

new life in the following words:

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me (Galatians 2:20 NKJV).

In the words of A.W. Tozer, in coming to Christ we do not bring our old life up onto a higher plane; we leave it at the cross. Christ becomes the great enabler for the new life that starts to take root in us. We become a new creation in Christ, with a new nature, habits, attitude and perspective. The cross is offensive to the world because it points to the insufficiency of human effort to attain righteousness before a holy God. The cross deflates human pride—the holier-than-thou-attitude which deludes a person into believing he is better than others. Many people believe that their good works can earn them salvation and they do not need any Saviour to die for their sins. Their sense of self-righteousness comes in the way of accepting the provision of God in Christ.

The cross is the place where we realize that we have to leave the world behind us. This awakening is the inner power of Christ working in us to transform us into His image. We can take pride in what happened on the cross for us. All that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16 NKJV)—is crucified for us on the cross. With grateful hearts we can say after the Apostle Paul: *God forbid that I should*

boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world (Galatians 6:14).

The cross is a place where we have the best example of a life to follow. The Apostle Peter reminds us about this point of our bearing in the following words; *For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that you should follow His steps: Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth; who when He was reviled, did not revile in return; When He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed* (1 Peter 2:21-24 NKJV).

We cannot conceive of the Christian faith without the cross. It is the very epitome and centerpiece of Christianity. The Cross is central to Christian theology and should be the focal point of our Christian life. The Apostle Paul believed that God had called him to preach the gospel not with wisdom of words lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect (1 Corinthians 1: 17 NKJV). Charles Spurgeon, the great evangelist, once said that we slander Christ if we think we have to draw people by anything else but the preaching of Christ crucified. For thirty years, Spurgeon made the cross the cornerstone of his preaching. Unless we personalize the message of the cross it has no power and meaning for us. Our redemption, transformation and hope

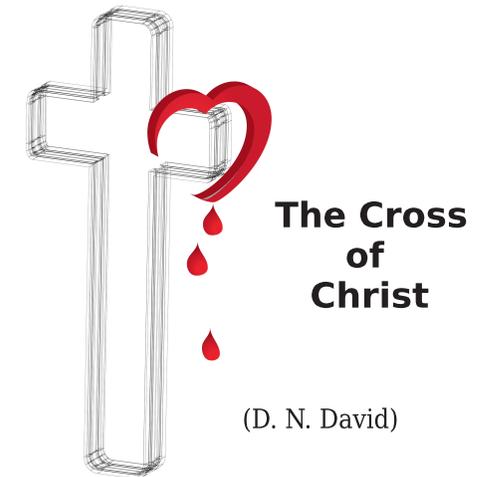
for a better world—all, lie only at the foot of the Cross of Jesus Christ. John Bunyan in his classic book *The Pilgrim's Progress* best crystallizes our feelings as I conclude this reflection on the Cross for you to seriously consider:

*Thus far did I come laden [laden] with my sin,
Nor could aught ease the grief that I was in,
Till I came hither. What a place is this!
Must here be the beginning of my bliss?
Must here the burden fall from off my back?
Must here the strings that bound it to me crack?
Blessed Cross! Blessed Sepulchre! Blessed rather be
The man that there was put to shame for me.*

Only Jesus who died on the cross for your sins can redeem you and make you whole TODAY if you put a child-like faith in Him and acknowledge Him as your Saviour and Lord.

Please contact us if you have more questions, or to tell us of your decision to trust in the finished work of Christ on the cross for your salvation. We have free Bible studies by mail for you.

Websites: westerntractmission.org/
& impact-Canada.org
email: Hope@westerntractmission.org
Impact Canada Ministries Inc.
401 33rd Street West
Saskatoon, SK . S7L 0V5



The cross is a symbol of Christianity. A symbol can be a material object or an emblem that represents an invisible quality or idea. Every religion has its own symbol which tries to convey its main theme or essence. The cross is so central to Christian faith that without it Christianity would be reduced to a mere religion devoid of its power. The cross became a symbol of Christianity only after it was stained with the blood of Christ—when Jesus died on the cross of Calvary for the sins of the world and rose again the third day. The cross points to Christ and his finished work of salvation for mankind. Any other association with the cross is misleading and meaningless. Before Christ, the cross was an instrument of torture and punishment for the enemies of the Roman Empire. Every criminal or insurgent was put on a cross in a public place and left to die there in agony. Such punishment was designed to strike terror in the hearts of people and instill respect for Roman authority and power. At the instigation of some misguided Jewish leaders, the Roman government

pronounced Jesus as a criminal to be hanged on the cross for defiance of the Jewish laws.

