

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

They are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye mistakes can be found. So he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabible.org.

Date: March 15, 2009

Title: The Work of the Cross (fulfilled and finished)

Text: Matthew 1:18-25; Colossians 1:12-23; John 19:30

Theme: God has done for us what we could never do for ourselves.

Author: Patrick J. Griffiths ©2009

Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in **the Storyline of the Bible**. She is determined by design to have a **God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching** focused on personal **discipleship** through intentional and systematic instruction; a **Global-impacting mission** that resolves to be a **church planting church**; and a **Grace-based fellowship** where disciples are invited to live under a **reigning grace** characterized by a **Gospel-driven sanctification** that celebrates a divine **monergism** to the Christian life.

The Way of His Cross

Date: March 15, 2009
 Title: The Work of the Cross (fulfilled and finished)
 Text: Matthew 1:18-25; Colossians 1:12-23; John 19:30
Theme: God has done for us what we could never do for ourselves.

Introduction:

“Perhaps the most crucial and basic of Christian doctrines also happens to be the most neglected and overlooked. I refer to the doctrine of the cross - the saving work of Christ as enacted at Calvary. The Apostle Paul could say that he desired to know nothing except Christ and him crucified. Yet today, even in the churches, this fundamental teaching is often neglected, misunderstood or minimized.”

<http://www.billmuehlenberg.com/2009/02/21/a-review-of-the-truth-of-the-cross-by-rc-sproul/>

The Bible contains a divine record of a story written by God. It speaks of His creative activities for the purpose of declaring His glory by redeeming those who stood in rebellion against Him. This redemptive act was planned by Him and provided for the believing. **The means of securing for Himself worshippers was through incarnation and crucifixion.** “God revealed himself as merciful to humanity in the Incarnation, when he manifested himself in human flesh, and the supreme moment of that revelation was on the cross at Calvary.” “Luther’s Theology of the Cross,” Carl R. Trueman. http://www.opc.org/new_horizons/NH05/10b.html. In the incarnation, God would become flesh and in the crucifixion, life would die. In Jesus Christ, man would find the offering and the offerer. Jesus would become the priest who offers and the lamb offered. He would function in a duality of roles. It is a role only He could fulfill.

“In the Gospel of John, Jesus is concerned to point out that no one takes his life from him but that he lays it down of his own accord (John 10:18). In the end, Jesus suffers and dies because *nobody* identified with him. The people cried, “Crucify him!” One of his disciples betrayed him, another denied him, the rest forsook him and fled. He died alone, forsaken even by God.” (“On Being a Theologian of the Cross,” Gerhard Forde, <http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=320>)

Saint Paul in Galatians chapter 4 verses 3 and 4 tell the reader how “in the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.” There was a distinct time, person, and reason as to why everything happened as it did. According to Luke, “The Father has fixed [the time] by His own authority” (Acts 1:7). It is the author who writes the story.

“In [understanding] a theology of the cross it is soon apparent that we cannot ignore the fact that suffering comes about because we are at odds with God” (“On Being a Theologian of the Cross,” Gerhard Forde, <http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=320>)

It is in the cross-work of Jesus Christ whereby the Father once more cuts a permanent and eternal new covenant with His people. Here in the cutting of this new covenant God forever

brings to completion the promises and pictures of all previous covenants. When Jesus held up the bread and wine, He said, "'This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' In the same way, He took the cup also after supper, saying, '**This cup is the new covenant in My blood**; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me'" (1 Cor. 11:24, 25).

This is the "once-for-all" covenant whereby the people of God are forever placed in a position of sons.

Today's study will explore the beauty of His cross work by its foretelling and its fulfillment.

THE BIG PICTURE:

- March 1 - The Relationship of the Cross to the Hero's Work
- March 8 - The Wisdom of the Cross
- March 15 - The Work of the Cross
- March 22 - The Way of the Cross
- March 29 - The Word of the Cross
- April 5 - The Weight of the Cross
- April 12 - The Wonder of the Cross

Its Eternal Value:

Only the work of God's Hero can save us from our sins. It is His work that will cancel out the shame, fear, and guilt of our rebellion against Him. All this is ours by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

The Problem:

Our problem is the desire to work it out ourselves and not to accept what He has done in our behalf.

