



The Austin Stone
COMMUNITY CHURCH

CALVARY'S CROSS

BY JOHN MURCHISON

The history of humanity is divided into two parts by the person of Christ. We mark events by whether they happened before Christ (BC) or in the “year of our Lord” (AD). The fact of Christ’s life, death, and resurrection is not just the pivotal point for all history, but also the pivotal point for the life of every believer.

Yet despite knowing the centrality of the cross of Christ for our lives, we far too often seem jaded to the amazing truth of what happened at Calvary. We come to church, we sing the songs we are asked to sing, and we leave thinking more about what needs to be done that week than we do about the God we just worshiped! The lyrics to the song “Calvary’s Cross” are a call to the believer to treasure the cross of Jesus with depth and breadth, resulting in a response of worship and sacrifice.

Every day I’m blinded by forgetfulness

The song starts by calling out this indifference that we often feel towards the cross. As we sing, “Every day I’m blinded by forgetfulness,” we are confessing to God our sinful hearts and pleading with Him to remind us of his presence and power. Because that power is greatly displayed in Christ’s willing sacrifice of Himself on the cross, the rest of the lyrics are filled with reminders of what happened that day at Calvary.

In my place, the cross You suffered willfully

Scripture clearly teaches that we are all sinners (Romans 3:23) and that the payment that we earn for our sin is death (Romans 6:23). As sinners, we are enemies of God (Colossians 1:21, Romans 5:10) and therefore objects of His wrath (Colossians 3:6, Romans 1:18, Ephesians 5:6). Because of the justice of God, this wrath cannot simply dissipate (2 Thessalonians 1:6) yet in his great mercy he made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf (2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus made a willing choice to take our place (John 10:18).

From Your wounds, Your grace was flowing infinite.

As the second verse says, “the wrath of God poured” on Christ rather than on us, the ones that earned it. Jesus’s death is accepted on our behalf, and by his wounds we are healed (Isaiah 53:5). By believing that we are sinners deserving of God’s wrath, and that Jesus substituted Himself by dying in our place and rising again, we are forgiven for our sins and made children of God (John 1:12).

I treasure Calvary’s Cross... I rest in marvelous love

The song's chorus says that as we treasure these truths about the cross of Christ, and remember His innocent blood, we will "rest in marvelous love." How can treasuring this brutal death on our behalf result in rest for our souls? The answer is found in Romans 8:

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

- Romans 8:31-35, ESV

How could we think that God would withhold anything good from us if He did not even withhold His own Son? Verses 33-34 remind us that because of Christ's death and resurrection, no one can condemn us or bring any charge against us. We have already been made just. Even when suffering comes our way, we never need doubt God's love for us, for He has proven it on the cross. Nothing can separate us from His love (vv 37-39). Because of Christ's death and resurrection, we can completely rest assured in His love.

Today proclaim all my surrender

This song does not just call Christians to think deeply on the cross, but also to think on it often. The cross of Christ did not simply change our eternal destination, but also opened up a relationship with God our Father. Unfortunately, many of us live our lives thankful for salvation while neglecting the everyday blessing of knowing the love of God that the cross of Christ made possible. This is like an adopted child who is thankful for his new legal status, but doesn't have any interest in enjoying the love of his new parents.

As we treasure the cross every day, our response is rest and worship. Because He gave His life for us, our joyful response is to give our lives for Him. "...present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship" (Romans 12:1). Our response to treasuring the cross is everyday surrender to His will, not ours.

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.
(Philippians 4:8, ESV)

Christian, what is more "worthy of praise" than the cross of Christ? Think about the cross, treasure it, and rest in His marvelous love today.