

GOD'S MASTERPIECE: The Cross of Christ



Fellowship Bible Church

GOD'S MASTERPIECE: The Cross of Christ

Bible Study Guide

From the leadership development ministry of

FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH MISSIONS

Acknowledgments

The lesson outlines and notes in this booklet were prepared and edited by Tim McManigle, Director of FBC Missions.

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03/31/07
Revision 1

Introduction

Indwelling sin/the flesh/self is nothing short of a wretched tyrant that gives commands and we obey. For many believers, the reality of all this has been a continuing problem over the years. We've struggled and fought, we've mourned and wept over the futility of our efforts to rid ourselves of this wretched thing. We've tried prayer and fasting only to be filled with disgust and shame over our inward desire to do wrong. We make new resolutions only to be disappointed with another failure. It seems that as time goes on, we become weaker and weaker in our struggle against sin. As the days, weeks, months and years go by, we find that we are actually a prisoner to this thing. If we were really to face facts, we would probably have to admit that for most of us, sin and self are in control of our lives.

The kind of Christian life that is set before us in the New Testament is so far above the actual experience of most Christians today, that it almost seems impossible. Yet, there it is in scripture for all to see. Every sincere Christian wants to know how to live the victorious Christian life; how can we overcome temptation and be used of the Lord in a great way? How can we find freedom from anxiety, and worry, and fear and really know that peace which passes all understanding? How can we live the kind of Christian life that we teach in our Sunday schools and preach from our pulpits? There is really only one way, and that is by gaining a full understanding of the cross. In this series of lessons, we have entitled the first section, "God's Masterpiece, the Cross of Christ", which is God's provision for man's dilemma, the self-life.

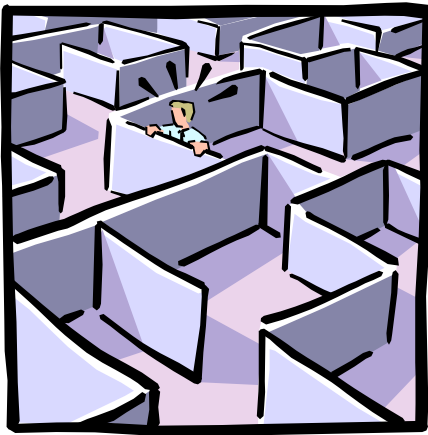
In the second half of the book, we have gone one step beyond an occupation with the cross, to an occupation with Christ. The men who produced the Westminster Confession of Faith in the seventeenth century answered the question "what is the chief end of man?" with these words; ***"Man's chief end is to glorify God & to enjoy Him forever"***

In modern day Christian circles, we don't hear much about the need to ***"be occupied with, and enjoy God"***. It is only as we turn back the pages of history that we become aware of our lack of emphasis on ***"being occupied with God"***. We find that in days gone by, there were many who were gripped by a hunger and thirst for God. This thirsting after God appears to be lacking today, and it would seem that we have lowered our goal in the Christian life to something far less than God Himself. For many of us, we have come to the conclusion that the purpose of the Christian life is to serve God as fully and effectively as possible. Techniques and methods by which we hope to make God's message known have become all important. To carry out this service, we need power, and so in place of a longing for God, our longing is for power to serve Him. So much has service become the center of our thinking that often a man's "walk with the Lord" is judged by success in his Christian work. Our service to God, falls far short of the purpose that He has designed for man, that of ***looking unto Jesus, being occupied with Christ, and enjoying Him forever.***

GOD'S MASTERPIECE THE CROSS OF CHRIST #1

"The Message of the Cross"

A. Introduction



- The New Testament is real clear on how we are to live this Christian life.
Some examples: **Eph.4: 1-2; Rom.12: 10-21**
- The kind of Christian life set before us in the New Testament is so far above the actual experience for so many of us Christians today that it almost seems impossible. Yet, there it is in scripture for all to behold; and by God's grace some have found it, and lived it, and described it in such terms as "The Spirit-filled life; the deeper life; the victorious Christian life."

- Every sincere Christian wants to know how to live the victorious Christian life; how can we overcome temptation and be used of the Lord in a great way?
- How can we find freedom from anxiety, and worry, and fear and really know that peace which passes all understanding?
- How can we live the kind of Christian life that we teach in our Sunday schools and preach from our pulpits?
- There is really only one way, and that is by gaining a full understanding of the cross.

B. A quote from T. Austin Sparks out of "The Hungry Heart" devotional.

- "It is for the lack of a complete understanding of the meaning of the cross, that so many Christians are carnal and try to live for God in their own power. This goes to the root of the continual weakness and poverty of their spiritual lives. The only answer to this is a new knowledge of the cross, not only as to sins and a life of victory over them, but as to Christ who supplants/replaces the natural man."

C. A French preacher, LaCordair, once said that we Christians are "born crucified."

- What did he mean, "**Born Crucified**"? Lord willing, that will become clearer as we go along.

D. Blindness to the true meaning of the cross

- Turn with me to **2 Cor. 3:13-15**.
- For the Jews, the message of the O.T. was a hidden mystery, and this darkness still exists when Moses is read



today. Without a prior knowledge of and faith in the crucified Christ it is vain to read the OT prophets. The deep meaning of the Psalms cannot be understood. The book of Isaiah makes no sense. David speaks a language that cannot be heard.

- The veil upon the hearts and minds of the Israelites will not be removed until they turn to Christ. **2 Cor. 3:16**
- In the same way, there appears to be a veil, which blinds the minds of Christians so that they may not look into the deeper truths of God's Word.
- For sure, we "Born Again Christians" have had a glorious sunrise when we came to know Christ, however, few of us ever come to see the full glory of the noonday sun. The reason is that there has never been, for most Christians, an **unveiling** of the **glory** of "**the cross of Christ.**"

E. God has nothing more wonderful to reveal to man than the cross

- **Rev. 5** - Think about all of the wisdom of all the angels, and combine that with everything that they have seen and heard, and give some thought to this; the angels know of no one so awesome as the "Lamb who was slain" **Rev.5: 12.**
- Notice Paul's comment in **1 Cor. 2:1,2**
- The cross/Jesus Christ crucified will stand out in eternity as "God's masterpiece."

F. Our objective for the next few weeks will be to unveil the cross of Christ.

- The central event, in all of history, is the cross. We even tell time by it.
- It is also the central event in Christianity. In the Old Testament and gospels, everything looks forward to it; after the fact, everything looks back to it.
- However, few Christians ever come to the place, spiritually, where they are able to see the full glory of the cross.
- Interesting Scripture - Phil. 3:18.

G. Examining the cross through the Scriptures

- **1 Cor. 1:17,18** - Notice that the Cross is set forth as foolishness to the unbeliever regarding salvation, and it also appears as foolishness to many Christians regarding this whole area of our co-crucifixion with Christ.
- **Col. 1:20** - Notice that it is presented as the medium of reconciliation. Not only are we reconciled to God by the cross, but also to each other - **Eph. 2:16.**
- At the cross two things happened.
 1. Jesus went to the cross alone, without us, to pay the penalty for our sins. (He was our representative)

2. He also took us with Him to the cross and there in the sight of God, we all died together with Him. **Gal. 2:20.**

- Please turn with me to **Rom. 6:6**
- Through the crucifixion of our old man with Christ we believers have been made dead unto sin. We have been completely freed from sin's power. **Rom. 6:6, 7, 14**
- **Gal. 6:14** - We are to glory in the cross. (paradox) (Notice at the cross, the world is crucified to me and I unto the world) These are just a few random thoughts re the significance of the cross.

H. The true message of the cross – The principle of death and resurrection

- All throughout the Old Testament and on into the gospels, we see little glimpses of the cross, and wherever we see it, the message is always the same. There is one consistent



principle taught, one consistent message, and that message is ***“The Principle of Death and Resurrection”***.

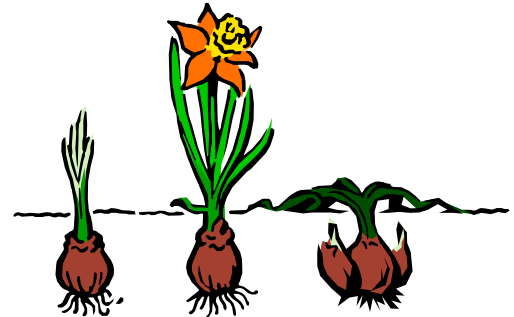
- The “principle of death and resurrection” is probably the greatest, and most needed Biblical principle taught in Scripture, and yet it seems so elusive to the greater majority of Christians.
- **Jn. 12:23-24** - In **verse 24** Jesus uses the image of a seed to illustrate this great Spiritual truth. The thought here is that ***there can be no fruitful life without death.***
- I would reckon that there are some folks here today who know a lot about gardening and seeds. In and of itself, a seed is useless; the germ of life is locked up within its hard outer shell and can't get out. Therefore, it produces nothing.
- This is the reason that many Christians are so unfruitful - (*Hard-hearted - Tough outer shell*).
- However, when a seed is buried/planted/falls into that cold, dark, wet ground and that hard exterior surface softens and decays, only then will that young sprout begin to receive nutriment and grow.
- In the same way, if our lives are to be fruitful, at some point the Holy Spirit will begin to loosen us from our comfortable surroundings. We will find ourselves dropped into a cold darkness in life that smears and injures our nice shiny outer covering; and worst of all, that outer covering begins to disintegrate and fall to pieces. All that is not Christ, no matter how nice in appearance, is revealed for what it is. Just self. ***There must be a further stripping away, right down to the germ of life; right on down until there is nothing left but Christ, who is our life. Down, down into death.***

