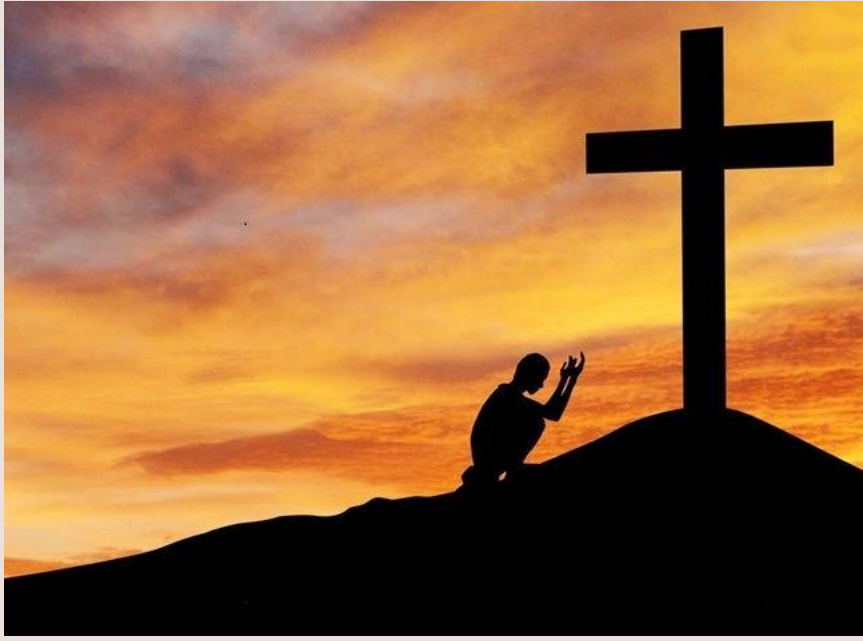


Understanding the Cross



The Love of God Expressed Through the Cross if Seen in the Right Way! Read on to Understand!

A brief explanation of the Cross and how it relates to each person today. But first, some necessary background leading up to the Cross.

God the Creator is holy both morally in His actions and thoughts and in His essence. God is a personal being and separate from His Creation. God can never do wrong or tempt someone to do wrong, James 1 v 13-15. He is unblameable in every way. The 10 commandments, Exodus chapter 20, as well as other scriptures such as Galatians 5 v 19-21 reveal his standard of holiness.

God chose to create “free willed” beings even though He knew his creation would choose to disobey and go their own way. That disobedience happened in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve around 6,000 years ago. The result was a broken relationship with God. God had to withdraw His Spirit from the hearts of Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve’s offspring were now born in a fallen state i.e. a broken relationship with the creator. King David said as he lamented his fallen condition and waywardness (Psalm 51 v 3,4) “For I acknowledge my

transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. 4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight!" (Psalm 51 v 5) "in sin did my mother conceive me!" The Apostle Paul who wrote most of the New Testament lamented in his fallen flesh, "that no good thing dwelleth in me!" (Romans 7 v 18). Paul also rejoiced that through the indwelling Holy Spirit he could mortify the fleshly desires, so all was not lost!

Contributing to that disobedience was a fallen angel named Lucifer (Satan). In God's creation of angels there was also a rebellion and a third of the angels joined with lead angel Lucifer to disobey and oppose God (Ezekiel 28 v 12-17 and Isaiah 14 v 12-16). In the Garden of Eden God had given Adam and Eve only one prohibition; not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Lucifer soon challenged Eve saying that God was lying to them about not eating of the fruit of the tree. God was holding out on them; Eve could be like a god if she did eat; gaining special wisdom and knowledge. Eve was deceived and believed Lucifer and fell with that transgression. (Genesis chapter 3)

The whole scene looks pretty bad doesn't it? Lucifer had won a major victory over the human race. The fallen condition of each person and the waywardness it brings has been a nightmare of sin and bad behaviour ever since.

But God in this hopeless situation conveyed that there was a solution to undo what had happened. A glimmer of hope was provided by God to Adam and Eve and to each of their descendants! (Genesis 3 v 15 and Genesis 49 v 10). A Messiah would be sent to undo what happened in the Garden of Eden.

You see God is both Holy and Loving. God in eternity past had already come up with a way that he could be both "just" and "loving" when his creation disobeyed. Oh the infinite wisdom of God!

When we with our behaviour just like King David in Psalm 51 v 3-5 violate God's holiness and moral boundaries we incur what is called a "debt of sin" in God's courtroom which triggers God's justice requirement. Sinful actions are firstly against God as disobedience to God's revealed moral will. By itself God has said that a debt of sin requires the person's death both physical and spiritually and separation from Him forever! That is set in stone because of who he is!

Let's digress a bit and look at what transgressions incur a "debt of sin".

Remember that God has to show us our fallen condition so we will forsake our own ways and look to the Cross.

