

The Cross for Me

By James E. Seward

I hear a lot of people talk about the necessity of "preaching the cross". But seldom do I hear anything that would satisfy my own heart, so I've been trying to give others what God has revealed to me about the life of the cross.

Most people do not get the intricacies of how the cross works in their lives. I hope to share this in this first tape, *The Cross for Me*. There will be a second tape, *The Cross for Others*, because if we have Christ in us this life will pour out to others.

To begin with, let's look at Gal. 6:14-15:

Vs. 14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

6's. 15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

Paul is going to glory in something, and that "something" is the cross of our Lord, Jesus Christ ... by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. The thing that speaks to me here is that there is a death; a complete cutting off of the world and the way the world works, and of me unto the world. There's a real fence put up there; an unreconcilable finality to the world and to me.

Let me go on to the next verse: For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. Now what does this represent? It represents "religion". It probably goes back to the law of Moses where all the Jews were circumcised in the flesh.

But not only are we talking about orthodox religion from Moses, we're also talking about religion in a very general sense. So it

says that "religion", one way or another, doesn't amount to a hill of beans. But what does matter? Paul says, "a new creation".

If we look at the embodiment of what's implied in these two verses, the cross is very effective here in showing that I have been put to death with Christ. (I'm going to explain this a little later.) I have gone to hell with Him because He carried me in His own body into the grave. And not only that, but I have been resurrected as a brand new person.

Religion doesn't amount to anything, but we have been made new creatures in Christ. God is going to use the new creature and not religion.

Now I asked the question, "Why should one glory only in the cross?" Paul knew for a real fact that unless Christ died on the cross we could have never been saved. Also, Christ could have never been able to live His life in us. This brings us to the explanation of what salvation, or the gospel, really is.

Before we read some other verses here, let me just say this. When you got saved, when you got born again, the Father put another person in you. He's not going to depend on you to get the work done. But He's going to depend on that Christ

that He put in you to live the life that's going to be pleasing to the Father.

I want to give you a picture of what Paul's testimony is to salvation. Now of course he was on the road to Damascus to kill Christians and to imprison them. He was an orthodox Jew and he felt it was God's will to wipe out this so-called false religion that had been stirred up by Jesus Christ. At least, he was convinced it was false. He was using all his will and all his energy to wipe this group out. So while he was there, he had a revelation of Christ on the road. The people around saw bright lights and they thought they heard it thunder. But here was Paul looking up at this vision of Christ and he said, "Who art thou, Lord?" That word "Lord" is really "Adonai". He recognized a divine creature that was Jesus. So when he said, "Who are you, Lord?", the answer was, "I am

Jesus whom you have been persecuting". Oh, it was a real shock to him and he said, "What would you have me to do?" So of course, this was the beginning of Paul's ministry.

Here is Paul's account of his first meeting with Christ.

Paul's Salvation - Gal 1:15-18

Vs. 15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,

Vs. 16 To reveal his son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: but went into Arabia, and returned again into Damascus.

Vs. 18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him 15 days.

Now let's just look at this a minute. If you read the King James Version and go to a Greek lexicon you're going to see something very startling with just one little word. He says, "...when it pleased God to reveal his Son in me". Not TO me, IN me.

(Just as a side line here, would you like to know what the most-used phraseology in the New Testament is? It's the words "Christ in you" or "you in Christ". It's mentioned 250 times in the New Testament. And merely from the weight of scripture in those phrases you've got to say that God is trying to get something across to humanity.)

Some of the modern translators will use the phrase "reveal his Son to me", and that is error.

Now Paul didn't confer with the other Apostles; he didn't ask their opinions, or anything. He went down into Arabia and was there for about 3 years. This is a time when Paul was getting revelation from God Almighty. Christ was teaching him. I'd like to refer to John 14, 15 and 16. This passage was written by John the

Apostle and it was written many years later than when Paul had this revelation. When you consider what the Holy Spirit does, you can see Him active in Paul down there in the desert.

We have several scripture verses where Jesus Christ gave him the message of what the true gospel is for us as new born creatures in Christ. In other words, the Born Again, the Gentiles. If you look in the 28 th chapter of Acts, when God

has turned from Israel and is turning out to the Gentiles, this is the time when God is going to reveal Himself in a wonderful measure to us.

I want to give you a couple of scripture verses on what God was doing to him there in the desert.

Col. 1:25 ... whereof I am made a minister according to the dispensation of God, which is given to me for you to fulfil the word of God; even the mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations, but now has been made manifest to his saints to whom God would make known what is the richness of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Now notice here, Jesus Christ has given Paul this message to pass out.