Quote by Watchman Nee

- “The Lord graciously laid me aside once for a number of months, and put me into spiritual darkness. It was almost as if He had forsaken me, almost as if nothing was going on, and I had really come to the end of everything. And then by degrees, he brought me back again. (Resurrected me). There must be a full night in the sanctuary. It cannot be hurried. He knows what He’s doing. **Job. 13:15**

I. Life springs out of death

- **1 Cor. 15:36; 2 Cor. 7:3**
- Our greatest example is Christ Himself. **Phil. 2:5-8**
Notice again **verse 5**.
And now **verses 9-11**.
- Look with me at **2 Cor. 4:10-11**. The key to being great for God, is death; Death to self. **1 Pet. 5:5-6**



The world would have us believe that the “principle of death and resurrection” won’t work - For example:

<i>The world says:</i>	<i>God says:</i>
Be strong, fight for your rights.	Power is perfected in weakness. 2 Cor. 12:9-10
Be number 1 - Winning is the only way.	The first shall be last. Matt. 20:16
Feel good about yourself/Be proud of who you are/Have confidence in your ability.	James 4:6 & 10
Claim your rights/Let your voice be heard.	In quietness and trust is your strength. Is. 30:15
The Lord helps those who help themselves.	The Lord helps those who trust Him. Prov.3:5-6

A great Biblical example

- **2 Chron. 20** - This principle of death and resurrection really works. It works for seeds, it works for people, Jesus and Jehoshaphat), and it will also work in our lives.
- **The true message of the Cross of Christ is “the principle of death and resurrection” and this will be our focus for the next number of weeks.**

GOD'S MASTERPIECE THE CROSS OF CHRIST #2

"The Cross and Victory over Sin"

A. Introduction

- For the next couple of lessons, we will be focusing on "God's Masterpiece the Cross of Christ". It appears that God has nothing more wonderful to reveal to man. **Gal. 6:14**
- Notice Paul's comment in **1 Cor. 2:1-2**.

B. The message of the cross is "The Principle of Death and "Resurrection"

- Life Springs out of death **Jn. 12:24, 1 Cor. 15:36, 2 Cor. 7:3**
- Our greatest example is Jesus Himself. **Phil. 2:5-8** - Note **vs. 5** - And now **vss. 9-11**
- **2 Cor. 4:10-12** The key to being great for God is death. Death to self. **1 Pet. 5:5-6**

C. A quote from one of the old brethren writers

- "God created everything out of nothing, and everything which He uses, He first reduces to nothing. The spiritual writings of any depth tell of this necessary demolition of self which will only take place at the cross and is God's provision for all of man's problems.



D. What problems are you facing today?

1. Are you not sure where you will spend eternity? **The cross is God's provision.**
 2. Is the problem you are having today financial? **The cross is God's provision.**
 3. Are you having relationship problems - husband/wife, parent/child? **The cross is God's provision.**
 4. Are you uncertain as to God's will for your life? **At the cross, which is God's provision, you will discover His will.**
 5. Do you find it difficult to have a consistent devotional time, or prayer time? **The cross is God's provision.**
 6. Are the temptations of the world seemingly too great for you? **The cross is God's provision.**
 7. Do you find it impossible to commit your life to God? **The cross is God's provision.**
 8. Do you see Satan as a powerful enemy that is consistently defeating you? **The cross is God's provision.**
 9. Are you struggling with fear, anxiety, impatience, anger, etc. The answer is the same. **God's provision for man's dilemma is the cross.**
- No matter what problem we are facing, the cross is God's remedy/solution/provision.

E. Practical explanation

- Let's say that we are facing a big problem in life; relationship problem/financial problem/fear/anger/impatience, whatever.



- Most of us would pray for God to change our physical circumstances, or for Him to give us patience, or take away the fear, or make us stronger.
- And God may do just that, depending on where we are in our relationship with Him.
- But if it's growth time in our Christian lives, and He is moving us from **milk to meat**, He's probably not going

to change our circumstances, or give us patience, or take away the fear, or make us stronger. **2 Cor. 12:7-10**

- God's way is not to make us stronger and stronger so that we become more independent, but rather weaker and weaker and more dependent.
- He's not in the business of promising us great circumstances so that we have no need of Him. Quite the opposite. He actually promises us difficult circumstances. **Phil.3:10**
- However, in the midst of all these difficult circumstances, we can have peace; we can be content; because of the cross.
- At the cross, the part of us that is discontent with our circumstances (the old nature), has been put in the place of death and exchanged for a new nature that manifests the life of Christ no matter what comes.

F. Andrew Murray quote

- "The Lord Jesus carried out the work of the cross as to our eternal position. The Holy Spirit carries out the work of the cross as to our present condition."
- Not only does the cross determine whether we go to Heaven or Hell, but it also affects the quality of our lives (love, joy, and peace, or envy, strife, jealousy, anger, and divisions).

G. R. D. Kilgour quote

"We may try to escape the cross, but we will never know the resurrected life until the "grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies". We may pray for revival, but it is a waste of time. We only weary God with our prayers until the cross of Christ conquers the "old man", there will be no daily manifestation of the life of Jesus in our mortal flesh". **2 Cor.4:11**

H. Four very basic, but very important "gifts of grace" stemming from the cross

1. We are forgiven
2. We are justified/declared righteous

- 3. We are redeemed/bought with a price
- 4. We are reconciled/brought from the place of an enemy to the place of a friend
- Now having been forgiven, declared righteous, redeemed and reconciled, are we then left to fend for ourselves as best we can with this wretched fleshly pride and self will controlling us?
- Are we only **declared righteous**, with no provision to be **made righteous**? **Rom. 8:32**
- Praise the Lord, there is more in the cross than just being declared righteous.
- **Rom. 5:1** - Declared righteous/position.
- **2 Pet. 1:3** - Made Righteous/ condition.

I. A quick look at Romans

- In the first 5 chapters of Romans, Paul's focus was on eternal position - Being declared righteous.
- Now, all of a sudden, he changes to our present condition - being made righteous.
- **Read Rom.6:1-14**



- Romans 6 has been referred to as the “Basis for the life of holiness.”
- It has been described as the “Mountain top of freedom.”
- What we find in Romans 6 is “Freedom” from sin’s power to enslave and master us.
- The focus of Chapters 1-5 is freedom from the penalty of sin, whereas chapter 6 deals with freedom from the power of sin.

The power of indwelling sin

- The truth is that indwelling sin/flesh is nothing short of a wretched tyrant that gives commands and we obey.
- Thus Paul immediately raises the question of sin’s power in **Rom.6:1**. “Shall we continue in sin?”. This is exactly what it comes to for most Christians.
- Justified/declared righteous positionally, but is still, in fact, unrighteous conditionally.
- Unfortunately, this has been the history of the church.
- Notice Paul’s response to the question “shall we continue in sin?” **Rom.6:2**
It’s almost as if the thought of a believer, who is justified by the blood of Jesus, still living under the power/dominion of sin is just plain repulsive to Paul. God forbid, that anyone who is dead to sin should continue doing it.

A prisoner of a prisoner

- I remember hearing a story sometime back of a soldier who radioed to his commanding officer that he had taken a prisoner. His commander said, “bring him here.” “He won’t come” complained the soldier; “Well then, come yourself” replied the officer. “I can’t, he won’t let me” was the soldier’s answer.
- Absurd, perhaps, but this is a picture of many Christians today. Even though the Captain of our salvation tells us in **Rom.8:37** that “we are more than conquerors”, we can’t seem to bring our sinful lives under control. “Well then come yourself” says our Captain, but indwelling sinful self won’t let us.
- So many of God’s people, after having been liberated at salvation, find that we are once again slaves to self and indwelling sin.

Example

- When we first come to Christ and for perhaps many years thereafter, we begin to clean up our external act, but nothing has really changed on the inside. Worries, fear, impatience, anxiety, etc. all remain. O we look good on the outside, but on the inside, we’re still a mess.
- **Rom.7:15** probably does the best job of describing us.
- We’ve struggled and fought, we’ve mourned and wept over the futility of our efforts to live for Christ. We’ve tried prayer and fasting only to be filled with disgust and shame over our inward desire to do wrong.
- We make new resolutions only to be disappointed with another failure.
- **John 3:6a** - Self can never cast out self.
- We become weaker and weaker in our struggle against sin.
- When we want to take sin a prisoner, we find that we are actually the prisoner.
- If we were really to face facts, we would probably have to admit that for most of **us sin** and self are in control of our lives...



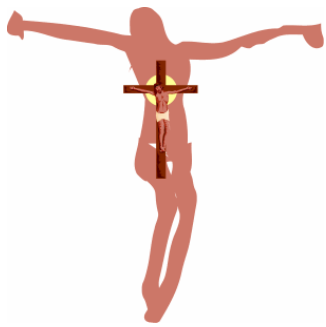
The Lord has made a way for us; we are “Born Crucified”

- In **Romans chapter 6**, the Holy Spirit begins His teaching of the believer’s victory over sin by repeatedly using the phrase “dead to sin.” **Rom. 6:2, 10, 11**
- It means everything for we Christians, to know that we are dead to sin; dead to sin’s power; We are actually “BORN CRUCIFIED.”
- When we accepted Christ’s death for our sins, we also accepted our own death to sin. (To sin’s power - Rom.6:6) We are born crucified.
- Our bondage to sin and self came by birth (**Rom. 5:12 & 19**); therefore deliverance from sin and self comes only by death.

