out love, unconditionally, not performance based, and not limited to prior Earthly relationships, the love of God that’s been poured out into your heart is what’s overflowing onto the human race. When your faith is in God and His unlimited love, and not in yourself and your ability to love, then you will have no need to ration your love to only your Earthly child, Earthly brother, Earthly mother, Earthly father.

So here’s the summary revelation. *When you love God more than others, you will love others more than before.* In order to love them more, love God more than them. Part of loving God isn’t just to love God, it’s to know the love of God and then that love of God is poured out from you onto others. Because you don’t only love God, loving God is a passion for oneness. As you become one with God, you now love *like God*; and now you love what God loves, you see. And that love, then, is what overflows onto the rest of the

human race. So when we're focused on trying to love instead of seeking the face of God to know His love, what we're doing, is self determining that the best outcome would be achieved by our performance of love, as opposed to the reception and overflow of love. So it's an entirely different model. Hear Him say, Matthew 12:46-50 – "Who is My mother and who are My brothers? Behold My mother and My brothers as He points to the masses. Whoever does the will of My Father, Who is in Heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother." So Jesus is expressing again in another context not to limit your love to Earthly bloodlines; or not to limit it to your familiar relationships and familiar confines as we know that here on planet Earth. Loving others as family, doesn't mean that we love family less. In I John 2:6 – we're told to walk as He walked. So let us honor our mothers; but never stop there. We don't have to cease to honor our mothers; but we never honor our mothers above God. Romans 1:2 speaks of honoring God as God. You see, we honor God as God by drawing from His love, pouring out the agape love of God, which we progressively grow into revelation of and that transcends Earthly relationships. For we're now in the family of God and we know that God is not a respecter of persons. Acts 10:34 says – "He shows no partiality." And that's our attitude as we pour out love.

I thirst – John 19:28. He simply said, "I thirst." Psalm 22:15 renders slightly different ways and different versions; but in the New International version, it says – "My tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth." And remember, Psalm 22 is the prophetic Psalm about the crucified Christ to follow. So when your tongue sticks to the roof of your mouth, that is a sign of overwhelming thirst. So once again: foreknown, foretold, for faith. The darkness is over. He's returning from the transcendent pain of His spiritual suffering summarized in that statement of, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He can now note the significant, the overwhelming, but lesser pain of His physical suffering as He now gives utterance to that, "I thirst." That's the flesh and blood need of the Son of man. His spiritual need, as always, was communion with His Father. That's why He had to cry out in the anguish of having lost it, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" But note here that He addressed His own physical need of thirst only after meeting the emotional need of His mother and His disciple, John. Can you see the prioritization in His functioning here on the cross? And, once again, notice the gentleness of his communication. There's no harshness. He makes a gentle statement, not a demand. He's the Lord of lords, the King of kings, yet He gives no order such as 'Give Me drink.' His flesh is screaming in its need, yet the fruit of the Spirit is gentleness and self-control. What would the mind set on the flesh do? The mind set on the flesh would scream, demand, command, and grumble. But the mind set on the spirit captures the thought and commands only His own flesh not to scream while gently acknowledging the truth of His physical condition as He simply says, "I thirst."

So what's the response of the men in attendance to this gentle statement? John 19:29 – "They gave Him sour wine." Now that fulfills Psalm 69:20-21 – "I looked for comforters but I found none; they gave Me vinegar to drink." It's also a revelation of the fallen condition of the human race apart from God. Proverbs 12:10 (in the King James version) – "The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." So man, apart from God, is so wicked that even his best attempts at tender mercies carry a certain embedded cruelty. Now our

anger would tend to rise against them until we recall the earlier prayer: “Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.” Now look at the humility involved. If you want to see humility, look at this. John 1:3 describing Jesus – “All things came into being by Him and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.” He has suppressed all of the power available to Him as the Son of God in order to complete His task as the Son of man. Now can you picture greater humility than hearing the creator of all water saying, “I thirst”? Why does He endure this? You see, He has a physical thirst, true enough, but He has the greater spiritual thirst. John 4:34 – “My meat (that is to say my very sustenance) is to do the will of Him Who sent Me and to accomplish His work.” The sustenance of Jesus is to do the will of the Father. Thus, He accepts the physical thirst in order to accomplish the greater thirst, which is to do the will of the Father, to complete His mission, to redeem the human race. His greater thirst is for the lost. I came to seek and to save that which was lost. See, He thirsts for us to be with Him for all eternity. He thirsts physically because He thirsts spiritually to complete His mission to take away the sins of the world. So remember, whatever is occurring in the physical realm is simply pointing to the greater truth of what’s occurring in the spirit realm.