The world's perception of the cross is varied and mixed. To some people, the cross is a symbol of defeat—a promising movement coming to a tragic end with the death of Jesus. To the philosophers of the world, the cross is utter foolishness. It does not stand to reason how 'one person' can die for the sins of the world—past, present and future. Further, to punish an innocent person for the sins of others is considered unjust, barbarous and cruel to the rational mind which values virtues, aesthetics and learning as part of wisdom. The devout Jews waiting for their Messiah to deliver them from Roman bondage stumbled at the cross—a suffering Messiah on the cross was a total enigma to them. The Bible expresses these thoughts in the following words:

[Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.](#) (1 Corinthians 1:20-24 NKJV).

However, once we understand that Jesus was God incarnate and his sacrifice on the cross was purely voluntary and volitional and

it was his love for dying humanity which impelled him to go to the cross in obedience to God's will, we can then see this seemingly gruesome act totally in a different light. Of his sacrifice Jesus himself said:

[My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have the power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father](#) (John 10:17-18 NKJV).

Some people believe there is a magical power inherent in the cross that can ward off evil and protect us from danger. They like to wear a cross as an amulet in a necklace. Some devout Christians make the sign of the cross to seek God's blessing before commencing any important task or facing a critical situation. But the cross in itself has no such mysterious power resident in it. Some people may wear a necklace with a cross as its pendant out of their love and devotion for Jesus. Such public display of devotion is commendable but still the pendant does not have any supernatural power. It is just a sacred symbol forming part of a beautiful jewelry item having perhaps a sentimental value for the person who wears it.

In some parts of the world the cross has come to be associated with crusades that embroiled Muslims and Christians in bloody wars. It only stirs up stark memories of merciless killings on both sides of the conflict that lasted for centuries. There

also have been times when the symbol of the cross, worn on a person, saved the life of that person. For example, at the partition of India which gave birth to Pakistan and India as two distinct countries many people who were not Christians wore the sign of the cross so people mistaking them for Christians would spare them from the killing which went on unchecked among the Hindus and the Muslims. Most Christians did not take sides in the conflict when people went on a rampage killing one another. Christians sheltered the fugitives in their homes and did what they could to protect innocent lives. To promote goodwill and understanding among the Hindus and the Muslims, Christians were often called on to be mediators. The cross at that time represented compassion and care for the suffering people. Associating such good or bad feelings with the cross is part of history but this is not what the cross is all about. In reality, the cross only points to Jesus Christ and his atoning sacrifice on it. In the words of Martin Luther, the great theologian of the Christian faith, the cross is 'the theology of Christianity and that is what we need to understand to appreciate its significance.'

The Cross reminds us about many eternal truths of Christianity.

The Cross reminds us of Jesus' victory over sin and death when he rose from the dead. We read in Colossians 2:15: [Having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over](#)

[them by the cross.](#) The Apostle Paul talking about this ultimate victory in Christ says: [So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your sting? O Hades where is your victory?"](#) The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. [But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"](#) (1 Corinthians 15:54-57 NKJV).

The Cross is a place where we can experience the forgiveness of our sins. When we do experience this forgiveness we can echo the thoughts of Spafford, the hymn writer:

[My sin—O the bliss of this glorious thought!—
My sin, not in part, but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more;
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!](#)

The cross is a place where we first experience God's divine love. We can relate to what the Apostle Paul says in the epistle to the Romans: [For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet perhaps for a good man some would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us](#) (Romans 5:6-8 NKJV).

The cross is a place where we start to grow in the image of Christ. This transformation is a lifelong process which is sure and perceptible. The Apostle Paul talks about this