- The Lord's way of victory over sin and self is not through suppressing self-centered desires, nor through confession of sins; God's way of victory is through crucifixion, deliverance is only through death. **Romans 6:7**

J. Focusing on our death with Christ

- The same holy Scripture that says He died for us, **Romans 5:8**, also says that we died with Christ, **Galatians 2:20; Romans 6:8**.



- Here is something for us to consider: if I believe in the death of Jesus, then I can believe in my own death just as surely as I believe in His.
- Let's ask this question: Why do we believe that Jesus died? Because the Word of God says so.
- Here is something else to give some thought to: when Jesus was crucified, two thieves were crucified at the same time. We don't doubt that they were crucified. Why? Because the Scripture says so.
- We believe in the death of the Lord Jesus, and we believe in the death of the two thieves, what about our own death? Again, **Galatians 2:20**.

K. God's way of deliverance is altogether different from man's way

- Man's way is to try and suppress sin by seeking to overcome it, but God's way is to remove the sinner.
- Many Christians pray for God to make them stronger to overcome sin, but this is not God's way. He sets us free from the dominion of sin not by strengthening our old man, but by crucifying him. **Rom. 6:6, 11-14**

L. Conclusion

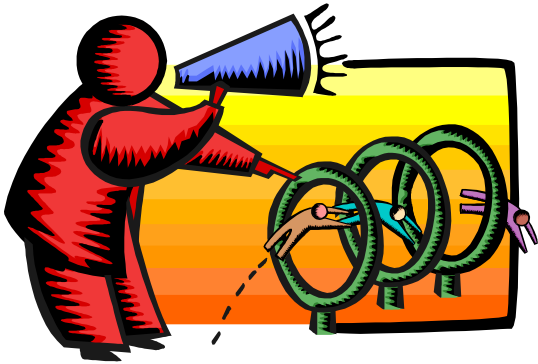
- Remember the day when we saw clearly that Christ died for us; we should be equally clear as to the time when we saw that we died with Christ...
- Notice the repeated statements in chapter 6 of our actual identification with the death of Christ. **Verses 2,3,4,5,6,7,8,11,13** and also **Colossians 2:20; & 3:1-3**.
- It is obvious from Paul's Epistles that his whole life hung on this fact. **Galatians 2:20**
- He was crucified with Christ. It is imperative that we know this; there is no other way to be set free from sin's power.
- To turn back in unbelief from the Biblical truth that we died with Christ, is to turn back to what? To the weary, hopeless struggle of a burdensome, fruitless life filled with guilt, frustration and defeat.

- Romans, chapter 6 is the basis for a life of holiness, and it might be helpful to end with this verse: **John 8:32**--sin enslaves, but a walk of faith brings freedom.

GOD'S MASTERPIECE THE CROSS OF CHRIST #3

"The Cross and the end of Legalism"

A. Review



- We began our teaching last time by looking at "The Cross and Victory over Sin".
- We mentioned that indwelling sin/the flesh/self is nothing short of a wretched tyrant that gives commands and we obey.
- For many of us believers, the reality of all this has been a continuing problem over the years.
- We've struggled and fought, we've mourned and

wept over the futility of our efforts to rid ourselves of this wretched thing.

- We've tried prayer and fasting only to be filled with disgust and shame over our inward desire to do wrong.
- We make new resolutions only to be disappointed with another failure.
- It seems that as time goes on, we become weaker and weaker in our struggle against sin. As the days, weeks, months and years go by, we find that we are actually a prisoner to this thing.
- If we were really to face facts, we would probably have to admit that for most of us, sin and self are in control of our lives.

B. It's no longer I, but Christ

- The Lord has made a way for us, and that way is the way of the cross.
- **Gal. 2:20** - Note "It is no longer I who lives, but Christ who lives in me".
- However, first comes the cross/crucifixion/death to self.

C. The cross and the end of legalism

- Today, our subject will be ***"The Cross and the end of legalism"***, or we could entitle it "The cross and the end of the old Jewish legal system". Or more simply stated, "The cross and the end of the law."

D. A focus on the book of Romans

- We pointed out last week that the book of Romans appears to be a snap shot picture of Christianity.
- Please turn with me to what has become one of my favorite scriptures. **Rom. 15:13** - This is the goal of our teaching in this class.

- There is something about the book of Romans which makes it different from all other epistles that Paul wrote. The folks that Paul was writing to, were gentile converts that he had never seen, and having to write a letter of commendation for a lady by the name of Phoebe, who was about to visit Rome, (**Rom.16:1-2**) Paul took the opportunity of unfolding to them the Gospel of God.
- Romans chapter 1 seems to indicate that Paul had never been to Rome to meet with the Christians there, (**Rom.1:9-11**) and from **verses 7 & 8** it appears that he knew little of their Spiritual condition; therefore he took nothing for granted and began his teaching at the very foundation of the Christian faith.
- He refused to build on another man's foundation. **Rom.15:20** He preferred to lay that foundation himself.
- Therefore Paul started his teaching from ground zero and took 5 chapters to explain salvation in Christ.
- Then immediately after salvation, in chapter 6 he took them back to the cross for the purpose of freeing them from the power of indwelling sin.
- Once that principle of death and resurrection was established in the minds of the Romans, and they understood that their co-crucifixion with Christ had freed them from the power and slavery of indwelling sin, he immediately teaches them that not only are they free from sin's dominion because of their co-crucifixion with Christ, but now they are also free from the bondage or slavery of the law; free from legalism because of their co-crucifixion with Christ.



E. What is **Legalism**?

- For the most part, we live in an extremely legalistic society/an extremely legalistic world.
- Most of us have probably grown up in rather legalistic homes.
- A good definition for legalism is, ***“Operating under a set of rules and regulations for the purpose of gaining approval.”***

F. Example

- If we obey a certain rules set down by our parents or teachers, then we are looked upon with favor by those in authority.
- My thinking is that many of us have grown up in such an environment, a legalistic home, with legalistic parents, who sent us to legalistic schools and later got jobs and labored in a legalistic work environment.

- How many of us after growing up this way and then experiencing God's grace at salvation have placed ourselves back under the law and are currently striving to live a holy, righteous life so that we will be acceptable to God? **Gal. 3:1-3**

G. We're either under law, or under grace - It's one or the other, never both

- **Rom. 6:14** - There appears to be a common error in Christianity today which is co-mingling law and grace.
- Lewis Sperry Chafer in his book "Grace the Glorious Theme" makes this comment - "if it is not 100 percent grace, then it is law"
- No where in scripture do we see the mixing of law and grace; it is impossible. **Rom. 11:6**
- **Matt 9:16, 17** -Jesus didn't come to patch up the old, He was offering something completely new. The new teaching of grace will not fit in the old teaching of the law. These principles are totally separate

H. Further thought regarding law and grace

- Law begins by asking the question, what must man do? **Luke 10:25-28**
- Grace on the other hand begins with the question, what has God done?
- A good example would be **John 3:16**. "For God so loved the world that He gave."
- These two opposing principles, law and grace, are not to be reconciled--there is a clear division between them.

I. The unbearable yoke

- Turn with me to a rather interesting Scripture. **Acts 15:1, 2 & 6-10**
- The dispute here is over the law, and to place it on the children of grace is to test or provoke God. Notice **vs 10** again: it's an unbearable yoke...it is unbearable!

J. An easy yoke

- However, look at what Jesus says about walking by faith and living under grace.
- **Matthew 11:28-30** - I want to point out a couple of things in this Scripture:
 1. **Verse 29** -"take my yoke upon you." What is the only yoke that Jesus puts on us? It is a yoke of faith. **Col 2:6**
 2. In that same verse, He says "learn of Me for I am meek and lowly in heart." Jesus doesn't put a lot of demands on us; **2 Peter 1:3**; NOTE the "LEARN OF ME" in **Matthew 11:29** and the "through the knowledge of Him" in **2 Peter**.
 3. **Verse 30** -His yoke is easy, as opposed to the unbearable yoke of the law back in **Acts 15:10**.

- Scripture is very clear, Christians are not to be entangled with the yoke of bondage (the law). **Galatians 5:1.**

K. The effects of legalism in the church

- Legalism in the church has probably done more to hinder it's progress and destroy it spiritually than anything else.

L. God has made a way

- All throughout Paul's epistles, the cross of Christ is clearly seen as the end of legalism. **Jn.1:17**

M. Wm. R. Newell quote

- "For the believer, the dominion of law is just as devastating as the dominion of sin. However at Calvary, death freed us from both. But unfortunately much of our modern day teaching fails to clearly set forth our end in death with the Lord Jesus on the cross. Therefore, the result of this fatal error is that the law becomes the rule of life over we Christians, "for the law hath dominion over a man as long as he lives." (**Rom. 7:1**) Unless we are able to believe in our hearts that we died with Him, and that we were buried, and that our history before the Father in Adam came to an end at Calvary, we will never get free from the claims of the law upon our consciences."

N. The old Jewish legal system has been terminated

- Turning now to Col. 2 and a rather interesting verse; **Col.2:14.**
- What Paul appears to be saying here is that not only did Jesus put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, but He also terminated the old Jewish legal system.
- What was "the old Jewish legal system"? We can probably best see it in **Deut.28:1-3.**
- Notice, if the Israelites heard and obeyed, then they were accepted by God and received His blessings.
- Not so for the Church of Jesus Christ. **Eph. 1:3**
- God has already blessed us and we believe to receive. **2 Pet. 1:3**



O. At the cross, Jesus put an end to "The old Jewish Legal System".

- At the cross, Jesus put an end to obeying rules/commandments for the purpose of being made acceptable. **Eph. 1:6**
- .However, many born-again Christians are still operating under that old system.

