



Part 4 - Living the Cross-centred life

Sunday 24 March 2024

Introduction

What do you think it will look like to live a “Cross-centred life”?

Recap...

Week 1 we looked at “Why the Cross is necessary”

1. Why **we** need the Cross
2. Why **God** needs the Cross

Week 2 we considered “What did the Cross of Christ achieve” and we saw that the Lord Jesus:

1. Was appointed to be **our substitute** – the true and better Adam
2. Came to **make atonement** – taking the punishment for our sin

Week 3 we saw that the Cross was...

1. Good news for us
2. Bad news for Satan
3. Good news for God

1. The importance of the Resurrection

We cannot understand what the Cross of Christ achieves without the resurrection. Without the resurrection we would be unable to prove that the Lord Jesus' mission had succeeded.

...if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. ¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.
1 Corinthians 15:17-19 (NIV 2011)

But the good news is that Christ has indeed been raised (1 Corinthians 15:20) meaning the Lord Jesus' death on the Cross was not futile.

(a) Debt paid in full

When he had received the drink, Jesus said, 'It is finished.' With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.
John 19:30 (NIV 2011)

He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.
Romans 4:25 (NIV 2011)

The Battle of Waterloo Wellington defeated...



Wellington defeated...the enemy!

(b) Satan defeated

...having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Colossians 2:15 (NIV 2011)

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.¹⁹ After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits –²⁰ to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built.

1 Peter 3:18-20 (NIV 2011)

Watch out!

Because Satan knows that he is a defeated foe and that his time is short, “He is filled with fury, because he knows his time is short.” (Revelation 12:12b)

However, because he is defeated, he no longer holds the same threat as he used to. That’s because, even though Satan is described as “the one who holds the power of death” (Hebrews 2:14b), death too is defeated.

(c) Death defeated

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus was a game-changer. It didn't simply bring him back from death (that's **resuscitation**) but brought him through death to NEW LIFE (that's **resurrection**).

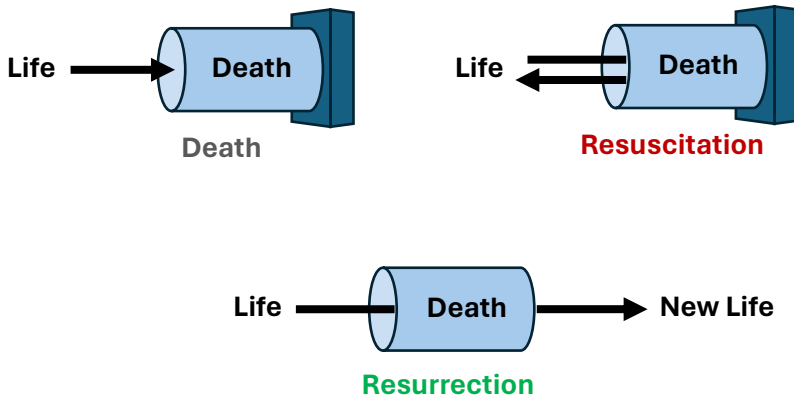


Diagram adjusted from Cross-Examined by Mark Meynell, p. 137

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.⁹ For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.

¹⁰ The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

Romans 6:8-10 (NIV 2011)

And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

Romans 8:11 (NIV 2011)

2. Living the Cross-centred life

What links these three pictures?



*“..we must understand that as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value to us.” **John Calvin***

(a) Confidence & comfort

We find rich **comfort** in the Cross, because there we see that we are loved deeply (Romans 5:8; 1 John 3:16), giving us joy and deep faith.

*The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God,
who loved me and gave himself for me.*

Galatians 2:20 (NIV 2011)

But more than comfort, we have **confidence**. Because the Lord Jesus has died for us and we are joined to him by faith, we are righteous in God's sight forever!

*Therefore, there is now no condemnation
for those who are in Christ Jesus...*

Romans 8:1 (NIV 2011)

*Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to
enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus...²² let us draw
near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that
faith brings... **Hebrews 10:19, 22** (NIV 2011)*

We don't need to be ruled by **legalism**.

Legalism claims that the death of the Lord Jesus on the Cross was either unnecessary or insufficient.

Remember John 20:30, "It is finished!"



We don't need to be crushed by **condemnation**.

Condemnation claims that the Lord Jesus' death wasn't enough to deal with the worst of me.

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. ¹⁶ But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.

1 Timothy 1:15-16 (NIV 2011)

Remember Romans 8:1, "Therefore, there is **NOW** no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus..."

The Cross of Christ brings us such COMFORT and CONFIDENCE that we are to be a people marked by CELEBRATION (see Revelation 5:12).

(b) Community

... the very purpose of his self-giving on the cross was not just to save isolated individuals, and so perpetuate their loneliness, but to create a new community whose members would belong to him, love one another and eagerly serve the world.

John Stott

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,¹⁵ by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace,¹⁶ and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

Ephesians 2:14-16 (NIV 2011)

The fact that God makes us into a community of people who love one another (and even love our enemies) is illustrated in communion.

(c) Conflict

When we trust the Cross of Christ, we turn from our sin and live, with the Spirit's help, for God. And at that moment a battle begins...

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.¹⁷ For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.

Galatians 5:16-17 (NIV 2011)

Because of the Cross of Christ...
sin's **PENALTY** is paid,
sin's **POWER** is broken,
but sin's **PRESENCE** remains

Our victory over sin is **NOW**

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Galatians 5:24 (NIV 2011)

Our victory over sin is **NOT YET**

For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

Romans 8:13 (NIV 2011)

“The choicest believers, who are assuredly freed from the condemning power of sin, ought yet to make it their business all their days to mortify the indwelling power of sin.”

John Owen

(d) Cost

Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it.

Mark 8:34-35 (NIV 2011)

- Denying self
- Taking up our cross
- Following Christ

Give up yourself, and you will find your real self. Lose your life and you will save it. Submit to death, the death of your ambitions and favourite wishes every day and the death of your whole body in the end: Submit with every fibre of your being, and you will find eternal life. ...Look for yourself, and you will find in the long run only hatred, loneliness, despair, rage, ruin, and decay. But look for Christ and you will find Him, and with Him everything else thrown in.

C S Lewis, Mere Christianity, 175.