The 10 Commandments (a covenant with Israel but the principles apply to all) and the fruit of our fallen nature in Galatians 5 v 19-21 show how in thought, word and deed we incur a “debt of sin”. One other principle is that when we practice a particular sin such as drunkenness or drug abuse as two examples, God says we become a “slave of that sin” which eventually destroys us! John 8 v 34-36.

Galatians 3 v 22-26 reads,

22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

Exodus 20 v 1-7 and 12-17 read,

3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

7 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. (basically cursing and swearing)

12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

13 Thou shalt not kill. (premeditated murder not defending your country in war or the justice system taking a life for a life taken)

14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.

15 Thou shalt not steal.

16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour (basically lying).

17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

Galatians 5 v 19-21 reads,

19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication (sex outside of marriage), uncleanness, lasciviousness (publicly parading your sin before others),

20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies (holding and teaching wrong ideas about the true God),

21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things (practice as a pattern or way of life) shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Recognizing your spiritual condition is a prerequisite to coming to the Cross. I always like the testimony of Isaiah when He saw the Lord and then saw himself!

Isaiah 6 v 1-5 reads,

1 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

5 Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

Isaiah had seen his inner self and his utter spiritual bankruptcy. He was ready to come to the Messiah who would pay for his sin in the future. And now comes the good news!

You see, there was one way that a person could be pardoned in God's courtroom for their transgressions or "debt of sin". God's character of love is displayed here! If there was a sinless perfect human who would enter his courtroom and could pay the debt of my sin, I could go free and have a restored relationship with the Creator. Another term for this payment is "substitutionary atonement". Another in love, stood in my place and took the punishment that I deserved.

This is where we think a bit deeper as to who was that person on the cross. The Bible says that the second person of the Trinity entered creation and took on a human body. God the Son entered creation, giving sight to the blind, raising the dead, casting out demons, reading people's minds and motives, stopping the weather, resisting Satan's 40 days of temptation in the wilderness, correcting the Pharisees about the Law, affirming Noah's flood, calling Israel to repentance through John the Baptist, giving spiritual light to the world of His time.

He lived a sinless life even though Lucifer and the Pharisees sought to entice Him to sin or disobey the law. Can you imagine the pressure continually put on Him?

God the Son as an innocent man had to endure a sham trial and crucifixion. Lucifer and the spiritual and political leaders of that time colluded in his death. But they had no idea that His death would actually seal their demise! You see Jesus came to pay that "debt of sin" in God's courtroom so that forgiveness and a restored relationship to God could be offered to every repentant sinner that would receive it! The greatest victory ever won had occurred on that cross. God the Father accepted that payment as fully satisfactory for the sin debt of the human race, for my sin debt! Because of who Jesus is, an infinite being, the grave could not hold Him and the third day He resurrected!

Jesus now offers forgiveness, pardon, a new spiritual life, mental and emotional freedom, a resurrection body and eternity with himself! But you must personally receive it in a state of Biblical repentance. You must agree with Him about your own personal debt of sin. This is Biblical repentance where you acknowledge that your sin is against God and by your life and behaviour you have led other people astray. Biblical repentance produces a willingness to turn from your sinful ways, agreeing to become his disciple (counting the cost), and being willing to abdicate the throne of your will to Him.

In this state of mind and attitude you trust 100 percent in that love payment on the cross as the payment for you! Upon trusting in this love payment you receive Christ's righteousness and are "born again" via the Holy Spirit. His pardon provides, forgiveness of sin (past, present and future), freedom from the power of sin and Satan, and at the resurrection freedom from

the presence of sin! Salvation also brings inner peace of mind and inner solidarity even though we are still in a world full of trials and tribulations.

You might have to ask Him to help you to get over yourself. We are all afflicted with a stubbornness and pride that greatly hinder us in coming clean before God. I had to ask him to help me repent and trust which He did.

Many will want to bypass the cross and try their own path to God. In this way they can still be boss of their own lives. Combine that with Satan offering many different paths to God to deceive people and you have a world of confusion. But the true God doesn't accept these other paths nor "turning over a new leaf" nor "trying to reform yourself" nor trying to embark on a "program of self-improvement" for these paths do not deal with the "debt of sin". Forgiveness and change comes from the cross and a spiritual birth and only the help of the Holy Spirit qualifies to produce good and acceptable spiritual fruit.

Can you imagine what was going through God the Son's mind when he was creating the world and all living things seen and unseen. He knew he would have to enter that creation as a man one day!! (Colossians 1 v 16)

Acts 20 v 21

21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 2 v 38

38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

2 Peter 3 v 5-9

5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Galatians 2 v 16

16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Isaiah 26 v 3

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

Romans 5 v 1-21

1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

13 (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

16 And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.

17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Colossians 1 v 13-22

13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;

20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: