

LIBERATED BY THE POWER OF THE CROSS

Bible Reading: Colossians 1:20-22; Galatians 2:20; 6:14

The Cross of Christ stands as a bridge between fallen man and the Holy God. To the sinner the Cross is a symbol of God's unimaginable and life-giving love, the love by which He offered up His only begotten Son for the forgiveness sin (Romans 5:8). For the believer the Cross becomes, additionally, symbol a death- death to self. If the believer is to serve in spirit and in truth, the flesh must be not be managed but put to death by crucifixion (Romans 8:13). It is in this crucified life that the believer finds dominion to live and be all that God would have him be (Romans 8:36,37).

VITAL DELIVERANCE BY CHRIST Colossians 1:20-22, Luke 1:74,75

The conclusion of Scripture concerning the fallen man is that he is '**dead in trespasses and sins**', (Eph. 2:1). The sinner is not simply a bad person, he's not just a person with weaknesses and flaws, out of which he can work his way by discipline and effort. He is dead in and as helpless against sin as the physically dead is against even a fly on his forehead. His best efforts at morality are but the decorations of a corpse and, before God, they are filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). Sin is the dungeon in which he is held captive, reserved for the final wrath of God against all ungodliness. His only hope at the freshness of life is Christ through His cross, (Colossians 2:13,14). By the power of the Cross, Christ quickens the sinner to life. He is delivered from the power of sin and its consequent judgement to live freely in God. This deliverance, although God's free gift, must be sought for or rather accepted (for it's been offered already) by repentance and faith in Christ, (Mark 1:15, Acts 3:19).

VICIOUS DEATH AT THE CROSS Gal. 6:14; 5:24

God does not intend the Cross to be only for the forgiveness of our sins but also, through it, to fashion us into the very likeness of Christ (Philippians 2:5-8). This He can only accomplish through death- death to self, death to the world and all that is not of Christ. Left on its own, the tendency of the flesh to run amok against God cannot be overstated. Only crucifixion through the power of the Cross can keep it under and bring it into subjection to God. In this light, Apostle Paul's injunction to '**mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth**' (Colossians 3:5, Romans 8:13) is not to be taken as a suggestion but an imperative for every believer. Only then can we live totally free of the hold of the world and the flesh and truly please God in everything. Without this crucifixion, we cannot truly be useful vessels to the Kingdom as God will have us be. We may be as Lazarus who although raised from the dead, '**came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin**' (John 11:44). How little use, if any at all, Lazarus would be in this state! Hence Jesus' command to '**loose him and let him go**'. Only the crucifying power of the Cross can loose us from the bounds of the flesh and let us go- free to serve the purpose of our creation and redemption (Isaiah 43:21, Romans 6:4). Let us then go back to the Cross and tarry there till it accomplishes its most blessed work in us.

VICTORY AND DOMINION AT THE CROSS Galatians 2:20; 1 Corinth. 15:42,43

The story of the believer does not end in crucifixion, just as Christ's didn't. **It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him...** (2 Timothy 2:11,12a). For the believer, there is life after the Cross and this life is the risen life that only the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit can bestow. Only those who have tasted of the brutal dealings of the Cross against the flesh can truly declare with the apostle: '**I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me**', (Galatians 2:20). When the Cross has dethroned self from the heart and enthroned Christ as its Absolute Monarch, the believer can confidently claim that '**the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me**', (John 14:30). The life after the Cross is a life of victory over sin and the world. It's a life that is not held back or limited by the tentacles of self but one of freedom to do the biddings of Heaven. It is one in which God can entrust to us the treasures of the Kingdom for He knows that, like Mary's ointment of spikenard, we'll pour it right back on Him without reservation. It is, above all, a life of victory over death itself,

for at that last day when death is swallowed up in victory, we will be able to exclaim with all other saints '**O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?** (1 Corinthians 15:55-57). Until then we can, here on earth, live in thanks God who '**giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ**'- all by the power of the Cross.