- Probably the place where we can best see this in scripture is in **Romans chapter 7**.
- In this scripture we see, that by means of the cross, Jesus indeed did take us out from under that old system and it's legal demands. Notice **verse 4**
- We Christians have died to the law/to that old legal system, which is working for acceptance. And notice that we have died to the law by the body of Christ, so that we might be married to another.

P. Dead to the law, and free to marry another



- **Rom. 7:1-3**
- Some years ago, the U.S. government issued a decree in which all soldiers, whose names had been appearing on the lists of those who had disappeared in battle during World War II, were officially declared dead. By

doing so they freed thousands of semi-widows to remarry.

- In the same way, the decree has gone out from the throne of God, that all Christians are to consider themselves dead to the law and free to marry another, the risen Lord Jesus Christ.



Q. Romans 7 is a chapter that many think to be almost unnecessary

- Some have said that the chapter is in the wrong place; they would have put it between the 5th and 6th chapters, because after chapter 6 all should be perfect.
- Their thinking is that if chapter 6 is the basis for the life of holiness, then why is Paul struggling in **chapter 7 verses 15-24**?
- Others have tried to explain away chapter 7 by saying that Paul is speaking of his life before salvation and his frustration as a Jew trying to keep the law.
- Some of what he describes in **verses 15-24** does not sound like it should be a Christian experience, however, many Christians do experience it.
- It appears where many of us make our mistake in understanding chapter 7 is the failure to see that chapter 6 is dealing with freedom from sin, whereas, chapter 7 deals with something totally different: freedom from the law.
- Notice all the references to sin in **Romans 6:1-2**, and the references to the law in **Romans 7:1-2**.

R. Romans 7 is a picture of a believer who is working for God's approval

- He is extremely self-centered, looking for his gain, and he's operating in the power of the flesh.

- Notice that from verse 7 to the end of the chapter, the personal pronouns, I, me, my, myself, are used 47 times; a beautiful picture of a self-centered, defeated Christian, who eventually will find himself launched into the experience of **Romans 7:15-24** and will not know why.

S. We're designed to run on God's power



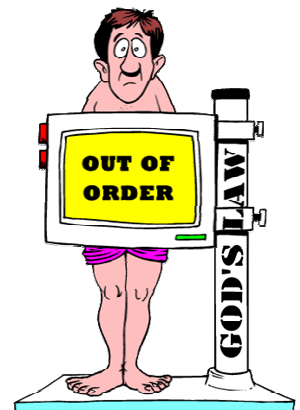
- The problem in Romans 7 is that man in the flesh, remember all the I's, me my and myself, is trying to do something for God.
- However, God has designed us to be dependent creatures. we were designed to run on God's power, not on the power we can crank out; therefore, as soon as we try to please or work for God through our own effort, we place ourselves under that old legal system and the experience of **Romans 7:15-24** is ours.

T. Keep in mind that the law is not bad

- **Romans 7:12** - The commands of the law are righteous, but the person upon whom the commands are made is unrighteous. **Romans 7:5, 14, 18**
- It's interesting to consider that if we are left alone, we seem to be pretty nice people.
- However, it is when commands are given to us that our sinfulness becomes known.
- The commands are all right, but we are not. We have this flesh in us, this evil power, this inward desire to do wrong.
- When a holy law is applied to a sinful man, his sinfulness comes out in full display.
- **Romans 7:5** - This is the reason for the law; had it not been for the law, we would have never known how sinful and weak we really are. **Romans 7:7.**

U. God never gave man the law to keep

- It is interesting that the more we try to keep the law, the more we fail, and the deeper we get into Romans 7 until we see our hopelessness. **Romans 7:24.**
- We could probably say that God never gave man the law to keep; He gave him the law to break, so he could see his sinfulness. **Romans 5:20.**
- Now let's go back: remember Romans 6--God delivered us from sin. **Romans 6:14.** Now in Romans 7--He must deliver us from the law. **Romans 7:6a.**



V. Comparing Romans 6 and 7

- If we were to compare the first 6 verses of chapter 6 with the first 6 verses of chapter 7, we would see that chapter 6 teaches that we died with Christ and we are dead to sin. The same principle operates in our deliverance from the law In Chapter 7. We died with Christ, and we are dead to the law.
- Coming back again to **Col.2:13-14** - Paul says here that our Savior nailed to His cross that which was contrary to us, namely, that old legal system.

W. Conclusion

- In **Rom. 6:14** when Paul tells us that we are not under the law, he does not mean that we can do whatever we want in the flesh. **Gal. 5:13; Rom. 13:14**
- But what he is implying by the phrase “your not under the law”, is that we no longer have to work for God...It’s not for us to obey/to carry out Christian conduct in our own power...That’s God’s job...WE’RE UNDER GRACE.....**1 Cor. 15:9-10; Phil.2:13**

GOD'S MASTERPIECE, THE CROSS OF CHRIST # 4
"The Cross and Victory Over the World, the Flesh, and the Devil"

"The Cross and Victory Over the World"

A. The cross is a beautiful picture of what the world thinks of Christ

- Speak your mind world, what do you think of Jesus Christ?
"Away with Him, Crucify Him, crucify Him".
- Basically, that's what the world thinks of Jesus Christ. **CRUCIFY HIM**

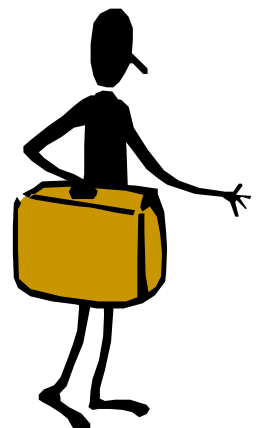
B. Defining the term "world"

- Let's take a few moments to define this term, "world", which in all reality, is rather difficult to define.
- It actually refers to the world system, which is dominated by satanic principles such as deceit, greed, ambition, selfishness and sinful pleasure.
- No wonder the Lord says; "Love not the world". **1 Jn.2:15**
- Notice that John doesn't say; "love not the world too much," He simply says, don't love it at all.



C. Three root sins

- **1 Jn.2:16** - Basically, this is all that the world (world-system) has to offer.
- Every sin boils down to one of these.
 1. Lust of the flesh - alcohol, drugs, immorality, overeating, etc.
 2. Lust of the eyes - greed, materialism, Occupied with the opposite sex, etc.
 3. Pride of life - Judgmental, critical and angry spirit, inflated with self-importance, boasting, etc.
- It's interesting to see what the serpent used to deceive Eve in **Gen.3:6**.
- It's also interesting to see that Satan used the same worldly tactics to tempt Jesus in **Matt.4:1-11**.
- Self-centered man, whether he be unsaved or a carnal Christian, will seek satisfaction through one of these 3 forms of worldly lust, but to all of them, the Christian has been crucified. **Gal. 6:14**



D. Our relationship to the world

- It is very important that we understand our relationship to the world.
After the cross.

1. This world is not our home - **Heb.11:13** - Strangers & Pilgrims on earth

2. Our citizenship is in heaven - **Phil.3:20**

3. Jesus makes it very clear in Jn.17 that we are not of this world - **Jn.17:14**

Notice that Jesus says here “The world hates them”. Look back to **John 7:7**. Why couldn’t the world hate them here? Because at that time, *before the cross*, they were still of the world. *They had not yet been crucified to it.*

- Remember **1 Jn.2:15**, “Love not the world, neither the things of the world.”
- Now turn with me to **James 4:4** - Notice the terms used; adultery/enemy. What James is saying here is that friendship with the world/world-system is **spiritual adultery**. Notice what Paul has to say in **2 Tim.4:10**.

E. The solution to worldliness

- What is the solution to Spiritual adultery?
- The Cross Gal. 6:14 - (I’ve got no desire for the world, and it’s got no power over me) and our only part is to believe, Col. 2:6.

“The Cross and Victory over the Flesh”

A. Introduction

- As Christians, we will be influenced and ultimately controlled by one of two powers: The “self life”, or the “Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” The first will make life Hell, and the second Heaven.

B. Defining the term “flesh”

- As we have mentioned before, self is the fleshly, self centered, carnal nature that we inherited from Adam. It is a horrible, wretched, ugly, deceiving self-infatuation that we got at birth and will be with us until death.
- In this life, we will never be delivered from it, nor will it ever change, and it is the cause of one misery after another.
- Vines definition of the flesh/self is; “Human nature, deprived of the Spirit of God and dominated by sin.”
- God sees nothing good in the flesh, **Rom.7:18a**.
- Even the very best which the flesh can produce, God rejects.



C. Paul’s flesh

- Paul comments about his flesh. ***Phil.3:4-6***
- Paul's flesh was educated, cultured, moral and even religious, yet it was unacceptable to God. ***Rom. 8:7-8***

D. The flesh is deceitful

- It's interesting that unlike Paul, few Christians are willing to admit that the flesh/self is controlling their lives; there is a blindness to the subtle, clever, deceitful workings of the flesh.
- If the more horrible sins are absent from our lives, then we tend to rest in a complacent sense of goodness/self righteousness.
- We fail to realize how obnoxious to God are the more "culturally acceptable sins" such as, embellishing stories, sarcasm, impatience, worry, etc.
- Few Christians ever come to Rom.7:24.