The power of this present shadow-land rests with its immediacy. Our moment is filled with sensual experiences which subsume the delicacy of spiritual mysteries. The strength of our feelings, our confidence in self, the pressure of our peer group and the directing force of circumstance, all shape our lives, all channel us. The power of the moment is often the master. The events of our time fill us with insecurity. Yet, we must not look at the shadows as if they are substantial. We should focus on the substance, focus on Christ. When I look at Christ, what do we see?
<http://www.lectionarystudies.com/sunday34ce.html>

The Storyline:

Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the promise. God has fulfilled all He has promised to perform in the incarnation and crucifixion of His only begotten Son. "Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua (Heb 4:8). He is another Joshua to lead the true people of God into the Promised Land." (A.T. Robertson's *Word Pictures of the New Testament* on Matthew 1:21).

Questions:

1. How did the incarnation take place based on Matthew 1:18 and 20?
2. How is the virginity of Mary stressed in the passage?
3. What two names are given Jesus, and what is the significance of each?
4. How do the meanings of His name correspond to our needs?
5. How are we to tie together the character of Christ in verses like Colossians 1:15, 16 with the work of Christ in verses like Colossians 1:13 and 14?
6. Why is the cross-work of Jesus Christ mighty to save? What is it about the offering that makes it so unique?
7. Concerning the implications of the cross, what does this mean on a practical day-to-day level?
8. On what basis are we holy, blameless, and beyond reproach?
9. If all that is stated is true, how then should we live?

The Holy Spirit is calling to us from this passage to consider three ideas.

To Know: The Holy Spirit desires for us to know Jesus and His work.

To Choose: The Holy Spirit desires for us to choose His work over your own.

To Feel: The Holy Spirit desires for us to feel the joy of resting in His finished work.

Outline:

- I. The causality of the cross – the incarnation

Here we answer the question, “Why is the cross mighty to save?” What makes this crucifixion so different than all other crucifixions before and after this one? Here we speak of what happens before the cross. Here we mark the events leading to the cross. The power of the cross lies in the active obedience of God incarnate. It is because of the One who lived and died that the cross is the power of God.

Here the passages are numerous but we will only note a handful. Our text in Matthew 1:18-25 has two dominate thoughts.

- A. His nature

He was conceived by the Holy Spirit (vv. 18, 20). There is something unique about this person which is unprecedented. Never will there be another. Nothing preceding this moment can explain this moment. In the mystery of God, the second member of the Godhead through a work of the Holy Spirit became what He created. God took upon Himself the quality of humanity in order that humanity might take on the quality of deity. Just as in divine union, the two natures are eternal separate, so also in the human union, the two natures are eternal separate.

Let it be noted that no matter how far we take this study, there is an inherent inability on the part of the finite to probe beyond simple statements. Somehow Jesus is God and man, and

because of this is capable of saving His people from their sins. He will do for them what they could never do for themselves.

Notice also His names.

B. His names

1. His name is Jesus – “Savior.”

“This shall be his great business in the world: the great errand on which he is come, viz. to make an atonement for, and to destroy, sin: deliverance from all the **power, guilt, and pollution** of sin, is the privilege of every believer in Christ Jesus. The perfection of the Gospel system is not that it makes **allowances** for sin, but that it makes an **atonement** for it: not that it **tolerates** sin, but that it **destroys** it.” ([emphasis his] *Adam Clarke’s Commentary* on Matthew 1:21).

“This is the great business of Jesus in coming and dying. It is not to save men IN their sins, but FROM their sins.” (*Albert Barnes’ New Testament Commentary* on Matthew 1:21).

He shall be called Jesus for He will save His people from their sins (v. 21). Whoever this person is, He will be a Savior who can save His people. There is something marvelous in this pronouncement. He comes as the fulfillment of a promise and a picture. We have studied this at length, but let us not grow weary in this sacred trust.

“This wonderful word touches the very heart of the mission and message of the Messiah.” (*A.T. Robertson’s Word Pictures of the New Testament* on Matthew 1:21).

“The Lord of glory is born the Son of man, and is named by God’s command, and by man’s mouth, JESUS the Savior.” (*Spurgeon’s Commentary on the New Testament* on Matthew 1:21).

We will note just how vast the cross-work of Jesus, Savior truly is in the study, but consider the following thoughts.