I Tim. 1:11 According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which has committed to my trust this message

Another very bold statement:

Rom. 2:16 In that day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

Rom. 16 Now to him that is a power to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began.

The message that Paul got from Jesus Christ here is the last statement about salvation for us as believers in the bible. This is the only message for those who are born again.

Paul states that if any one brings any other message than this, let him be accursed. Now this is strong stuff.

We've had teaching from Warren in our fellowship about rightly dividing the word of truth. We know that the whole bible was given for us and all the words are blessed for us. They are God's words and all true. But not everything was directed especially to us as born again believers. Except for the Holy Spirit rightly revealing Christ, we wouldn't know where to put these things in proper emphasis. And so for the born again believers it's different than the other parts of the bible when we look at the message of what God has given to men at different times.

I want to get into the details of the cross here as quick as I can. Now the first thing we talk about in being saved is believing. It reminds me of a marriage ceremony. I'm going to quote a verse from the Gospel of John:

John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God

I remember when I got married I stood in front of a preacher with my wife and I said "I take you as my wife" and she took me as her husband. The night I got saved, which was about 48 years ago, I gave myself to the Lord Jesus Christ. You may say, is that believing? Well I would say this: that's the best I knew how to do. I just said, "If you're real I'm going to give you my life, but I want something back. I want to know you. I want to know you in a real way."

So it reminds me of a marriage relationship where I'm going to definitely do something. I received Christ as my Savior. Some call that believing.

I'd like to give you an example of what I call biblical belief. Many times when I'm speaking I'll take a chair and put it up in front of the congregation. I'll say, "How many of you believe in this chair?" They'll look at it and beat on it and so forth. They'll say it looks good and "yes, I believe in the chair." I'll say "No, you don't." Well eventually someone will get up and go sit in it. Well now we're getting some where! If you look at the chair and it looks like something that will hold you up, and if you put your seat in it and take your feet off the ground, the chair is going to hold you up. Now that's belief. That is bible belief. It's not just believing that Jesus exists, that God is around and so forth. Even the Devil believes that Jesus is the Christ, but he's certainly not saved! Biblical belief is not merely mental acknowledgement, but belief is when I take Him into my life and receive Him, and I give my life to Him. To me that is believing. You can call it "receiving" if you want to.

I believe the primary emphasis of the revelation to Paul was the cross. When he sat down there in the desert and began to listen to Jesus reveal Himself, the first thing I believe he saw was this issue of the cross.

The next point is that salvation is not a thing. There is not a "thing" called salvation. Salvation is a Person. We receive a Person, not a bunch of doctrines or theories or precepts.

I have a box that I bring out when I speak. I painted it white and painted on it the letters of Christ and wrapped it up with a ribbon like a Christmas present. Inside the box I put a scroll that I made with a long piece of rolled up paper. And I say, "When you receive Christ as your savior, you get a Person." Now I hold up the box which has Christ written on it, wrapped up in a ribbon. And the other thing you receive is the Holy Spirit that lives in your mind, will and emotions; in the soul parts of your being. (Here I hold up a Christmas ornament of a dove to represent the Holy Spirit.) And

He's there to make Jesus real. A lot of people say you're saved by the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit is not the Savior. Christ is the Savior. But the Holy Spirit is there to reveal Christ and to teach you Christ.

Now I pull the ribbon off the box, open it up and pull this scroll out. We received a Person and that Person is Salvation. So let's find out what this Person is like. Now I remember when I first got saved, I didn't know one end from the other. I just knew that the Lord had given me an impression in my heart that I was saved. I didn't know how it worked or anything like that, but I began to study and the Lord revealed things to me.

The first thing I noticed was that the fullness of the Godhead was bodily in Christ, and this Christ was in me. I also saw that He's my completion (Col. 3). He is all and in all. He is my way to the Father. You have no access to the Father except through Christ. He said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to the father but by me." No other way.

If we look in the first chapter of Colossians, the 30th verse, we find that He is wisdom, He is righteousness; He is sanctification; He is redemption. The first chapter of Ephesians, 7th verse, tells us that in Him is forgiveness.

The other thing I notice about forgiveness is what it's not. It's not God writing the list of my sins on a divine blackboard every time I do something wrong. If I go around convicted of sin and try to repent and confess it to Him, it's not God standing there with a divine eraser. That's just not it. You have to understand as we get into this business of the cross that we've been put into Christ. I died in Him. And so forgiveness is deeper than just erasing some misdoing off of a blackboard. He took the producer of sins out of me and put my sins right into the pits of hell.