E. Scripture makes many references to the flesh

1. Walk according to the flesh - ***Rom.8:4***
2. Mind of the flesh - ***Rom.8:5***
3. Plan or purpose of the flesh - ***2 Cor.1:17***
4. Deeds of the flesh - ***Gal.5:19***
5. Desires of the flesh - ***Gal.5:16, 24***
6. Warring of the flesh - ***Gal.5:17***
7. Good showing of the flesh - ***Gal.6:12***
8. Confidence in the flesh - ***Phil.3:3***



F. The flesh controls both the unsaved and carnal Christians

- Man in his natural/unsaved state, is under the total control of this wretched fleshly nature. ***Eph.2:1-3***
- In the same way, the carnal Christian is also under the control of the flesh. ***Rom.7:23***
- Both the unsaved man and carnal Christian will find their mind, will, emotions, energy and power to be under the control of the flesh which manifests itself in many self-centered ways such as;
 - Self-confidence, Self-esteem, Self-pity, Self-defense, Self-seeking, Self-exalting, Self-pleasing, Self-respect, Self-importance, Self-indulgence, Self-satisfaction, Self-will, Self-trust, . Self-righteousness , Self-love, Self-effort, Self-sufficiency, Self-conscious, Self-infatuation, Selfishness.
- These are just a few of the multiple forms of the flesh.

G. How can we be set free from this wretched tyrant?

- There is only one way. **The cross Gal. 5:24 - Again Rom. 6:6**
 - **Rom.5:19** makes it very clear that sin/self/the flesh, came in by birth, so it makes sense that it will only go out by death.
 - The cross is God's way. It was on the cross that God, in Christ, dealt fully and finally with self/the flesh.
 - The flesh will only yield to the cross, not to resolutions, or self-denial, or revival, or confession, or self-effort, but only to co-crucifixion. **Rom. 6:6; Gal 2:20**
-

The Cross and Victory over the Devil

A. Introduction

- It might be good to begin our study on the cross and victory over Satan by looking at a picture that most people, including many Christians, have of Satan.

B. A true story

- I remember someone sharing a true story of a young man who had gone to a tattoo parlor to receive his first tattoo. When the young man entered the door of the shop, he was confronted with a big decision; what would he choose to have tattooed on his arm? After looking at many options, he settled on a picture of the devil, with horns, in a red suit and carrying a pitchfork. Later that day, the young man went bowling. He rolled up his shirtsleeve to reveal his new tattoo. Suddenly from the next bowling lane he heard a woman's voice saying, "look at that cute little devil". That's exactly what Satan would like us to believe of him, that he is a cute little devil.
- Isn't it interesting that in reality Satan is a murderer, who hates God and desires to destroy every man, woman and child that God loves, including you and me? So what does man do? He tattoos his picture on his arm and calls him a cute little devil.

C. Satan can appear as an angel of light

- **2 Cor.11:13-14.** *He can make what is bad look good – Abortion.*
- On the other hand, He can make what is good look bad - Spanking our children.

D. Some comments by the Apostle Paul

1 Cor.7:5	Tempter
2 Cor.2:11	Apparently he can gain an advantage

Eph.4:25-27	He can gain ground
Eph.6:11-12	Schemer
1 Thes. 2:18	can hinder
2 Thes. 2:9	He's actively working
1 Tim.3:6-7	Snares
1 Tim.5:15	some turn aside to him
2 Tim.2:26	Apparently, in some way, he can hold man captive

E. If this was all that was written to the church about Satan, it would appear that we are in big trouble



- Well, praise the Lord. There is much more to be said.
- Let's try and draw a true, Biblical picture of Satan;
 1. **1Pet.5:8** - Roaring/angry lion - Wants to destroy
 2. **Jn.8:44** - Liar/Murderer - He destroys lives by deceiving folks, not by knifing them
 3. **Rev.12:7-10** - This scripture reveals how he operates - (Deceives the

world/accuser)

• Examples:

- A. Job - **Job.1:6-12; 2:1-6** - Accuser - Notice that Satan is under the sovereign control of God.
- B. Eve - **Gen.3:1-6** - Deceiver/Liar/Murderer
- C. Jesus - **Matt.4:1-3** - Tempter - He can't force us/just tempt us - **1Thes.3:5**

F. Satan is under the sovereign control of God

- Satan would like to throw Christians into the fiery furnace to destroy them, but our loving Heavenly Father only permits the ropes that bind us to be consumed. **Dan.3:1-28**
- Satan would like to grind us to powder, but the Lord only allows the chaff to be separated from the wheat. **Luke 22:31-32** "*Simon, Simon, Satan wants to sift you like wheat*".



G. Many Christians live in retreat and defeat

- Although the greater majority of Christian know they are blood bought and heaven bound, they are unaware that they have been set free from the fear and bondage to the world, the flesh, and the devil. They are living in retreat and defeat, unaware of the total victory of the cross. They have been:
 1. Crucified to the world - **Gal.6:14**

- 2. Crucified to the flesh – **Gal.5:24**
- 3. And crucified to the devil – **Gen.3:15; Jn. 12:31**
- A powerful verse - **Jn. 8:32**

H. A comment from C.A.Coates

- *“The forgiven man is on an altogether new ground with the Father; he is on the ground of grace, which is given to us through Jesus Christ Who is “full of grace and truth.” The apprehension (taking hold) of this, puts the soul beyond the reach of the oppression and harassing of the devil.*



I. The cross is the solution to anything that our external enemy can do

- He was defeated/crushed/disarmed at the cross. **Col.2:15**

J. By faith, hold your ground

- Another interesting Scripture. **Eph.6:10-14a**
- Notice the number of times that Paul uses the word stand. If we were to look at that word “stand” in the Greek, it has the idea that the ground is already taken and we are to merely hold our ground. But How? By faith - **1 Pet.5:8-9a**

K. Unbelief gives ground to the devil

- **Eph. 4:27** - “Don’t give place/ground to the devil”.
- What gives place to the devil? **Unbelief - Stand** (Hold your ground) **firm in the faith.**
- **James 4:7** is significant. Notice the order here, submit (trust, depend on God), then resist the devil, by faith.

L. Conclusion

- According to the Word of God, our Heavenly Father is sovereign not Satan, not the demons. God the Father rules over all, no matter what Satan does.
- Many, many believers, not knowing or abiding in their position in Christ the victorious One, attempt to fight against the devil and his demons. Before long, Satan looms larger and stronger in their minds, while Jesus seems to become smaller and weaker.
- Soon they imagine there are demons everywhere
- They become obsessed with warfare and before long, they begin to experience defeat and breakdown in the physical, mental, moral and spiritual realms.

- If Satan can bluff we Christians into becoming more occupied with him than the Lord Jesus, the inevitable result is a defeated Christian.
- A popular TV Preacher was heard to make this statement some time ago, “My greatest struggle is to maintain a wartime mentality”.
- Out of his wartime mentality, came a nervous breakdown.
- Early on in my Christian life, I attended a seminar where they were teaching on eight characteristics of being mighty in Spirit - The eighth being; knowing how to bind Satan and rescue family members from his power –
- I tried this for years. It was futile. The cross has freed us from the world and it's prince.
- Notice **Col. 3:1-3**. We are dead (at the cross) and our lives are hidden with Christ in God.
Satan can't touch Jesus, nor can he touch us in Him.

GOD'S MASTERPIECE THE CROSS OF CHRIST #5
"The Cross and the Consecrated Disciple of Christ"
"The Cross and Knowing the Will of God"

Introduction

- From the beginning of this study of the cross, there has been one main message that we've repeatedly emphasized each week and that is our co-crucifixion with Christ.
- We have consistently looked at **Rom. 6:6**, and mentioned that **Gal. 2:20** is Paul's definition of the Christian life.
- Obviously, the cross is a basic ingredient for spiritual growth and hopefully today we'll see a little more clearly just how important it really is.

"The Cross and the Consecrated Disciple of Christ".

A. Defining a "consecrated disciple"

- A disciple is a learner, a pupil, a follower of the teachings of another; and a good definition of this word consecration is - To dedicate, commit, surrender for God's use.
- So we could say that a consecrated disciple is a dedicated, committed, teachable follower of Jesus Christ.
- However, we will never be a committed, surrendered, teachable follower, until we get self out of the way, because self will not surrender, self is not teachable, and self will not follow Jesus; **thus our great need for the cross.**



B. Miles Stanford quote

- " Nothing can set us apart for God; nothing can make us holy, except the cross, because only the cross can keep the flesh/self in the place of death".
- Nowhere was Jesus more clear or firm than when He mentioned discipleship - **Luke 9:23**. Take up His cross; the daily giving up of the self life, which can only take place at the cross.

C. If the flesh/self is active, then Christ is not

- Here is an interesting thought to ponder: If the old I/self /flesh is active then Christ is not.
- However, if we walk by faith in the fact that we have been crucified with Christ, then self is rendered powerless by the Holy Spirit and as Jesus leads, we will follow. (A true picture of a disciple).

D. A closer look at consecration

- It might be helpful if we took a closer look at the term consecration and a key portion of Scripture that seems to be misunderstood by many Christians.
- **Rom. 6:12-13** The key word here is “yield” or “present,” and we find it used 5 times in **verses. 13, 16 & 19.**
- Moving on now to **Rom. 12**, where again we see this word yield/present. **Rom. 12:1**

Many have taken this word “yield/present” to mean consecration

- Remember our definition - To dedicate/commit/surrender for God’s use”.
- Many believe Paul to be saying in **Rom. 12: & Rom. 6:12-13** that we are to take action and consecrate/dedicate/commit ourselves to the Lord for His service.
- And so they set out to serve the Lord, motivated and empowered by self effort/the flesh, and the outcome is failure.