“He came to save from **the guilt of sin** [i.e., justification] by having shed his blood, his may be remitted or washed clean. He saves from **the power of sin** [i.e., sanctification] by bestowing the gift of the Spirit, who regenerates, comforts, and strengthens, and ultimately he saves from **the punishment of sin** [i.e., glorification] by giving us a resurrection from the dead, and an abundant entrance into the home of glory. That is no salvation at all which fails to free us from this triple bondage of sin.” ([emphasis added] *The Fourfold Gospel* on Matthew 1:21).

It is always interesting to me to note how these truths are so basic to the gospel, but so easily forgotten by those who are saved.

2. His name is Emmanuel - "God with us."

Immanuel or Emmanuel ("God [is] with us" consists of two Hebrew words: אֱל (El, meaning 'God') and עִמָּנוּ (Immānū, meaning 'with us'). It is a theophoric name used in the Bible in Isaiah 7:14 and Isaiah 8:8. It appears once in the Christian New Testament: in Matthew's quotation of Isaiah 7:14." <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immanuel>

In Christ, the very presence of God will now dwell among us. This will be unlike anything else prior to this moment. He will dwell in an unsophisticated way in our midst. He will live in your neighborhood. He will be one of us. John 1:14 tells us, "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." That which caused the Old Covenant believer to tremble and quake will become incarnate and we will behold Him.

Listen to how John describes this same idea in his letter.

¹ "What was from the beginning, **what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands**, concerning the Word of Life— ² and the life was manifested, and **we have seen** and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us— ³ what **we have seen and heard** we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:1-3).

There is an earthiness to this. God has just showed up at your work, in your home, in that most mundane and routine moment. "God is with us."

All of this prepares us for what happens at the cross. Jesus Christ was in complete submission to His Father. He never missed a beat. He did exactly what He was told both in the letter and in the spirit of the Law. It is because of who He is that what He will do will be of immeasurable consequence to those He came to seek and save (Luke 19:10).

"We must never forget that His peace is founded solely on the work of the cross, totally apart from anything whatsoever in or from us." (*Principles of Spiritual Growth*, Miles J. Stanford, "Chapter 3 - Acceptance," <http://www.pembrokebiblechapel.com/pdf/PrinciplesofSpiritualGrowth.pdf>)

Let us now note the real work of the cross and what follows as a consequence of it.

II. The consequence of the cross - the implication

Here we answer the question, "What are the consequences of this sinless sacrifice?" Here we speak of what happens after the cross. Here we mark the events flowing from the cross. The power of the cross lies in the passive obedience of God incarnate.

Here the passages are numerous but we will only note a handful.

The work of the cross accomplished by the incarnate Son of God was “a promise kept” and “a power displayed.” God promised a deliverer (Gen. 3:15) who would bring deliverance (Gen. 3:21) from mankind’s shame, fear, and guilt. And He kept His promise. What the Old Covenant foretold and pre-figured, the New Covenant features and presents. In Christ Jesus, the promise is fulfilled and finished.

The New Covenant was made by God and secured by blood. It is the work of the cross that constitutes the content of the New Covenant. The biblical record contains the consequence of the cross-work. Colossians 1 speaks of rescue (v. 13a), transfer (v. 13b), redemption (v. 14a), forgiveness (v. 14b), reconciliation (vv. 20a, 22), peace (v. 20b), holy, blameless, and beyond reproach (v. 22c). All of this falls from the gibbet on which the Son of God was slain. It is through the instrument of death that life is birthed. It is the grain of wheat in dying that brings forth a harvest of life (John 12:24). This is the paradox of the biblical cross. This is where the wisdom and the work of the cross collide. “This insight is one of the factors in [Martin] Luther's thinking that gives his theology an inner logic and coherence. Take, for example, his understanding of justification, whereby God declares the believer to be righteous in his sight, not by virtue of any intrinsic righteousness (anything that the believer has done or acquired), but on the basis of an *alien* righteousness, the righteousness of Christ that remains external to the believer. Is this not typical of the strange but wonderful logic of the God of the cross? The person who is really unrighteous, really mired in sin, is actually declared by God to be pure and righteous! Such a truth is incomprehensible to human logic, but makes perfect sense in light of the logic of the cross.” “Luther’s Theology of the Cross,” Carl R. Trueman. http://www.opc.org/new_horizons/NH05/10b.html.

Although I believe the implications of His cross-work are inexhaustible simply because of the infinite nature of the one who voluntarily and vicariously gave Himself for our sins, we will only note six implications as they are found in the Book of Colossians.