As I received the person of Christ I discovered that I was I was crucified with Him. He is the express image of the Father. He is the true light, the bread of life. He's my shephard, he's my

savior. He's the true vine. He is my peace. He's the power. The Holy Spirit is not the power; Christ is the power of God.

When I began to find out the truth of all this, I felt that I ought to be more loving of others. But I found out that God does not give me love to give to anybody else. If you look at I John 4:16, it says that God is love. Now if God is love He can't give that to me. But we have another Person living His life in us. I have a loving Person living in my body and He will express that life out to others. It's not me doing it. I'm the container for Him.

Also, we find that He is eternal life. He's the word of life. He's the provider. He's my exceeding great reward. I don't love Him for what I can get out of Him. I just love Him because He's Jesus. He's my reward. He's my joy; he's my hope of glory. I am joined with Christ. I have become one spirit with Him. He's my only life. I am joint heirs with Him. In Christ I'm a brand new person. In Christ old things are passed away. In Christ I am seated in heavenly places with Him. He's my victory. He lives His life in me.

Now as we explore the Person that the Father has put in me, isn't it wonderful that I can see what He is. We've really got someone in us. Can you imagine? The Creator of the universe live in your mortal flesh. That's awesome to me. I don't think we've even scratched the surface to fathom what that really means.

Many people have got things centered on the Holy Spirit. What I'm about to say here does not demean the Holy Spirit, but they have the Holy Spirit saving you. They have the Holy Spirit empowering you and a lot of things that the Holy

Spirit was not given for. The Holy Spirit was given primarily, PRIMARILY, to make Jesus real. I have passed out hundreds and hundreds of fliers that give a synopsis of the facts about the Holy Spirit. It's all tied up in the Gospel of John. If you haven't read it, get your bible and go through it carefully. John 14,15,16 But I'm going to give you a synopsis of what the Holy Spirit is here to do, taken from the 14th, 15 and 16th chapters of the Gospel of John. Here we go:

He shall abide with you forever. He shall teach you all things.

He shall bring all things to your remembrance that I (Jesus) have said unto you.

- He will be your comforter.
- He shall testify of Me (Jesus).
- He will reprove the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.
- He will guide me into all truth.
- He shall not speak of himself.
- He will show you things to come.
- He shall glorify me (Jesus).
- He will take the things of Jesus and show them unto you.

Paul tells us in 1 Cor. 12:13 that the Holy Spirit puts us into Christ. And in Rom. 8:14, he tells us the Holy Spirit leads us.

Jesus Himself gives us the key to the Holy Spirit. As you start reading the 14th chapter of the Gospel of John there's a verse that says, "If you love me keep my commandments." A lot of people are confused about that. At least I was. Early in my Christian life I thought that I've got to keep the Ten Commandments to please Him, and love Him. That's my proof of love. But

that's not really the context of what He's talking about.

He had the disciples around Him the night before He was arrested. I'm going to put in the way that I have seen it. He said, "Now fellas, listen. If you really love me you'll do what I'm telling you here, because I'm going to give you some instructions. I've got to get out of here. I've got to go back to the Father." Well, they didn't understand what that meant.

So He said, "If you really love me, I'm going to give you some instructions. I'm going to go away, but I'm going to send back the Paraclete, or the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit." And the Holy Spirit would do all those things that I listed for you.

In the 14th chapter of John, the 20th verse, Jesus talks about the day of Pentecost. He says, "On that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." Now the people that were there on that day of Pentecost missed the whole business. Even though Jesus gave these instructions to them, they evidently did not remember. And when it came to the Pentecost, they got all caught up in the tongues and the miracles and the five thousand that were saved. They were taken up with that pretty completely.

But when Jesus told them about "I in you", nobody ever wrote about it. You didn't see Peter or John or any of them writing about it at that time. So what God had to do was get the meanest man He could find, Saul of Tarsus. A man going around trying to kill Christians. God caught him on the road to Damascus and saved him. Jesus revealed Himself to Paul in the desert. Paul was the one who began to talk about this very thing that we're talking about here. The inner life of Christ

There is a word that comes up in the epistles,, called "mystery". The mystery is a picture of what the gospel really is. The fullness of the gospel, called the mystery, is just not some unknown thing. But I guess it's not known to some person unless they've experienced it. Which is, Christ IN you.

And so, this whole statement here of John 14:20, "... at that day you shall know that I am in the Father, ye in me, and I in you", that's the mystery. The mystery is Christ in you. It took Paul's ministry to get that message across to us.

The next verse, 21, says: "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them...". Now again, this is not the Ten Commandments. This is not taking the old Judaic law and trying to do it. "If you've been listening to me, Disciples, you're going to do what I tell you. He it is that loveth me and he that loveth me shall be loved of my

Father and I will love him and (now get this) I will manifest Myself to him."

The thing that we talk about in our Fellowship, the question we ask is this: Have you had an inner revelation of Christ? We're not talking about necessarily being saved. But the promise of the Father and Christ himself is that He wants to manifest Himself as a living Person inside your mortal flesh.

I want to give you some other things about the Holy Spirit before talking about the cross. Jesus Himself gives us the key to the Holy Spirit with His own mouth. This is very, very important. Some denominations pay little to no attention to

the Holy Spirit. Many evangelicals and fundamentalists interchange the names of the spirit of God, the spirit of Christ, and the Holy Spirit. They change them around as if they are all the same, but they are not. Each has its own ministry, yet are one. The Holy Spirit is NOT the spirit of Christ or the spirit of God, or vice versa. Some Christians believe the Holy Spirit gives them power, but that is not the truth. Christ is the only power. The Holy Spirit can make Christ real who IS the power. Now that's correct. You look back at the ones that they quote and you'll see, ... and the Holy Spirit will come upon you and you'll receive power." Well, what's the power? It's not that God gives any human being power. They are crucified; they are dead in Christ. They are dead, so they don't have power. But the power is that the believer, who has been resurrected with Christ, has the knowledge of a powerful Christ that lives in him. THAT'S the power.

So the knowledge and the sensitivity to the living Christ within is the power that God is talking about. We have a powerful Christ IN us. The main purpose of the Holy Spirit is to work in my soul mind to make the Christ in me real. He is the power. We ourselves cannot live a life pleasing to God. Only Christ living in me can please the Father. Now it certainly takes some cooperation between myself and the One that's going to live in

me, Now I went to all this trouble of talking about the Holy Spirit because one has to have that knowledge, that knowing.

What's the cross all about? Many people say, well, we ought to go to the cross, and stand at the foot of the cross, and carry it and so forth This is religious nonsense. The cross is to be an inner

reality - taking me out of the way and bringing forth Christ.

The first mention of the crucifixion is from Revelation 13:8 where it talks about the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. We find that Christ, who is the Lamb, died unto the Father before the world was even formed. I don't know quite how that was done, but we have enough scripture that says that He was obedient to the Father. He loved the Father and the Father loved Him. He laid his life down unto the Father and the Father took it. So there was a crucifixion in the heart of God, or the Trinity, before there was ever any sinners, devil, or hell.

I wrote an article several years ago entitled "Why Did Christ Have to Die?". I had someone at a meeting who cried the whole time Warren was preaching. We had to give her a whole box of Kleenex because she was crying so much. And she came to me and asked, "Why did Christ have to die?" And for some reason it hit me as such a strange and deep question from her heart. Now I could give her all the cliches that the fundamentalists and evangelicals usually give. In other words, that Christ died for our sins. And that's the truth. He did die for our sins, but there's a lot more to it.

I looked back there to the time before the foundation of the world and here's the Trinity: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. I see the Son laying His life down to the Father. One of the pictures I got of that was Abraham and Isaac. As you remember in that story, the son Isaac was very obedient to Abraham when he took him up on the mount to offer him as a sacrifice because God wanted to have him as a sacrifice. So the son followed his father up there. I thought, boy that's a real love that son had for his father. I felt that this is indicative of how Christ felt toward His Father... THE Father.

I also noticed in the 17th chapter of the Gospel of John that Jesus talked about the love He and His Father had for each other even before the foundation of the world. I saw that the Son laying his life down for the Father was a love act. Not that the Father just imposed it on the Son. John 3:16 says, "God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."

So the Father gave his Son as a sacrifice and the Son volunteered for it. Even though the Son took a secondary place to the Father we see the Father eventually backing off in eternity and putting his Son up and making Him the creator of the universe. And as the Father steps into the background He gets his Son out before the world. He made Him King of kings and Lord of lords; the highest among every thing that ever existed. And then the Holy Spirit is given. And we find that the Holy Spirit does not speak of Himself, but He's there to make Jesus real. We see in the function of the Trinity that they all submit themselves to each other. I came up with a conclusion from all this: Life is never lived from oneself; it's always lived from another. And that Other is God.

My position, what I have learned, is that I am submissive to the Trinity so that They can live Their lives through me. So again, life is not lived from oneself, but from another. We conclude from Phil. 2:6 that Jesus made Himself of no reputation and became obedient unto the cross. This is beginning to get at what the cross really means. Paul came up with this great statement in I Cor. 2:2:

For I determine not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

What a statement! I can see Paul with a face like flint, like stone. I see purpose here, not to know anything among you except Christ. Now that reminds me of a statement that John made in the Gospel of John, 17th chapter, third verse. For this is life eternal: that we know the true and living God and Him whom God has sent. What a statement, just like Paul has said. This life eternal; to know the Son, to know the Father. This is the first thing we see about knowing Christ.