E. A good Biblical example

- In Exodus 2, Moses decided to offer himself to the Lord for setting his people free.
- It’s interesting to note how far Moses’ self confident commitment carried him.
- **Ex.2:11-15** What we see in this scripture regarding the life of Moses is that God rejected



his efforts, and did not give the charge to “Set His People Free” upon seeing his self confident efforts, but rather He gave it after Moses had failed, ran for his life and spent 40 years in the back-side of the desert. It came only at the END OF SELF.

- A big failure and forty years in the wilderness is what the Lord used to bring Moses to the end of self.
- How about you and I? What provision has God made that we might come to the end of self? The Cross.
- *Now God may use a 40 year wilderness experience , but*

whatever he uses, His object is to move us to the cross which is the only place that we will give up self as we, by faith, see ourselves crucified with Him.

F. Crucifixion will always come before Biblical consecration

- In Exodus 29, before Aaron and his sons were consecrated, blood/death was sprinkled all over them - **Ex. 29:21**
- Uncrucified self refuses to be consecrated to say nothing of God’s refusing to accept it. **Rom. 8:7**
- That’s why so many sincere Christians walk down the aisle again and again consecrating uncrucified self.

G. Our position of sanctification is the key to understanding Biblical consecration

- Before we can get a clear understanding of Biblical consecration, it would probably be good to look at our position of sanctification.
- To be sanctified, means to be set apart for God's possession and use.
- Some Scriptures to consider; **Gen. 2:3; and John 17:17, 19**
- It's encouraging to know that positionally we are sanctified at salvation (positionally set apart for God's possession and use). In addition, as we, by faith, rest in that position, the Holy Spirit gives us the power and desire to consecrate/to dedicate ourselves for God's use...

H. However, man has a problem

- Left to ourselves, we will not trust and rest in our position of sanctification, because our flesh won't let us. **Rom.7:15 & 18** Again, the solution is the cross. **Gal.5:24**

I. And God has a solution

- Going back to Romans 6, there is a divine order in verses 6, 11 and 13.
1. KNOW--vs 6 2. RECKON--vs 11 3. YIELD--vs 13.

1. **Knowing** is the first step in consecration. Just as we must have knowledge of Christ's crucifixion for salvation, we must also have knowledge of our co-crucifixion for our consecration.
2. **Reckoning** is a natural response to true Biblical knowledge.
3. **Yielding** is the end result here, and is not an effort for the believer in the Romans 6 pattern, but rather is simply a natural response to our faith. **James 2:18b** "I'll show you my faith by my works."

J. The subject of consecration is misunderstood by many believers

- Often times we hear a message like this: "Jesus gave His all for you, now the least you can do is give your all for Him."
 - We are exhorted and pressured to consecrate, or dedicate, or surrender, or commit our lives to Christ on the basis of our love and gratitude for what He has done for us.
 - ***Be assured that our love and gratitude cannot supply the power to live the Christian life, nor can more prayer supply the power; as indispensable as prayer is, it is not enough.***



K. A missionary testimony

- I once heard of a couple who went out as missionaries. They truly loved the Lord and were extremely grateful for all that He had done for them. They spent many hours each day in prayer, but in the end, there was no power to carry on.
- A rather interesting Scripture is found in **Jer. 12:5**.

L. The key to Biblical consecration

- The key to Biblical consecration, yielding, presenting, dedicating, committing our lives to God is not I; nor the love that I can muster, nor the prayers that I can pray---It's not I, but **CHRIST. Gal. 2:20; Phil 1:21**

M. The self life is unimprovable

- So many of us well meaning Christians seek to consecrate, dedicate, surrender and commit to God what He has totally rejected--SELF/FLESH.
- Our thinking is if we seek the Lord hard enough and pray, that self will become spiritual and thus useful in His service. We must understand that the "self life" is unimprovable.
- Our natural thinking and the modern teaching of consecration which asks us to commit our lives to Christ through self-effort, bypasses the death sentence.

N. True, acceptable, Biblical consecration is most clearly shown in Romans 6:13

- This is the key statement in all of Scripture regarding this subject. "AS THOSE THAT ARE ALIVE FROM THE DEAD."
- Paul is saying that we must present ourselves unto God as those who are alive from the dead. (Dead to self)
- Remember **Romans 6:7**, "he that is dead, is freed from sin." Nothing from the old creation can be consecrated, yielded, or presented, but only that which has passed through death to resurrection.

O. An Old Testament picture of this New Testament truth

- Back in **Leviticus 8**, when God was consecrating the Old Testament Priests; notice how he directed Moses. **Lev.8:22-30**. The blood was placed on the right ear, the right thumb, the right big toe, and eventually sprinkled all over the Priest. Death was written all over them. Their consecration came only by death.

P. Conclusion

- Now remember our subject. "The cross and the consecrated disciple of Christ"

- There is only one way to yield/present/surrender/commit/dedicate/consecrate ourselves to the Lord, it can only happen **AT THE CROSS** as we, by faith, see ourselves co-crucified with Christ. **Jn. 10:11**.
-

“THE CROSS AND KNOWING THE WILL OF GOD”

A. Introduction

- Many, many times over the years, I have either desired to know, or have been asked how one can know the will of God. It seems to be a major concern for Christians everywhere.
- Unfortunately, the motive for knowing God’s will is most often self-centered and therefore hinders the individual from ever finding it. **James 4:1-3**. (*Notice the problem here is a self-focus*)

B. An age old problem

- The problem actually started way back, before the creation of the world, when Lucifer turned from God’s will. **Is.14:12-14**
- Interesting scripture. - **Prov.16:5, 18** And now **Is.14:15**
- Carrying this thought over to man, the whole sin issue began when man also turned from God’s will to do his own will. **Gen.2:15-17; Gen.3:1-6**.
- Notice **verse 5** “You shall be like God”
- A thought to consider is that, although Lucifer and man failed to fulfill God’s will, Christ did not. **Heb.10:7; Jn. 6:38**
- A couple of interesting verses to ponder are **Jn.17:18 & Jn.20:21** - Just as Jesus was sent into the world to do the will of the Father, likewise, we are sent into the world to do the will of the Son.

C. An Andrew Murray quote; (Paraphrased)

- “God’s reason or object in the redemption of man was to restore him to do God’s will. (**Eph.2:10**). It was for this that Christ died; He gave up His own will to do the will of the Father. He died to do God’s will”.

D. Saved to do God’s will

- So, if **Jn. 17:18, Jn. 20:21**, and Andrew Murray’s are correct, we’re saved to do God’s will.
- However, for many Christians, it’s difficult to know what His will is, and for others, it seems impossible to carry out.
- Why? Basically, it all boils down to this, the thing that man loves the most is himself.

- What man wants more than anything else is to have his own way and to enjoy himself.

E. God's formula for knowing His will



- In **Rom.12:1,2** there appears to be almost a God-given formula, a 4 step process, for knowing His will:

1. Verse **1** - Knowing God's will demands total surrender of Man's will which can only take place at the cross where the old man was crucified.
2. Verse **2** - Be not conformed to this world/Don't try to work it out the world's way.
3. Verse **2** - Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. **Eph.4:23;**

Col.3:10

4. Verse **2** - That you may prove/know what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.
- **Prov.3:5,6** Appears to be a parallel passage.
Jn.15:7, also sheds some light. If we abide in Him/Similar thought to presenting ourselves in **Rom.12:1**, or trusting in the Lord with all of our heart in **Prov.3:5**. His word abiding in us, is the renewing of our minds in **Rom.12:2**.
The outcome is that we can ask whatever we want, and it will be done for us. How so? The progression of thought here is; If I am abiding in Him, and His word is abiding in me, then my will would be His will, therefore, I can ask whatever I want, and it will be done.
 - A similar Scripture; **1 Jn.5:14,15**.

F. Gideon desperately wanted to know God's will

- It might be helpful to look at an Old Testament example of a man who appears to be rather insecure and desperately desired to know God's will.
- His name was Gideon, and his story is found in **Judges 6:36-40**

G. Let's shift now from Gideon and the Old Testament to the present day church

- At Fellowship Bible Church, the leadership desires to know the Lord's will regarding the need to build a new sanctuary.
- How should the leaders go about finding God's will? Should they put out a fleece?
- Well no - The O.T. was not written about us. **Rom.15:4** says we can learn from it, and **1Cor:10:6 & 11** says that it is an example and a warning.
- The O.T. is often a physical picture of a deeper spiritual truth.



- What is the deeper spiritual truth for the church revealed in ***Judges 6?***
- Thinking back again to ***Rom. 12:1-2***, and the **4 step process**.
Did Gideon have any desires of his own? No, It appears he was trusting the Lord.
Do we see any indication that he was trying to work things out the world's way, or that he was leaning on his own understanding? No.
- Another interesting thought; there is no indication that the Lord was angry or concerned with Gideon's need for reassurance; He just kept patiently showing him His will.

H. Let's not lose sight of our subject. "The cross and knowing the will of God."

- It's really not possible to discern God's will apart from the cross.
- It's at Calvary that we look at the Cross and accept our death with Him.
- And it's by means of faith in that truth, that we are able to give up our own desires or will, and the Holy Spirit then takes off the veil and begins to show us the will of God.

GOD'S MASTERPIECE THE CROSS OF CHRIST #6

"The Cross and Relationships

"The Cross and Finances"

"The Cross and Relationships"

A. Introduction

- It's often said, "you can tell a man by his friends".
- So often, this is true. One measure of a man can be his relationships;
Husband-wife relationship; Parent-child relationship; Does he make and maintain enduring friendships?
- The latter, definitely was a characteristic of the Apostle Paul's life.