Recall Luke 16:24 when Jesus told the story of the rich man and the poor man Lazarus, who now goes to Abraham’s bosom after death; and calling out from Hades the rich man said, “Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.” See, as I interpret Scripture, this isn’t even the lake of fire; this isn’t even Hell yet. This is heading to, for unbelievers, but even here, one drop of water to cool his tongue is his agonized cry. Now call to mind that that agonizing thirst is the plight of what sin merits being paid, and what man, standing alone before a Holy God, will merit. Then call to mind that Jesus paid that price. And then understand that this is not an ordinary thirst that Jesus has. He speaks simply and gently, “I thirst.” But don’t think that you can grasp the degree and the horror of His thirst from the gentleness of the statement. Don’t think that He thirsted less than the rich man who did not help the poor man, Lazarus; and the rich man now in Hades is crying out in the agony of the flames wanting just a drop of water to relieve his torment. So how could you think that Jesus, in His agony on the cross, paying the price for all sins for all men for all time, had less thirst than the rich man in Hades? Then know that if Jesus had not so thirsted, then every one of us would have thirsted afar off from God with an impassable gulf between us and our unrighteousness compared to the righteousness of a Holy God. Our sinful tongues would have burned forever with unquenchable thirst, had not His tongue been so tormented in our place. Remember, when I spoke of, “Why hast Thou forsaken me?” Why did He say it? He said it so that we never have to. Likewise, why did He say, “I thirst”? As always through the cross, it’s so that we never have to. That we never have to experience that eternal thirst associated with the torment of Hell forever. The focus on the spiritual struggle had taken priority; but now the physical suffering which had been heretofore pushed aside is now given expression. The spiritual struggle is past, so He can now acknowledge the reality of the physical suffering of the Son of Man. You see, this is One Who understands our circumstance in the flesh. This is a mediator that we can trust. The Son of God had to become the Son of Man to say, in the flesh, “I thirst.” But once, again, let us not think

that because of an expression that describes a physical condition, that that physical condition is the greater revelation of what's taking place here on the cross of Christ.

Now look a little closer at the response of man to give Him vinegar. According to modern thought, man is a noble creature, struggling mightily to improve himself. That's why there are thousands of self improvement books. The tendency is to exalt man instead of God and to say that except for adverse circumstances, man would be a fine and noble creature loving to the fullest. But that is not the picture of man given by the Bible. There man is a fallen creature, functioning in his self determination, who by his own efforts can never be reconciled to God. There man is the slave of sin, a rebellious traitor to his God, functioning in self-determination, and thus, his self-centeredness. At the birth of Jesus, no room in the inn. At the death of Jesus, no water on the cross. See men left to themselves, operating out of their own natures, to one degree or another will always reject, mock, and crucify God. They do so by functioning as god, by self-determining *if* God is, and if He *is*, what He must be and what He must do. And here's a point for us, as Christians, to contemplate. Even after our salvation, how much of that do we still do? Do we honor Him by giving thanks constantly for the cross? We do to a degree. But do we attempt to satisfy Him while clinging to our residual sin and our residual lukewarmness and refusing to fulfill His passion for oneness with us? Because ultimately, He wants not one thought in our minds not to be renewed. He doesn't want one thought that exalts itself against the knowledge of God to be tolerated within our minds, you see. When we cling to the unrenewed mind, cling to our self-determination (even as Christians), in a way that's to respond to His thirst by giving Him vinegar. Because He thirsts for oneness with us, not just the union of salvation, but progressively unto unity where no part of ourselves remains outside of Himself. In a way, it's to continue to say, 'I want You as Savior, but here's another nail. I want You as Savior, but here's another thorn. I want You as Savior, but here's another whip. I want You as Savior, but here's some more vinegar to drink.' I'm not saying that to bring us condemnation because there is no condemnation in Christ. I'm saying that to give you, once again, a reminder of the revelation that He's delighted that you're His child; but He's not *satisfied* so long as you have a part of your mind that's unrenewed, you see. You'll still spend eternity with Him. No salvation lost; but we want to glorify Him to the max; we want to bring Him pleasure to the max; we want to seek and to save that which was lost and we can't do that while clinging to our residual sin.