If you just have kind of an attachment to Christ, you don't know Him. You've got to have an inward revelation of what He is in your life. This is the revelation of Him IN you. Not only that, Paul says he's determined not to know anything save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. Now that's heavy. That's got direction to it. The direction I see is that He's crucified, which relates me to Christ, and that He lives his life in me. And Him crucified means that he's going to move out to the world. So what's indicated here is not just knowing Him as the person that lives in me, but seeing Him move out through me to a lost and dying world. I am the vessel that will carry Him out.

So here's what we see. You need a deep revelation of the cross. Many believers have little or no knowledge of what the cross means and have no sensitivity of the cross. The typical scripture that fundamentalists use for the cross is:

1 Cor. 15:13 Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures

Now, what are we talking about here? This picture of the cross has two parts to it. The first one is the legal sense: Christ died for my sins. If the Father was a judge looking down on us He's going to say, "Well, son, you have committed sins and you're going to go to hell. But I love you and I don't want you to go to hell, so I'm going to do something for you. You don't have the wherewithal, the power, or whatever it takes to pay for your sins. But I'll tell you what I'll do. I will pay for your sins Myself I will give my Son to die and pay for the ungodly life that you have lived... the rebellion to Me, all the sins and nastiness you've gone through. So I will do that for YOU." This is called being the justifier of all those that are saved. It's a legal thing, that through His blood He pays for our sins. This is something that He has done for us. It is a pure gift and we can't earn it.

The other part of the cross has to do with our body. Now when we talk about the cross I am reminded about taking communion. We talk about the blood and the body which are represented by wine and crackers, or grape juice and broken bread. The blood,

again, is the legal side. But the other part is not mentioned too much. This has to do with the fact that the cross enables the Father to put the Son in me. And the rest of that is that Christ will live his life in my body. Not much is said about that in most churches. This is why we have our ministry; to make this good and clear to people. Jesus said, in John 14:6:

I am the way the truth and the life. No man cometh into the Father, but by me.

I was trying to draw a chart which showed the bridge between the old life, the life of sin, and the life of righteousness. I wanted to make the bridge into a cross, but I changed my mind. I put JESUS across as the bridge. Christ is the bridge. But the means that Christ uses to get this done is the cross. So now we're talking about the cross.

I use pictures and charts to demonstrate when I'm speaking, to get ideas across. And so I took a piece of cardboard and folded it to put thin s inside. On the front I drew a human being. Inside I slipped another picture that looks rather spooky. It's a red flaming thing that may look like Satan. Now, Satan doesn't look like that; I just use it as a symbol. I put some horns on it and I call it the spirit of Satan. What I'm trying to illustrate is the condition of an unsaved person. Many denominations and theologians talk about original sin, the sin nature, and inbred sin (some of the Holiness people use that). But I looked at the scriptures and began to notice something. Look at Eph. 2:

And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: wherein

as time passed ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince and the power of the air; the spirit that now work in the children of disobedience.

Notice that phrase, "the spirit". What is that? That's the spirit of Satan. We're not talking about demon possession here.

Let's go on the third verse:

Among whom also we've had conversations in times past, in the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath even as others.

Now I'm using those scripture verses to talk about what the term "sinful nature" would be. Preachers will say, "I want the Lord to forgive me of my sin." Sin. Singular. I'll tell you what I'm getting at. Paul, when he writes about the cross in Romans 6 and 7, uses the word the "sin", singular. Not sins, plural, as in talking about the things that we do. But it has a deeper meaning. One preacher said that's the sin principal. Well, I don't like that because we're not talking about principles. We are talking about someone inside that produces an ungodly life. It's a person.

When Adam and Eve partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil they took upon themselves the spirit of Satan. That was passed all the way down to us. The only person who has not had that in him was Jesus Christ. He has not had that nature inside of Him. He was born of pure seed from the Father. Our seed came from Adam, so we've been in Adam all these years.

I am trying to personalize this false nature that lives within us. The 4th chapter of Genesis gives the first clue as to the personification of this sin nature or spirit of Satan. The 4th chapter of Genesis talks about Cain and Abel. Cain had killed his brother and felt condemned when the Lord was talking to him. Notice in the 6th verse, God said to him:

Why art thou wroth? Why has thy countenance fallen? If thy doest well thou shall not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lyeth at the door and unto thee shall be his desire and thou shall rule over him.