What is of equal interest to me is the nature of this passage suggests this is a hymn or creed (vv. 15-20). This is what the early church sang and professed. This should continue to motivate us in having a rich theological content to our worship service.

A. His cross-work **rescues** sinners (v. 13a)

“For **He rescued us** from the domain of darkness, . . .” (1:13a).

I have often noted how the work of saving sinners is not an enablement, but a rescue.

- It is the word used in the disciples prayer of Matthew 6:13 (cf., Luke 11:4), “[Rescue] us from evil.”
- It is the word used by our Lord’s accusers when they mocked Him and said to Him at the cross, “Let [God] rescue him now” (Matt. 27:43 – only times this word occurs in Matthew’s Gospel).
- It is the word Paul used when he groaned, “Wretched man that I am! Who will **set me free** from the body of this death?” (Rom. 7:24).

This is the name by which He is described, the Deliverer (Rom. 11:26), and the work by which He is known (1 Thess. 1:10). "Jesus will save us away from (apo) as well as out of (ex) our sins. They will be cast into oblivion and he will cover them up out of sight." (A.T. Robertson's *Word Pictures of the New Testament* on Matthew 1:21).

B. His cross-work **transfers** sinners (v. 13b)

"... and **He transferred us** to the kingdom of His beloved Son," (1:13b).

'so that, as **sin reigned in death**, even so **grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord**' (Rom. 5:21).

His cross-work removes us from the power or authority of sin and death and transfers us under the power or authority of Christ and grace (Rom. 5:21). The idea of "transfer" speaks of "being put out or removed." You were once over there now you are right here. We know the language of a "job transfer." Here the idea is that of an "authority transfer." We are no longer under the old authority of sin and death. We are now under the new authority of life and grace.

C. His cross-work **redeems** sinners (v. 14a)

"In whom we have **redemption** through his blood, . . ." (1:14a).

"being justified as a gift by His grace through the **redemption** which is in Christ Jesus;" (Rom. 3:24).

"In Him we have **redemption** through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. 1:7).

"and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal **redemption**" (Heb. 9:12).

What do we mean by "redemption?" The word is used graphically in Hebrews 11:35, "Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, **not accepting their release**, so that they might obtain a better resurrection."

"A release on payment of a ransom for slave or debtor (Heb 9:15) as the inscriptions show (Deissmann, *Light*, etc., p. 327)." (A.T. Robertson's *Word Pictures* on Colossians 1:14).

Redemption speaks of a release that is predicated or based on a payment. Redemption is a debt word. In His cross-work, He paid the sin debt that we had accumulated before the offended. This is what He did and we could never do. That which held us in bondage, our shame, our fear and our guilt, He has fully answered.

“Through His blood” is in the KJV, but absent from the NASB. This has led some to conclude, “It is likely that the reading here is not genuine; yet that we have redemption any other way than through the sacrifice of Christ, the Scriptures declare not. The same phrase is used Eph 1:7, where there is no various reading in any of the MSS., versions, or fathers.” (*Adam Clarke’s Commentary on Colossians 1:14*).

D. His cross-work **forgives** sinners (v. 14b)

“. . . even the **forgiveness** of sins” (Col. 1:14b).

What God buys back He now sends away. He casts it aside.

“The taking away of sins; all the power, guilt, and infection of sin. All sin of every kind, with all its influence and consequences.” (*Adam Clarke’s Commentary on Colossians 1:14*). Often we stagger under both the simplicity and enormity of this idea, but God has forgiven us all our transgressions.

“When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, **having forgiven us all our transgressions**” (Col. 2:13).

The forgiveness of God is possible because of His redeeming blood. Our sin is no longer there. He has fulfilled the promise to save His people from their sins.

E. His cross-work **reconciles** sinners (vv. 20, 22 [same word])

²⁰ “and through Him to **reconcile** all things to Himself, having made **peace** through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. ²¹ And although you were **formerly alienated** and **hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds**, ²² yet **He has now reconciled you** in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach” (Col. 1:20-22).

Reconciliation presupposes alienation. “Christ is the agent of reconciliation.” <http://www.lectionarystudies.com/sunday34ce.html>. Notice the words used in verse 21: alienated, hostile, and evil deeds. We were over there because of our rebellion against Him. There exists between God and man an insurmountable gulf. It is fixed, and humanly speaking, unchanging. Yet God sent His Son to be the Savior of the world whereby those who were once far off are now near. Where once there was open hostility, there is now and forever more peace.

