“The Glory Side of the Cross”

Gal. 6:12-15; Jer. 9:23-24

(notes based on the sermon by Elder Drew Wenstrom, Hayden Bible Church, 9/25/22)

We have crosses as ornaments in our houses, we have crosses as jewelry around our necks. These crosses remind us that Jesus has provided the means by which we are saved. He even calls us brothers and sisters and friends! Jesus went willingly to the cross to be punished for our sins. We have been called out of darkness into His marvelous light.

When Jesus went to the cross, He had evildoers on either side of Him. One looked for earthly deliverance, with no regard for eternal consequences. (Q1) The other knew he was guilty of sin, and that Jesus was the atoning sacrifice for him. That man had no baptism, no circumcision, no church attendance- he was only trusting in the One hanging on the cross next to him.

Paul’s letter to the Galatians was written to counter false teaching that said you must be circumcised on top of your justification by faith. This is heresy. Justification by faith is reliance solely on Christ for salvation. Through Jesus’ death on the cross, we are counted righteous. It is NOT by doing something to make ourselves righteous. Adding anything to the cross is heresy. No one can keep the whole law; no one is without sin. But faith in Christ’s finished work on the cross is what makes us righteous in God’s eyes.

We don’t have this controversy about circumcision in 2022. So, what form does this heresy take today? Some teach that you must be in a certain denomination. Some teach that baptism is a necessary work for salvation. Still others teach legalism: you must have good works to outweigh your bad works. (Q2) It seems as if there are two religions in the world today: the religion of Divine accomplishment and the religion of human achievement. The latter denies the need for Christ’s death. Jesus’ death on the cross is the only atoning work that God accepts. We bring nothing to our salvation but our sin. To glory in the cross is to rejoice in what Christ has done. To glory in the cross is to delight in and extol the Most High God in the victories of His grace. If anyone could have been saved by works, Paul would have been. BUT HE WASN’T! Paul was saved by faith!

Do we glory in God or in ourselves? Paul David Tripp says, “… there is no reason to boast. There is nothing for which we can take credit. All praise, honor, worship, and service go to God and God alone. He sought us. He birthed us. He sustains us. He matures us. He protects us. And he will finally deliver us. To Him be the glory.” (New Morning Mercies, Sept. 24). We celebrate God with praise because He has chosen us for Himself. He foreknew us, predestined us, called us, justified us, and glorified us. These are all past tense- it’s already happened in His eyes! We have been redeemed from sin’s penalty and power, and someday from its presence. We are heirs with Christ: we are now children of God, adopted into His family.

The cross is a dividing line between 2 kingdoms: One is the Kingdom of God. We are children of Light. We have life and purpose (John 12:46; 1John 5:4-5). (Q3) The other kingdom is opposed to God. The residents are children of darkness. Their lives are ruled by self-gratification (Eph.2:1-2). The children of God’s Kingdom have a new identity based on their new position (Gal. 2:20). They are no longer shackled to the things of this world. The faithful believer has no more compelling interest in the things of this world (2Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15). He is a new creature. He has been given a new heart. On the glory side of the cross, we boast in HIS divine accomplishment. Are you living on the glory side of the cross? (Q4) (Q5)

**QUESTIONS:**

1. How often do WE look for earthly deliverance from our pains, our diseases, or our troubles and trials? How can we instead keep our focus on things above?
2. Does this heresy (“the Gospel PLUS…”) take any other forms in 2022?
3. What is your purpose at this stage of your life?
4. In one translation, Heb. 10:14 says, “For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.” What is that offering? “Has perfected” (past tense) refers to what? “… are being sanctified” is ongoing. Aren’t you glad He’s not finished with you yet!!
5. Charles Wesley wrote the lyrics to one of my favorite hymns: “And Can it Be?” Full of great theology, this hymn rises and soars, especially when accompanied on a pipe organ! Listen to these words from the fifth stanza:

“No condemnation now I dread

Jesus, and all in Him, is mine!

Alive in Him, my living Head,

And clothed in righteousness Divine,”

THIS is what Christ did for us on the cross! This is why we can approach our Heavenly Father with outstretched arms!

“When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” (Watts)

1. When I survey the wondrous cross  
   On which the Prince of glory died,  
   My richest gain I count but loss,  
   And pour contempt on all my pride.
2. Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,  
   Save in the death of Christ my God!  
   All the vain things that charm me most,  
   I sacrifice them to His blood.
3. See from His head, His hands, His feet,  
   Sorrow and love flow mingled down!  
   Did e’er such love and sorrow meet,  
   Or thorns compose so rich a crown?
4. Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
   That were a present far too small;  
   Love so amazing, so divine,  
   Demands my soul, my life, my all.