B. The Apostle Paul's example of "selfless" love

- It's interesting to note that no one in the New Testament made fiercer enemies, but few men in the world have had more and better friends.
- It's amazing that Paul involved his friends in all sorts of risks for Christ's sake, and yet they willingly followed him, because they were assured of his love and concern for them.
- One great secret of Paul's deep relationships/friendships was his capacity to love unselfishly, even if his love was met with nothing in return. **2 Cor.12:14-15**
- Basically, this was Paul's approach to people; "Selfless Love".
- Love which is totally void of self/dead to self. **1 Cor.13:4-7; Jn.15:13**
- "Selfless Love" was Paul's approach.

C. "Selfless Love", is not the norm

- It is quite obvious as we look around, that what we are seeing is "Self Love", and rather than enduring friendships/relationships, we are seeing loneliness and isolation, or anger and separation. **(Contrast selfless-love and self-love)**
- Self love breeds isolation, and it's always barren and solitary. **Ps.38:11; Ps.88:7-8 & 18**

D. There is hope for struggling relationships

- The solution lies with God. He has made a way for us.
- And that way is through the cross. **Jn.12:24-25**

E. Now back to the life of Paul and our subject; The cross and relationships

- The Corinthians were Paul's children in the faith, and in **2 Cor. 7** It appears that Paul is answering accusations that he didn't love them.
- Notice what he says in **2 Cor.7:2-3** "We have wronged no man. You are in our hearts to die and live together."
- Paul did not want to **live and die** with his spiritual children, but rather to **die and live** with them.
- Note this comment in **2 Cor.5:16**; "We know no man according to the flesh..
- Paul loved the Corinthian believers, but not in the flesh; (neither his, nor theirs) he loved them through the cross. He knew no man according to the flesh.
 1. What does it mean to love someone through the flesh - Live for self. **Luke 9:24a; Rom.8:13a.**
 2. What does it mean to love someone through the cross - Putting to death the deeds of the flesh at the cross, and live. **Luke 9:24b; Rom.8:13b**

"The Cross and Finances"

A. Introduction

- The Bible has much to say about finances. And here are some thought why.
- **Matt. 6:19-21** Notice, "where your treasure is, there will be your heart."
- Another interesting Scripture - **Col.3:1-2**
- Now let's think it through. We know from our past studies, that every human being born after Adam has a self-centered sin nature which Scripture refers to as the flesh.
- So if the flesh is self-centered, where will it set it's affections; on things above, or things on the earth? Will it lay up treasure in heaven or covet/lay up treasure on earth?

B. Thou shalt not covet

- There is another interesting verse in **Heb. 13:5**.
- Incidentally, this is not a new problem. Way back in **Exodus 20:17**, God told the Israelites; "Thou shalt not covet."
- Because of all this self-seeking covetousness, the Lord makes some rather strong statements regarding finances. **1 Tim.6:5-11; Prov. 15:27; (He that is greedy troubles his own house) Ecc. 5:10-11**



C. An interesting parable dealing with the subject of finances

- **Lk. 12:15-21** - Notice, that he was a good businessman, but a fool.

D. How to handle finances

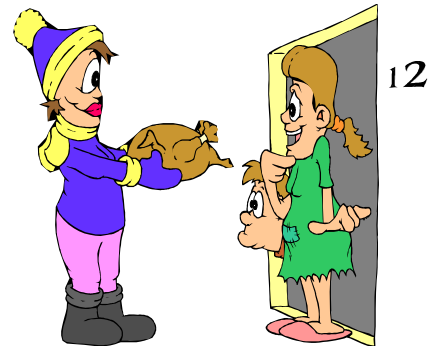
- It's real obvious that the Lord has a lot to say regarding a Christian's attitude toward money.
- He also has a lot to say about how we are to handle our finances.
Pr. 3:27-28; Pr. 21:6; Pr. 11:15

E. Giving

- Let's move on now to one of the biggest problems for many Christians regarding finances, the area of giving.
- I'm sure most of us have heard the old saying, "A penny saved is a penny earned." Some how that doesn't fit with what Scripture says. **Prov. 3:9-10; Mal. 3:7-11; Luke 6:38**

F. We're not under the law

- Now if we didn't know better, it would appear that we are under the law in this whole area of giving.
- But notice where we are looking. The Old Testament and the gospels.
- Let's turn now to the New Testament. **Cor. 8:1-7; 2 Cor. 9:6-8**
- Interesting Scripture to give some thought to **Ex. 35:5, 21, 22, 29....Ex. 36:5-7.**



G. L.S. Chafer quote

- "In the New Testament, there are two **inseparable** themes; Christian conduct, and God's enabling power, and we must teach them side by side".
- Basically all that we have looked at in our study of finances thus far is Christian Conduct, but how does one carry out that conduct?

H. Brief review

- It might be good to sum up all that we have discussed thus far.
 1. Where our treasure is, there will be our heart. **Agreed; But unfortunately my treasure is earthly.**
 2. We are to be occupied with thing above, not things on the earth; **But I'm not occupied with things above, so how do I change.**

3. Storing up treasure here on earth is just plain foolish. **It's pretty obvious that I am a fool. How do I stop?**
4. Godliness with contentment is great gain. **Agreed, but I'm not content. How?**
5. Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a trap, which causes many sorrows. **I see that in my life, but I can't change.**
6. If we hold back what is justly due another, we will never prosper. **But, I'm so greedy.**
7. Ill-gotten gains do not prosper. **Cheating on income taxes?**
8. Give and it will be given unto you. **I've always been taught that a penny saved is a penny earned, how can I change my thinking?**
9. We learned of "Grace Giving" from the Church at Macedonia, and they did it by first giving themselves to the Lord. **How do I do that?**
10. He who sows bountifully will reap bountifully/ Everyone is to give as he purposes in his heart/We are not to give grudging, or because we are forced to, but rather cheerfully. **But, how?** Once again, there is only one answer; at **the cross.**



I. Man's dilemma

- The one thing that stands in our way in all this is **the flesh. Gal. 6:7-8**
 - The flesh is so deceitful, it's very possible that our **sacrificial giving** may be nothing more than sowing to the flesh, it very possibly could be done with an underlying selfish motive.
 - It's interesting to know that self can pay all it's bills on time, it can tithe for a lifetime without missing a Sunday, it can give till it hurts and pat itself on the back and say, "that was wonderful; what a useful man you are to God."
 - It might be helpful to once again look at **Gal. 6:8**. How can we sow to the Spirit rather than sow to the flesh? **The cross. Crucifixion must come first.**
-

GOD'S MASTERPIECE, THE CROSS OF CHRIST #7

“The Cross and Prayer”

“The Cross and the Spirit Filled Life

“The Cross and Prayer”

A. So why pray?

- **Job 21:15** – “What profit if we pray?”
- One interesting answer could be in **1 Tim. 2:1-3**

B. Be not anxious

- A very interesting Scripture - **Phil. 4:6**
- Notice, “be not anxious” The implication is that we have arrived at **Rom. 12:1**
- And what then? Does Paul say that we will immediately receive what we pray for?
- No, not even close. **Verse 7**
- So we pray, and we don't get what we pray for, instead we get peace that is beyond our understanding which will keep/guard our hearts and minds (soul).



C. How does that peace come?

- How do we stop being anxious? Paul's answer, through Christ Jesus.
- Let's be more specific - **1 Cor. 2:1-2**
- So how does that peace come? Through Jesus Christ crucified, and our co-crucifixion with Him.
- Simply stated, **Phil. 4:6-7** is a picture of the prayer life of a co-crucified Christian.
- He goes to the Lord about everything, no matter how small, even though God knows his request before; then why go? Because our Heavenly Father loves to have us coming to Him about every little and big matter, trusting and resting in the assurance that He will do what is right, and give us only that which is good.
- The point that Paul is making here is that, whether He gives or withholds, we are to continue in prayer, and His peace shall keep/guard our souls.

D. Pray always

- Let me add another thought to all this; Turn with me to **1 Thes. 5:17** (*Pray without ceasing*); **Col. 4:2** (*Continue in prayer*); **Eph. 6:18** (*Praying always*); **Rom. 12:12** (*Devoted to prayer*); **Act. 6:4** (*Give ourselves continually to*

prayer);

Luke 18:1 (*Men ought always to pray*); **Ps. 55:16-17**

- Pray continually/Pray at all times/Pray morning, noon and night. What does He want from us? Does He want us to be monks on a mountain top?
- Let's give some serious thought to all this; because there is a slight possibility that we don't even know what true Biblical prayer is.

E. Let's add one more thought

- Turn with me back to **Rom. 8**, and to another significant Scripture pertaining to prayer. **Rom. 8:26**
- Now, not only do we not know what prayer is, but there is a good possibility that many of us don't know how to pray, nor do we know what to pray for.

F. Defining "prayer"

- It might be helpful to stop a moment and define prayer. **What is it?**



- We could spend many hours looking up definitions of prayer, and to be quite honest, we'll probably find that most are rather shallow.
- For example - Webster's Dictionary defines it this way: To beg, or implore; to address God; a form of worship. Other definitions were equally as confusing and vague.
- Of all the definitions, John Darby seems to help us see the true meaning of prayer. (Paraphrased) – "Prayer is the great means by which we are practically kept in awareness of the Father's presence.

It is the proper expression of our weakness to the father and of our confidence in His love and care day by day and ever more. Prayer is confessing our constant need of dependence upon Him."