“This double compound (apo, kata with allassô) occurs only here, verse Col 1:22; Eph 2:16, and nowhere else so far as known. **The addition of apo here is clearly for the idea of complete reconciliation.**” ([emphasis added] *A.T. Robertson’s Word Pictures on Colossians 1:20*).

F. His cross-work **justifies** sinners ([holy, blameless, and beyond reproach] v. 22c).

It is His cross-work, having been reconciled to the Father through the Son, that we are now holy, blameless, and beyond reproach. Herein sits the glorious truth of our justification before the Father. What is noted is the imputed righteousness of Christ to those who are His. It is because of who He is and what He has done that all who believe are holy, blameless, and beyond reproach. These ideas are captured in the word "justified." What does it mean to be justified? None other than to be holy, blameless, and beyond reproach. And this is because of who He is and what He has done. Remember, "Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to His cross I cling."

"Sanctification, as the fruit, is here treated of; justification, by Christ's reconciliation, as the tree, having preceded (Eph 1:4; 5:26, 27; Tit 2:14). At the same time, our sanctification is regarded here as perfect in Christ, into whom we are grafted at regeneration or conversion, and who is "made of God unto us (perfect) sanctification" (1Co 1:30; 1Pe 1:2; Jude 25)." (A.T. Robertson's *Word Pictures* on Colossians 1:22).

How profound! How stunning! How "illogical!" God in His wisdom and because of His work "declares the sinner righteous yet while a sinner." Only God can rescue the drowning, transfer the damned, redeem the indebted, forgive the despicable, reconcile the dastardly, restore the dishonorable, give peace to the destructive, and declare holy, blameless, and beyond reproach those who are defiled and deserving of damnation. How vast is this work? How unfathomable is the idea that "God would come down and love the unlovely and the unrighteous before the objects of His love have any inclination to love him or do good?" "Luther's Theology of the Cross," Carl R. Trueman. http://www.opc.org/new_horizons/NH05/10b.html

This is the work of the cross whereby God saves the sinner, rescues the rebellious, delivers the undeserving, and graces the godless. Oh may God enlarge the hearts and minds of His people in order that they might comprehend the magnitude of His work in their behalf. May blind eyes be opened and deaf ears hear so that the glory of His work would weigh heavily on His people.

Shepherding the Sheep (What's the NEXT STEP?)

1. Think about who He is and what He has done.
2. Do you know Him in the fullness of His person and work?
3. If you do not know Jesus in His cross-work, then today the Holy Spirit calls out to you to embrace Him and His work by faith and be saved.
4. If you do know Jesus in His cross-work, then rejoice and leave here thinking and speaking Him.
 - a. His people should live like they have been rescued from sin.
 - b. His people should live like they had a "life transfer."
 - c. His people should live like they have been removed from sin's power.
 - d. His people should live like they have been totally forgiven from sin's penalty.
 - e. His people should live like they are holy, blameless, and beyond reproach.

5. None of these implications are because of who you are or based on what you have done. All of it is because of who He is and what He has done. This is the wisdom and this is the work. Amen.

“Fosteria, Ohio, made news in 1986 when a local resident saw an image of Christ on the rusting side of a soybean oil storage tank. Archer Daniels Midland was suddenly on the religion page. Hundreds of cars lined Route 12 on August evenings, full of curiosity seekers waiting to sneak a peek. As one local named Jimmy noted, "It's real. The image looks like me, but I've always had long hair and a beard." With more profundity than he may have ever realized, Jimmy spoke for all of us who unwittingly like to see Christ reflecting the image of our own lives.” <http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=3105>

Rita Rachen was driving home from work along Ohio Route 12 one night in 1986 when she saw the image of Jesus with a small child on the side of an Archer Daniels Midland Company oil tank containing soybean oil. She screamed "Oh, my Lord, my God!" and nearly drove off the side of the road, but recovered enough to continue driving. **Impact:** She spread the word to other faithful, and the soybean tank became a popular pilgrimage site. (Since then, however, the oil tank has been repainted. Jesus is no longer visible.) <http://everything2.com/title/Jesus%2520sightings>

The way to reorder jumbled lives and hold meaning together in the face of chaos, however, is not to see the fullness of ourselves in Christ. It is to cherish the fullness of God dwelling in Christ. As we continue to focus on the cross of Jesus Christ let us remember that all of this is about Him. He is enough in this life and in the life to come.