**Remember the Cross**

Colossians 2:13-15

**Introduction**

On the north side of our church building there stands a 75-foot tall cross. Perhaps some here have never noticed it. How is it possible to miss such a prominent structure? Walking in at ground level without looking up, it is easy to go in and out of the church building without seeing it. Perhaps some have noticed but have just become familiar with it, so much so that it has lost its significance. Unfortunately, that is a sad commentary on the life of many Christians. Living under the shadow of the cross, we miss its significance. In the text, Paul reminds us of the cross of Christ—the battle fought there, the victory won there, and the hope, forgiveness, and new life it brings to the Christian. *“It is clearly Paul’s conviction that the cross of Christ in and of itself gives the clearest and most complete understanding to the Christian of the fullness that is in the gospel. (Stott)”*

1. **Prior to salvation, man is in desperate need. (v. 13)** 
   1. You were dead in your sins. (v. 13a)
      1. “Being dead” speaks figuratively of persons unable to respond to God because of spiritual alienation.
      2. The Greek word for “sins” means a deviation from living according to what has been revealed as the right way to live. It is used of serious offenses against both God and man.
      3. You were not the people of God. You were not set apart to God.
   2. God’s solution is presented. (v. 13b)
      1. “Quickened” – to make alive together with; to cause to live together with.
      2. “Forgiven” – to cancel or do away with a debt that is owed; to give pardon for a wrong that has been done to someone.
2. **How could such sinners as we be made alive and forgiven?**
   1. We had to be made aware of our sin. The law shows us our need of God’s salvation. It functions as a mirror. A mirror just shows you your need for cleansing, but it does not make you clean.
   2. An honest look into God’s Word reveals the true nature of your sin.
      1. Illustration: If you sinned five times a day, that is 1,825 sins a year. If you lived 70 years, you will have broken God’s commandments 127,750 times.
      2. You will have to answer for every sin before God.
      3. Only a corrupt judge would let it slide. A good and honest judge says that justice demands that you pay for your crimes.
   3. Men have tried solutions that fail.
      1. The philosophies of man will fail you because they dismiss God and sin.
      2. Man-made religion will fail you.
      3. The bottom line is that you can’t trust man’s solutions to solve man’s problem because man is the problem!
   4. As sinners with a record against us, we needed forgiveness.
      1. Therefore, forgiveness would require someone who never sinned and who was willing to take the punishment for your sin.
      2. Only then could justice be served so that you could go free.
   5. As sinners, we needed new life.
      1. It would take someone who had the power over death to give you new life.
      2. Thankfully, Jesus was sent by the Father to die in your place.
      3. Through His death, burial, and resurrection you can be forgiven and have new life!
   6. Therefore, the gospel calls for repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts 20:21) You can’t be saved apart from the gospel or by trusting in false hopes. You must repent and believe the gospel.
   7. Repentance and faith in Christ result in forgiveness of your sins and new life in Christ.
      1. Forgiveness is important because of guilt of the past. If God did not forgive us for our past sins, it would not matter if we were delivered from present sin.
      2. New life is important because of your present and future battle with the flesh. If God did not deliver us from the reigning power of sin, forgiveness would be only a momentary victory.
      3. Forgiveness and new life are important, and both were accomplished through the cross.
3. **Central Idea: God canceled the sinner’s record of guilt through Christ’s death on the cross.**
   1. Christ’s death on the cross saved us when we could not meet the demands of living for God, and it blotted out the handwriting of the ordinances that was against us. (v.14)
      1. The words “the handwriting” means a handwritten legal document, such as a promissory note or record of indebtedness; it is not the law itself, but the record of charges for breaking the law and shows one to be chargeable with offenses for which they must pay the penalty.
      2. “Ordinances” – a decree; a commandment; a requirement; a fixed rule or set of rules prescribing what people must do
      3. The ordinances were against us; they were opposite or contrary to us, even hostile to us.
      4. What did He do with that which was written against us?
         1. He blotted it out and took it away, meaning he eliminated it, did away with it, removed it, and erased it! It means to cause something to cease by obliterating any evidence.
         2. Jesus took it out of the way by nailing it to the cross. “God nails the accusation against us to the cross of Jesus.” (O’Brien)
      5. You have no charges against you!
   2. Christ’s death on the cross delivered us from the powers of evil. (v. 15)
      1. “Spoiled” is to take off or strip off; to render an enemy helpless by disarming or taking away their power. It also refers to firmly renouncing a former sinful life by changing one’s character; to no longer behave as before.
      2. “Principalities and powers” refers to spiritual foes, including Satan.
      3. “Made a shew” is to expose; to make a public example of as a warning; to publicly disgrace. It was not done in secret!
      4. “Triumphing” speaks of celebrating a triumph by leading prisoners of war in a victory procession. This was done so that there was no question as to who won the victory. It shows God’s overcoming power so that the people under His rule could rejoice and live.
      5. The spiritual foes of man were disarmed at the cross.
      6. That which was a means of death became the means to life for the Christian.
   3. Illustration: The Battle of Iwo Jima in WWII.
      1. For 36 days, 110,000 US marines fought above ground on a tiny island 1/3 the size of Manhattan, just 7.5 square miles. The defending Japanese fought from below ground, digging 1,500 rooms into the rock that where connected with 16 miles of tunnels; the US Marines rarely saw a Japanese soldier. Historians described U.S. forces' attack against the Japanese defense as "throwing human flesh against reinforced concrete."
      2. The Japanese were prepared to fight to the death, ready to blast the beaches with heavy artillery, rockets, and machine guns. On February 19, 1945, the US big guns opened up on Iwo Jima and dropped bombs for a solid hour, leaving the entire island smoking. The battle was won by the inch-by-inch tenacity of the US foot soldier. Four days later, Sergeant Mike Strank, along with 5 other men, received the order to climb Mt. Suribachi and raise the US flag so that all on the island could see it. To this day, the flag raised at Iwo Jima is a symbol of the victory won at this location and for the entire war.
      3. Just as the flag raised at Iwo Jima reminds us of the price others paid for our freedom, the cross and the empty tomb remind us of the price Jesus paid to redeem mankind.

**Conclusion**

You have no enemies that can harm you. You can live through the power of Christ, not dominated by guilt or sinful influences. Most believers do not understand the great truth that forgiveness and new life were made possible by the cross of Christ. What are you facing in life? Look to the cross and remember the victory there.