It's amazing how fast time goes. Let's at least start with a page or two of "It is finished." John 19:30 – "It is finished." Now see, we know we can't measure the suffering of Christ by our finite reasoning. I hope we know that; but we do know that what He endured there was accepted by the Father God as adequate payment for all sin, for all men, for all time. That payment is finished. His drinking from the cup of the wrath of God the Father to complete His perfect obedience to His Father's will has been finished. He drank it full. He finished it. Why? So you never have to. It's the redundant answer through the sequence of the cross; everything that occurs there, so you never have to. All of the Old Testament types, and shadows, and prophecies, and promises about His first coming are now accomplished in Jesus. They're finished. All of the symbolic blood sacrifices of the Old Covenant Law are now finished. 'I came to fulfill the law.' He's

resisted all temptation to sin; physical death and even ultimately spiritual death, meaning forsakenness by the Father, the last and ultimate temptation to place His own self-interest above the will of the Father and above your redemption. That's why your salvation is finished. When He said, "Satan is coming before the cross, but he has nothing in Me", what He's doing is speaking prophetically, because if He takes the full wrath of the Father, while enduring the forsakenness of the Father, to pay the price for all sins, for all men, for all time, what test can exceed that test? There is no test beyond that test proving that there is no impurity in Jesus; because if any impurity were there, it would have been revealed under those circumstances; because there is nothing beyond the circumstances of the cross. Satan himself, called the accuser of the brethren, cannot successfully accuse you of a single flaw before a Holy God and lay claim to your eternal spirit. Any claim of Satan on you is finished. That's why there is no condemnation in Christ. You see Jesus has totally defeated any and all power of Satan over all believers in Him; because Satan has nothing left to accuse you of; because whatever he accuses you of has been paid for. Any hope of Satan for eternal victory is finished. Divine justice—perfectly displayed because the wages had to be paid and they were paid. Divine justice—satisfied! It's finished.

Perfect righteousness revealed; not even the pouring out of the fullness of the wrath of the Father, including the forsakenness of the Father, could make Jesus even consider disobeying the will of the Father. That perfect righteousness is what we now have. Our righteousness in Christ is finished. God may have work to do in renewing our minds; but nothing that limits His love for us; nothing that limits our eternal destiny with Him. Trying to establish our own righteousness, rather than simply receiving by grace, the righteousness of Christ is finished, or should be. The Father was perfectly honored as God. Divine love—perfectly revealed. Because what greater passion for oneness can there be than to receive the wrath of God, while enduring the forsakenness of God, to fulfill the will of God? There is no greater task; so perfect love revealed. They're finished because no greater test remains. The barrier of sin that started back with Adam that prevented the free flow of loving communion with God is finished. The doors of Heaven are now open. The closure beforehand—finished. The Holy Spirit purchased for us, the procurement of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth to indwell us to bear witness of Jesus Christ is finished. Trying to establish your own worth before a Holy God is finished; because this is the finished work of Christ, you see. And the simple math is as follows: Jesus plus anything equals nothing. Because it is His righteousness and His righteousness alone that has satisfied the wrath of God. We cannot take His righteousness plus our righteousness equals salvation. It is His righteousness and His righteous alone. So Jesus Christ's righteousness and what He did on the cross for us plus nothing equals everything. But you don't ever mix law and grace; because if you try to mix law and grace, you nullify grace; because it's either grace alone or law alone—but not both in a mixture, you see. So we pursue righteousness by being transformed by the renewing of our minds by the progressive revelation of the amazing grace of God. But that's the grace that's sufficient to transform us. We are not transformed in order to merit it; and all that is finished at the cross of Jesus Christ.

My time is up for today and we'll pick that up again next time.