

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@waukeshabile.org](mailto:pastorpat@waukeshabile.org).

**Date:** April 5, 2009 (Palm Sunday - Matt. 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-41)

**Title:** The Weight of the Cross

**Text:** Gal. 5:11; 6:12, 14, 17; Rom. 8:17, 18; 1 Pet. 1:10, 11; 5:1; Phil. 2:7-10

**Theme:** The weight of the cross is its stigmata and glory.

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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

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 Title: The Weight of the Cross  
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 Theme: The weight of the cross is its stigmata and glory.

Palm Sunday – Palm Sunday begins Passion Week. It is the one week most spoken of inside the four Gospels. Palm Sunday is recognized by the title, “Our Lord’s Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem.” Personally, I find this event significant for at least two reasons: **First**, it fulfills a promise – God is faithful. **Second**, it reveals a problem – people are fickle. Even in this event we see the inevitable weight of the cross He bears.

### **Introduction:**

The weight of the cross is its stigmata and glory. Paul’s language in Galatians is militant and fierce. It is without deviation or compromise. He speaks of the cross as a stumbling block, of producing persecution, of causing a branding. This is its weight. **Those who bear it are identified by it.** The cross alters everything it touches. Paul uses the word “brand-marks.” It is the English word **Stigmata**. “*Stigmata* is the plural of the Greek word *stigma*, a mark or brand such as might have been used for identification of an animal or slave. An individual bearing stigmata is referred to as a **stigmatic**.” It is the only time this word is used in the New Testament. It means, “A mark incised or punched (for recognition of ownership), i.e. (figuratively) scar of service.”

These two ideas are inseparable. In the economy of God suffering precedes glory and glory follows suffering. In this study we shall note both aspects of the weight of the cross.

### **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:**

The cross speaks of God’s established moderm operandi. Such thinking is woven into the very fabric of God’s story. Suffering always precedes glory. Knowing this can comfort us in the face of our own suffering whereby we become confident that glory shall follow.

### **The Problem:**

Our problem lies in our inability to see our suffering in the context of God’s one story. In the absence of this singular idea, suffering loses its meaning. Without glory,

suffering becomes unbearable. Our enablement comes from understanding the intent of God in establishing the tandem elements of suffering and glory.

### **The Storyline:**

From the very beginning God merged into His story the twin truths of suffering preceding glory. In the pattern of creation, transgression, condemnation, and redemption we have instituted the suffering-glory idea.

### **Questions:**

1. What might be considered the stigmata of the cross?
2. What might be considered the glory of the cross?
3. Are the two capable of being separated?
4. Is the stigmata of the cross something that is inevitable for the Christian?
5. How might you describe the idea of stigma for the Christian life?
6. In light of the stigmata, should the Christian hope for the glory to follow?
7. How might you describe the idea of glory for the Christian "heaven"?

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

**To Know:** The Holy Spirit desires for us to know the certainty of both suffering and glory.

**To Choose:** The Holy Spirit desires for us to choose the path of Jesus over our own thinking.

**To Feel:** The Holy Spirit desires for us to feel the joy of resting in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

### **Outline:**

#### I. The Stigmata of the Cross

The weight of the cross was sufficient to warrant our Lord's Prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will" (Matt. 26:39). The Lord understood the full weight of what He was about to do. This moment would be so severe that He would cry out, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46). There are three basic ideas I would like to consider concerning this stigma.

##### A. The stigma is normal (Acts 14:22; 1 Thess. 3:3; 2 Tim. 3:12).

As long as we live in this world, we will suffer persecution. The cross marks all who follow Jesus. There is offense in the cross. The cross broadly states, "You cannot; only Jesus can." The cross accents humanity's inability and celebrates God's sufficiency. The cross says, "You are wrong and only God is right." The cross puts an end to humanities boasting, arrogance, autonomy, and damning façade. The cross makes everyone naked, transparent, and vulnerable. The cross strips us of any residue of self-sufficiency and makes us depend only on God. This is the stigmata of the cross.

B. The stigma is cultural (John 16:33).

As long as we live in this world, the world will be antithetical to the Christian worldview.

C. The stigma is brutal (2 Cor. 11:23-28; Heb. 11:32-38).

As long as we live in this world, the world will reject, resist, and attack the Christian worldview.

What are Paul's stigmata? His marks are those left by persecution. "The stigmata of which the apostle speaks here, may be understood as implying the scars of the wounds which he had received in the work of the ministry; and that he had such scars, we may well conceive, when we know that he had been scourged, stoned, and maltreated in a variety of ways. The writer could show such scars himself, received in the same way." (*Adam Clarke's Commentary on Galatians 6:17*)

Listen carefully to Paul's listing of his stigmata.

<sup>23</sup> "Are they servants of Christ? --I speak as if insane--I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. <sup>24</sup> Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. <sup>25</sup> Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. <sup>26</sup> I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; <sup>27</sup> I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. <sup>28</sup> Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches" (2 Cor. 11:23-28).

This same truth is noted for us in Hebrews 11.