This is the first place in the scriptures that we have the personification of this sin spirit. You notice, "sin lyeth at the door". And He calls sin "he". I thought it's very interesting and it kind of proves my point.

Also, in the 8th chapter of the Gospel of John, Jesus is having quite a dispute with the Jews and He talks about two fathers. He says in 8:41:

You do the deeds of your father. then said they unto Him: We be not born of fornication. (They were throwing it back at Jesus that they did not believe in His miraculous birth.) We have one father, even God. And Jesus said: If God were your father you would love me for I proceed and I came forth from God. Neither came I out of myself, but He sent me. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lust of your father ye will do.

This was pretty condemning to talk about them as being servants of sin, as he did in verse 34:

Verily, verily I say unto you; whosoever commits a sin is a servant of sin. (That's the servant of the sin nature inside.)

Jesus talked about two fathers; your father and my Father. I sort of simplified it down and merely said that when Adam and Eve partook of that tree in rebellion to God, they took upon themselves the spirit of Satan.

Now let me talk about that spirit of Satan a little bit. Satan never let Adam and Eve know that he was in them. And the thing that he's pushed through them is nothing but a pack of lies. The big lie is that YOU are doing what ever you do. He would say to Adam, "If you sin, it's you doing it." But Adam did not realize that Satan was the producer of sins in him. And that's true of all humanity. They say, "Well I just lived my life. I didn't plan to go out and sin." We had a black comedian in our country who used to joke, "The devil made me do it!" Well, we used to laugh at that and thought it was funny. But that's really true.

The reason we commit sins is because Satan lives his life in us and produces those desires, then we go out and do them. Now you may say I'm

passing the buck on to Satan. But let me say this. We as individuals endorse it and go along with it and therefore we

become guilty. You see, if we just had the proper insight, we could just refuse sin, but being fleshly people, being seduced by the devil we give in. And when we come to the age of accountability everyone "is like sheep gone astray and has turned everyone to his own way." It's that "his own way"-ness that Satan has produced in us by his nature.

Having explained the sin nature let me go back to my illustration of the human being with the Satan picture inside. Now how are we going to get him out? Salvation is when that sin spirit is taken out and replaced by Christ Himself.

One year I was talking down in Tyler, Texas, and I didn't use religious terms. I said we have to go to the factory where Christians are made. Well, they wondered what in the world I was talking about. I held up a picture of Jesus on the cross and I said, "this is the place where it's done."

Now what does God the Father do to make us better Christians? He puts us in Christ and kills us. He kills Christ and us both. It's a foregone conclusion that Christ was meant to be crucified as unto the Father. Of course, human beings did it, but it was preordained by Him, the Father.

Now, I want to explain how a Christian is made and what the cross has done. When Jesus hung on that cross the Father did something really unusual.

11 Cor. 5:21 For He (the Father) hath made Him (Jesus) to be sin for us, who knew no sin: that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

The one who showed me this first was Norman Grubb, my spiritual father, a very godly man. I loved him. I used to sit at his feet for years and I became one of his ministers. And he said, "Now how was this done?"

Here's Jesus hanging on the cross and the Father took you and me, with our sin spirit, and put us into Christ while He was hanging on that tree. And He died and went down to hell, zarrying us with him. Now that's awesome to me! As the Father put us, with our sin nature, into Christ while He was hanging on that cross, no Wonder Jesus cried out and said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!"

Peter said an interesting thing about this:

1 Peter 2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed

What I had done to illustrate this was to hold up a picture of Jesus hanging on the cross that I had cut out in such a way that it could be detached and leaned down. Underneath Jesus was a picture of me hanging there inside of Christ.

So as I try to illustrate this in a way people can remember, we have Jesus on a cross with me in him, and you in Him. He dies and goes to hell. Then I have another picture of Jesus lying in a grave on a slab. If you peel the picture of Jesus back you see myself lying there with Him dead.

Now Norman Grubb used to ask, what has happened to a dead body? Whatever life was in him, good or bad, goes out when he dies. So as the person is lying there in death he has to be resurrected by the Father. I call this the Great Exchange. The sin spirit, or the spirit of Satan, is taken out and goes into hell where it belongs. It is replaced by Christ. The Father resurrects Christ and myself together. The last picture of my illustration is Jesus resurrected. If you look inside it you see me smiling, because I am a new person. I have been resurrected with Jesus. Now listen to the verses that have to do with that.

Col. 2:12 Buried with Him in Baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead

Rom. 8:11 But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Eph. 5: Even when we were dead in .sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace are ye saved).

