

are you walking daily as a servant of Christ? Do you value and appreciate what Christ did for you when He shed His blood that you might be redeemed? Christ gave His life for you and me and all mankind; shouldn't we give our lives to Christ by becoming a new person through the blood of Christ in the death, burial, and the resurrection to a new life? **Romans 6:1-11** 1 "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? 3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old

man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin. 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. 11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 6:23 23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Two thousand years ago, Christ died on the cross; His arms are still stretched out for all mankind. Christ came to us, now we have to go to Him. That is what the cross means, life.

By Bill Davis

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Faithful Sayings

Olsen Park Church of Christ

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Vol. IX, No. 14

April 22, 2007

Services

Sunday: 9:30 a.m.
10:20 a.m.
6:00 p.m.
Wednesday: 7:00 p.m.

Elders:

Ken Ford
Charles Kelley
Pat Ledbetter

Deacons:

Dean Bowers
Eddie Cook
Bill Davis
Pat Goguen
Neil Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Fred Perez
Rusty Scott

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

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The Cross

John 3:16-17 16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Have you ever noticed that in today's style, many of us will look for anything that we think will keep us close to God or remind us of how we should live? We saw the fad of people wearing the wrist band of WWJD, which says, "What Would Jesus Do?" This was to remind us of how to live our lives and how to not act like the world. We see a lot of people today who will wear the cross around their necks as jewelry, or t-shirts with the cross on it with a verse or picture of Jesus on the cross, etc. Yet,

do we stop and consider the real meaning of the cross and the reason Christ had to suffer and die upon the cross? If one considers the significance of the cross, one might stop and take a hard look at himself. The question is, as Christians today, do we ever stop and think about what the cross really stands for? Do we consider what the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus means to each of us as Christians? How do we reflect upon what Christ has done for us and why Christ had to die on that cross? When we see a cross in pictures or read about the cross in the Bible, do we stop and think of the great price that Jesus had to pay for our sins, yet He had no sins? Do we ever think about the agony that Jesus went through before He was betrayed by Judas, beaten by the Romans, and finally

nailed on the cross? Do we ever think about these facts? Do we ever feel sorrowful or remorseful regarding His death on the cross when we partake of the Lord's Supper the first day of the week? Do we think about how His body was beaten and battered when we eat the broken bread? Do we think about the blood that He shed on the cross and what it cost Him when we drink of the fruit of the vine? When we partake of the Lord's Supper do we show our deep gratitude for Christ who died on our behalf on the cross? Let us always be mindful of the death of Christ and why he paid the highest price for all of mankind.

Now the Greek word for cross is "*stauros*", which means, "primarily an upright stake or beam which was used as an instrument for cruel punishment or for execution for criminals and those who were evil". In Christ's day, after the criminal's condemnation, it was the custom for a victim to be scourged with the whip usually made with leather thongs with iron or bone to inflict more pain or death to the criminal. In our Lord's case, this no doubt was how He was scourged by the Romans before He was forced to carry the cross beam like a slave or criminal to the scene of His torture and His death outside the city walls. As Jesus carried the cross beam, a herald carried in front of Him the title, the written accusation of why He was to die on this cruel cross. In the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John we all have read about Jesus being crucified on the cross and we all can tell it was a terrible ex-

perience for Jesus. But do we know why He had to die on the cross? Since the Garden of Eden, mankind has sinned from the beginning. Let us look in **Genesis 3** (Adam and Eve) and **Genesis 6:11** (the world in Noah's day). It seems man could not follow the laws that God had given him no matter how hard he tried. (**Exodus 20**) When God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, they constantly murmured against God and did not follow His laws and regulations. (**Exodus 16; 32**) When the children of Israel wanted a king like those countries around them, God let them have a king. They wanted a man as their king, not God. (**1 Samuel 8:6-22**) All through the history of Israel they had the laws that God had given to Moses concerning how to worship God and to live a godly life. But time after time, they rebelled against God by their stubborn and evil ways. Today, we as a people, are not different from those in the days of the children of Israel. We have the Bible, which is God's word, and we know how to worship God; yet we do the same rebellion today as they did. This brings us to the reason Jesus had to die upon that cross. A good place to begin is found in **Romans 3:23** *"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."* Each of us throughout history have sinned against God; and thus our sins have separated us from Him. (**Isaiah 59:1-2**) However, let us continue to read in **Romans 3:24-25** *24 "being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through*

faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed." It is through Christ and His sacrifice on the cross for our sins that we may have redemption. In the Old Testament, when the people would sacrifice animals, God would consider the people's faith and their obedience and this would make them ceremonially acceptable according to the Old Testament law.

You see, animal sacrifices could not take away the sins of the people, they provided only a temporary way to deal with the people's sin; that was until Jesus came to deal with man's sin permanently. In the Old Testament, the believers were following God's command to offer animal sacrifices, He graciously accepted them when, by faith they made their sacrifices. You see, by this practice they looked forward to the time when Jesus would be the perfect sacrifice for all mankind. For Christ's way is superior to the Old Testament way because the old way only pointed to the cross where Jesus would take away the sins of mankind. For Jesus to take away the sins of mankind He had to be the final sacrifice, to shed His blood so we could have life. **John 1:29** *29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"* (see also **Hebrews 9:11-15**)

One may ask, "Why does the forgiveness of our sins require the shedding of Blood?" There is no greater symbol of life than blood,

for blood keeps us alive, it is Life. (**Leviticus 17:11-14**) Jesus had to shed His blood and give His life for our sins so that we wouldn't have to experience the spiritual death and the eternal separation from God. Jesus is the true source of life, not death. Jesus gave His own life to pay our penalty of death so we would live and have eternal life. When Jesus died on the cross he brought about the removal of God's punishment for the sins of mankind through the perfect sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ. (**Romans 3:25**) His Son, Jesus Christ, paid the highest price by shedding His blood. In other words, Jesus purchased our freedom from death and the separation from God. The price He paid was His life.

So what does the cross mean to me as a Christian, "that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us?" We have been reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, Jesus Christ. You see, God sent His only Son to die for the ungodly and He demonstrated His own love for us that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us and all mankind. (**Romans 5:6-11**)

Since Christ paid this sacrifice for all mankind to give us life and not death by pointing the way to salvation for all, what should our response be? Do you believe, and are you ready to confess with your mouth that "Jesus is Lord"? (**Romans 10:9-10**) Are you willing to seek God's ways for your life through His Word and turn away from your sins? (**Acts 2:38**) Will you commit your heart and your life in service to your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ? If you are a Christian,