G. True Biblical Prayer is acknowledging and depending on God.

- The asking and receiving is elementary; it is the part of prayer that we understand, but should not be the focus of prayer.
- It would appear that true biblical prayer is not an action, but rather a life, which maintains a dependence on Him at all, times. Thus **1 Thess. 5:17** makes sense.
- Our minds must be saturated by and with Him. Prayer is not an exercise, it's a life lived occupied with Him.

H. Praying in the Spirit

- Let's add one more thought from **Jude 20**.

- If we were to ask, “Do you pray in the Spirit”, what would that conjure up in your mind.
- We talk a lot about walking in the Spirit, which basically could be defined as being influenced and controlled by the Spirit. **Gal. 5:16**; That’s **walking in the Spirit**, but what is **praying in the Spirit**?
- Again in **Rom. 8:26-27** we are taught that the Holy Spirit makes intercession for us.
- He is the author of every true and right desire in our hearts.
- It’s only by the Spirit that we can pray as we ought. **Jn. 16:13-14**
- It’s interesting to consider that we are unable to walk in the Spirit and walk in the flesh at the same time. **Gal. 5:16-17**
- Neither can we pray in the Spirit and Pray in the flesh simultaneously.
- When we pray in the Spirit, we must be free from the flesh; free from our own desires (**James 4:3**), which can only take place at the cross.

I. Another point to ponder

- When we are praying in the Spirit, He will always bring us back to this one point; we are not heard because of our goodness, or because of our diligence in prayer. We are heard only because of the blood of Christ. (**Heb. 10:19**).
- Again, we see the importance of the cross, where Christ shed His blood.
- It is so necessary that we understand the importance of the blood of Christ.
- The blood deals with what we have done. When sin occurs it brings death (separation - **Rom. 6:23**). But God has given us a remedy for this death, and that is the blood the blood satisfies God - **Lev. 17:11**).
- In order for us to keep approaching God in prayer, we must have a clear conscience and that means knowing the value of the blood. (**Heb. 10:22**)
- Our basis of approach to God must always be the blood of Christ. God's acceptance of that blood is the ground upon which we may enter; there is no other.
- God is totally satisfied with the blood, therefore, we must also be satisfied with it.

J. The Biblical basis for prayer under grace is our position in Christ

- Prayer is to be offered in His name (which links it to the person of Christ). (**John 14:14; John 16:23-24**)
- Keep in mind that if we ask in someone’s name, then we have their approval.
- It’s interesting to note that in **John 14:13** the sole condition for prayer to be answered is praying “in My Name”, and we can only pray in His name, if we know what His will is. And as we discovered several lessons ago as we looked at “the cross and knowing the will of God”, we can only know what His will is at the cross where our will/desires are crucified.
- The words, “in My Name” signify Christ Himself is actually making the petition.

- It is as though He signed the petition along with us. **1 Jn. 5:14-15**
- **That** is praying in the Spirit.

K. Concluding thoughts from G. Watson

- "It will save years of frustration and effort for one to understand that prayer can never be learned or developed. Prayer is the outflow of the new life; as one grows, as the cross frees the new from the old, there is the growth of effective prayer.
 - Without the cross, prayer becomes a mere religious formality.
 - As the cross works in us, keeping in the place of death every assertion of the old man, and everything in our old natures that is against God, our spirit finds a clear way up to fellowship at the throne.
 - Away from the cross, prayer becomes nothing more than an ecclesiastical ordinance or a religious exercise expressed in devotional phrases. I beg of you, when you read a book on prayer, find out the place in it which the author gives to the cross, and you will be able to estimate it's value".
-

"The Cross and the Spirit Filled Life"

A. Introduction

- Our final subject today is "The Cross and the Spirit Filled Life".

B. Where did the Holy Spirit come from, and why?



- John the Baptist, in two great statements, declared the entire ministry of Jesus Christ when he said in **Jn.1:29**; "behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." And in **Jn.1:33** when he stated; "He that sent me to baptize in water, the same is He that baptizeth with the Holy Spirit".
- Christ's ministry was to **take away sin**, and to **give the gift of the Holy Spirit** to those who believe.
- Further light is given on this special gift in Christ's last conversation with the disciples before going to the cross. **Jn.16:7**

C. When Jesus returned to glory, He fulfilled His promise and sent back the Spirit.



- On the day of Pentecost, the disciples in the upper room were baptized by the Spirit. **Acts.2:1-4**
- From that day on, everyone who has been united by faith with the Living Lord has received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

D. God's purpose for sending the Spirit

- Now in God's plan there is a definite purpose for the gift of the Spirit, just as there is a definite purpose for the gift of the Son.

- Through the Son, the sinner has life; through the Spirit, the believer has life more abundant.
- Through the Son, the sinner enters the Spiritual realm; before, he was Spiritually dead. Through the Spirit, the believer is lifted to life on a higher plane.

E. Be filled with the Spirit

- In one statement, God reveals the highest point any believer can reach in relationship to the Holy Spirit. **Eph.5:18 "BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT"**
- It's interesting to note that the term **FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT** is only mentioned once as a command for believers, and that is in **Eph.5:18**. However, it is mentioned 14 other times in the New Testament, all in the books of Luke and Acts.
- If we were to examine the Greek, we would see that the term used in both Luke and Acts has a different meaning than in **Eph.5:18**.
- In all usages of the term in other than **Eph.5:18**, it seems to describe either the Spirit coming upon an individual for special empowerment such as **Acts 1:8**, or it refers to a quality of life roughly equivalent to the term Spiritual as we use it today. (Example **Acts 6:3**)

F. Keep on getting filled by the Spirit

- If we are to get a proper interpretation of the command in **Eph.5:18**, we must look at the term in light of the context.
- It appears from the context that the literal interpretation is; **"filled by the Spirit"**. Thus, the Holy Spirit is the one doing the filling; in fact in the Greek, the tense of the verb places the emphasis on a continuing process to be received by the believer. **"Keep on getting filled by the Holy Spirit"** would be a more accurate translation of the verse.

G. Looking at the context in Ephesians

- To begin, in **Eph.1** Paul refers to the summing up of all things in Christ. **Eph. 1:10** The idea is that Jesus Christ is the center and focus of all that God is doing to work out His sovereign purpose.
- **Eph.1:22-23; Eph.4:10-13** – It appears that the meaning of "**BEING FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT**" in **Eph.5:18** is that Christ Himself is the content of the filling, and it is produced by the Holy Spirit.

H. To be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with Jesus Christ Himself

- Whatever **Godliness** is outwardly seen through our lives is nothing more than the manifestation of an inward working of the Spirit producing the life of Christ in us....**Phil. 2:12-13; Jn. 16:13-14; 2 Cor. 3:18**
- We want to make this as clear as we possibly can. **TO BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT** is to be filled with the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our life. **Col. 3:4A; Gal. 2:20**
- **TO BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT** is to have His life manifested in our mortal flesh. **2 Cor.4:10, 11**
- The Christian life is the life of Christ produced in each of us by the indwelling Holy Spirit Himself, and that life will become progressively spontaneous. **Rom. 8:2**
- Eventually our words, our prayers, our lives will become spontaneous, unforced expressions of the life within. **Eph. 5:18-21**

I. "Christ in you"

- The real Christian life is to possess the life of Christ in such a way that we can say with Paul, "to me to live is Christ". **Phil. 1:21.**
- The real Christian life is to have Jesus Christ filling our mind, will and emotions in such a way that my thoughts are really His thoughts, my will is His will and my emotions are coming from Him. **It is Jesus Christ filling my life until I have no life apart from Him.**
- "Christ in you" was the heart of Paul's message to the churches, and he made it very clear in all his teaching and preaching. **Col. 1:27.** Paul had one goal and that was to see Christ formed in every believer. **Gal. 4:19.**

J. The Spirit filled life is actually God's remedy for man's dilemma

- It is life in Christ, lived in the Spirit - It is ruled by grace, and lived by faith.
- The answer to living a victorious Christian life rests with the Holy Spirit.
- It is not a question of our ability or effort, but of **the absolute faithfulness of the Spirit of God.**

K. However, something is standing in the way

- That something is the flesh.
- We've mentioned numerous times that we can't walk in the flesh and walk or be filled with the Spirit simultaneously. It's either one or the other. **Gal. 5:17.**

L. The difference is the cross

- The flesh is rendered powerless at the cross which frees us to walk /be influenced/be controlled/be filled with the Spirit.



M. Conclusion

- It might be helpful to end our time by going back to a question we asked several weeks back.
- ***What problems are you facing today?***
- And our answer was; ***God's provision for all of man's problems is the Cross.***

1. Are you not sure where you will spend eternity? ***The cross is God's provision.***
 2. Is the problem you are having today financial? ***The cross is God's provision.***
 3. Are you having relationship problems - husband/wife, parent/child? ***The cross is God's provision.***
 4. Are you uncertain as to God's will for your life? ***At the cross, which is God's provision, you will discover His will.***
 5. Do you find it difficult to have a consistent devotional time, or prayer time? ***The cross is God's provision.***
 6. Are the temptations of the world seemingly too great for you? ***The cross is God's provision.***
 7. Do you find it impossible to commit your life to God? ***The cross is God's provision.***
 8. Do you see Satan as a powerful enemy that is consistently defeating you? ***The cross is God's provision.***
 9. Are you struggling with fear, anxiety, bitterness, impatience, anger, etc. The answer is the same. ***God's provision for man's dilemma is the cross.***
- No matter what problem we are facing, the cross is God's remedy/God's solution/God's provision.