1 Cor. 5:14 For the love of Christ constrains us: because we thus judge, that if Christ died for all, that all are dead.

1 Cor. 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: Old things are passed away: behold, all things are become new.

This is an interesting statement that has been translated a little differently at times. Johnson's translation says: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new race of people. " But we want to emphasize here that if we have been resurrected with Him, the old life (all that we used to be) is cut away. There is a great fixed wall between the world and myself. I have been crucified with Christ and I am a new person.

Now we have a problem at this point. The Father looks down at us and sees us to be perfect in Him. The reason we are perfect is because He sees His perfect Son living in us. Now you have to realize that there is nothing you can do to make that happen. It is something that the Father has done. Even when Jesus was on the cross and He gave up the ghost, He said, "It is finished." There is nothing else the Father can do. It is finished! There's no other work that I can do to make this happen. I can't make myself any closer to God. We talk about following in the footsteps of Christ. Well that's nonsense. We don't follow Christ. Christ lives His LIFE in us. We don't try to get nearer to the Lord. You can't get any nearer to the Person that lives His life in you. The Father put His Son in us and He is pleased with His Son. The Son is the only person of whom the Father says He is "well pleased".

Now there is nothing in ourselves that makes us righteous. We are just the body into which the Father puts his son. Therefore the only righteous thing about us is the person who lives in us. Again, I don't care what you've done or what you haven't done. In Romans it says, "if anybody is in Christ there is now no condemnation in him." I am thrilled with that information!

Now, the night I got saved and gave my life to Christ I didn't know any of this. Me in Christ? Now this happened 2,000 years ago. What's that got to do with me today? I live in 1999. How can that work? Well, with God there is no time element. As we look back to that time when Christ was on the cross, it doesn't make any difference to God if it was 5,000 years ago or 5,000 years in the future. If you can punch through to the other side, to where the Kingdom of God is, there's no time there. It could be that

We started out talking about the package, the present tied up with ribbon. Remember, we opened it up to look inside the wonderful life of Christ. And what we see is that we have been crucified with Him. I did not know that. So a person has to come to a sensitivity, an awareness, that this has happened to ME. And the fact that we are ignorant of it is our big problem. We've got to come to the knowing.

This is why I spend so much time in going over the Holy Spirit's ministry to make Jesus real. Not only making Jesus real, but making real what Jesus is In me and TO me. This is most important.

When I got saved people tried to make me busy in the church. Busy doing and doing. They thought that if I was busy doing I wouldn't backslide and so forth. Well, that's the worst thing you can do to a believer. What a believer needs to do is to sit and to learn Christ. This is not a history lesson or a Sunday school lesson where you go through the acts of Jesus. Learning Christ is learning how Christ can live His life in me in every day situations. Paul talks about the fellowship of mystery. The mystery is Christ in you. There is another passage where he is reprimanding some of the believers. He tells them, "You have not so learned Christ."

Well, it's in learning Christ that He relates himself to me in every day circumstance. So this is not history lessons. It's learning how Christ can function THROUGH me in life.

Matthew 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29. Take my yoke upon you and of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. So again, the believer has to have a sensitivity of what it's all about. Now lets look at what Paul says in Romans:

Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

1. God forbid How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Now let me use one of my country explanations again. What is this talking about? As we've already gone through this thing about our death and resurrection in Christ I said we have the Great Exchange. The sin spirit has been taken out of me and been replaced by Christ. If through the cross the sin spirit has been taken out of me, why is it that I continue committing sins? Now the answer is that we are ignorant of the fact of what happened to us. My mind did not get saved. I have carried across the threshold of salvation old habits, old ways of doing things. I have been used to doing it my way, living my own way, trying to get ahead. A lot of times I drag these things across and God has to deal with them. There's got to be a lot of correction. I feel that the great element of the cross is the correction process.

We are already perfect before Him, but our behavior is not what it should be. Now we're not talking about perfection in behavior; we're

talking about perfection in relationship. Now our relationship with Christ is fine. It's perfect. You can't get any better. You can't be any more godly or related to Him than you are. Now, Christ coming out in our behavior may need some improvement. And how is that done? That's what we're going to get into here.

The first thing is, we've got to know what's happened to us. So let's continue with Romans 6:

Vs. 3. Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into death?

Later on he talks about reckoning. Now we have to count on this as being a fact that this has happened in my life. That has to be settled in my mind. Romans, chapters 6, 7 & 8 have to be gone over and over until we are aware of what God has done. Now I'm going to be picking at you a little bit by going through some evidences or symptoms of the fact that a person doesn't know that they have been crucified with Christ. Let's call these "Symptoms of Ignorance". Here is a person who is not aware of the cross:

If a person always wants his own way continually he certainly is not aware of what the cross has done.