<sup>32</sup> "And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, <sup>33</sup> who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, <sup>34</sup> quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. <sup>35</sup> Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection; <sup>36</sup> and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. <sup>37</sup> They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated <sup>38</sup> (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground" (Heb. 11:32-38).

All bore the marks of His cross. Such marks are the testimony of those who stand for God and resist the conforming power of the world, the flesh, and devil. All who bear such marks choose to identify themselves with who God is and what God does rather than the usurping action of the rebellion. Why is the cross foolishness to those who perish and an obstacle to others? Remember, the cross speaks the truth about God's priority, Man's inability, and Christ's sufficiency. The cross tells us the truth about who He is and what He has done and why it was done. The natural man hates the light (John 3:19). God came unto His own and His own did not receive Him (John 1:10, 11). The church will be persecuted by the world, the flesh, and the devil because it hates God and all who are His (John 15:18).

## II. The Glory of the Cross

The idea that the believer can live peaceably in a hostile environment is always tentative. Yet with these stigmata comes glory. Paul notes how the only boasting he has is sourced solely in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the stripping away of all things but the cross, life becomes singular and simple. The New Testament writers knew that glory followed suffering. The supreme example is that of the Lord Jesus Christ, who the object of our affection and energy is. Listen carefully to the following passages and see if you cannot hear their voice.

<sup>10</sup> "As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, <sup>11</sup> seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as **He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow**" (1 Pet. 1:10, 11).

"Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and **a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed**" (1 Pet. 5:1).

<sup>7</sup> ". . . but **emptied Himself**, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> Being found in appearance as a man, **He humbled Himself** by becoming obedient to the point of death, **even death on a cross**. <sup>9</sup> For this reason also, **God highly exalted Him**, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, <sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:7-11).

As a Christian, suffering is inevitable (Acts 14:22; 1 Thess. 3:3; 2 Tim. 3:12). Yet there is glory. It is in the death that life is brought forth.

<sup>17</sup> ". . . and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, **if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him**. <sup>18</sup> For I

consider that **the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us** (Rom. 8:17, 18).

What is this glory? It is, "Not only the glory of his resurrection, ascension, exaltation, and the effusion of his Spirit; but that grand manifestation of God's infinite love to the world in causing the Gospel of his Son to be everywhere preached." (*Adam Clarke's Commentary* on 1 Peter 1:11). The glory of the cross is the consequence of the finished work (Isa. 53:10, 11; Heb. 12:2).

"But the LORD was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, **He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand. As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied;** By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities" (Isa. 53:10, 11).

"Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, **who for the joy set before Him endured the cross,** despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2).

First Peter 1:11 uses the plural of glory (i.e., glories). The magnitude of His work is truly awe-inspiring. It is impossible for us to understand significantly the scale of the glories. We can no more fathom the unplumbed depths of His cross-work, as we could possibly comprehend the bottomless quality of the resultant glories. But with the stigma comes the glory. The two are inseparably linked.

There are three basic ideas I would like to note concerning this future glory.

A. The glory is immeasurable

The glory of the cross causes the stigmata to pale in comparison. The glory is sourced in the person of God.

B. The glory is unimaginable

The glory following the suffering is unimaginable. Those who are its recipients cannot imagine what awaits them because of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

C. The glory is total

There is nothing outside of who we are that is excluded from experiencing all that He is. It is His suffering that makes the glory to follow immeasurable and unimaginable.

In the Cross of Christ I glory

John Bowring, 1825

In the cross of Christ I glory,  
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;  
All the light of sacred story  
Gathers round its head sublime.

When the woes of life o'ertake me,  
Hopes deceive, and fears annoy,  
Never shall the cross forsake me,  
Lo! it glows with peace and joy.

When the sun of bliss is beaming  
Light and love upon my way,  
From the cross the radiance streaming  
Adds more luster to the day.

Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,  
By the cross are sanctified;  
Peace is there that knows no measure,  
Joys that through all time abide.

In the cross of Christ I glory,  
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;  
All the light of sacred story  
Gathers round its head sublime.

**What sin ruins, the cross restores.** This is the glory of the cross. The cross delivers us from our self-effort and gives us His effort. The believing life, the Christian life is coming to understand who God is as a Trinity, what God has done, and who His people are because of it. May God the Holy Spirit continue to open our eyes and ears to both see His face and hear His voice in our unfolding life.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday He was affirming God's purpose for His life. Jesus submitted Himself to the one story of God. The language of His high priestly prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane suggests the story of God could have been abandoned. What agony He knew is beyond our scope. Yet He gladly accepted the joy that was placed before Him (Heb. 12:2). He embraced the one story of God. Today, no matter who you are or where you are at, you've been written into the story of God. All of the agony, all the suffering, all of the confusion is a part of the one story. What God desires for you to know is that "just as, so also." Just as there is suffering in this world, so also is there glory to follow. Be encouraged, the weight of His cross is both the stigma and its resultant glory.

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

1. Do you understand the stigma of the Christian life?
2. Do you embrace the stigma of the Christian life?
3. Do you understand the certainty of the glory to follow?
4. Do you embrace the glory to bolster you in the mist of the struggle?
5. THINK, CHOOSE, and FEEL.