- Full of self pity
- Standing up for my rights
- Getting ahead of others
- Ego trip
- Bad habits
- Grouchy, complaining
- Why did that happen to me
- Hurt feelings

- Insensitive to others situations & feelings
- Rebellious, nasty, mean (Some of the meanest people in the world are religious people! They think they're doing God's service by giving you a hard time.)
- Undermining others
- Trusting self and not trusting God
- Imposing my religious beliefs on others

I'm not trying to do a hell-fire preaching, but this is a picture of someone who's not aware of the cross. I live across the street from a graveyard and I tell you, there's not a soul over there that bothers me! You know why? Because they are dead. Now if a person realizes that they are dead, crucified in Christ, you're not going to get any problems out of them. They won't give you a hard time.

Now I want to talk about someone who is AWARE of the cross. Paul made a great discovery and he said, " I am crucified with Christ, yet nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me". That sounds like a real contradiction, but no. That's the way it is.

We have been crucified with Christ. We have been crucified to the world and the world to me. And yet I have been resurrected to a new life. What is the relationship? I have to be aware that I

am the vessel. I have no life of my own but I let this other Person, whom the Father put in me, have His own way. I don't have my way anymore. That's the death.

A person who is aware of the cross says:

- I have no rights.
- I will not be trying to push myself ahead of others

- I will be praising the Lord for whatever He will put in my life. (This is a hard one. Usually we only want to praise Him for the good things and we get upset about the bad ones.)
- I will love Him for who and what He is, not for what I can get out of Him. (A lot of people think that God is a big rescuer; that He will get me out of a hard time. Well, God may be putting you in that hard time to teach you something.)
- I will be letting Christ have complete control in my life.

Now, I'm necessary as a person to God. He's going to use my body as His body. He needs my body to live in, but it must be a crucified body. So I'm going to be a living sacrifice. A living sacrifice! I'm going to be walking around and having life, but the real life is going to be Him, not me.

I mentioned that there is an element of correction in the cross. God will put you in many circumstances and situations to float to the surface much that you are not aware of. This is what I call the correction element of the cross.

My wife and I are professional artists and we are quite outspoken on some things. We had a

discussion in the kitchen one time with our children, who are also artists. I rose up during this discussion and interrupted my wife. I was very rude to her. I cut her off in the conversation and hurt her feelings. I looked at her face and saw a real hurt look with tears in her eyes. She choked up and couldn't talk and she went into the other room. I usually don't lose my temper, but God had floated to the surface in my life something that I had a tendency toward, and He wanted to correct it. He put within me a sense of not wanting to do that any more. I think that's one of the ways that the cross works in a person's life.

Now a person could say, "Jim, you talk about the cross. Was not the cross real in your life?" Yes, it was. I was crucified with Christ. But God was floating to the surface things that had to be corrected. I think this is what the cross does. We are going

through a correction. We are having our mind changed, renewed! We are having our outlook changed from the old ways. Remember when I said we bring our old ways across the threshold of salvation? A lot of habits have to be changed. So God will float that stuff up and hand it to our face. I think He does it with habits. I've never had a problem with alcohol, but maybe I have with ego trips. Many times when I'm talking about myself the Lord will say, "Hey, people are bored with what you've done. You better cool it!" He says, "All they want to see is the Jesus in you, not the publicity and the hot air!" Now, there is a place for that. As an artist, I have to be able to let people know I can do the work. But it's not for pumping up one's self or being the big shot. This is the renewing of the mind. Norman Grubb was the first I ever heard talk life. It has been wonderful knowing them and about the inward life of Christ. Later I got with loving them, and loving you all. Warren who showed me some things I had never

seen before, but Norman was the first one. It is our mutual desire to get this message to as Norman was quite a character. One time he was many as possible. at a meeting and some lady got up and said, "Oh,

I'm going through such a hard time! Life is so terrible!" And Norman said, "Madam, sit down. You are full of self-pity!" The whole congregation was shocked at his bluntness, but he sure put the woman in her place.

One day I asked Norman if he prayed. He said he did now and then. When I asked Him what he prayed for the most he said, "I ask the Lord to be absolutely ruthless to my flesh." Now this sent shivers up me. Here I was asking God to save my flesh and Norman was bluntly asking God to be ruthless!

Even though Christ dying on the cross was a finished work of God and nothing can be added to it, there is conformity on our behalf to what the cross implies. It has to do with correction and having our minds changed.

I think this is part of what we are talking about with the cross. There is sensitivity, a renewing of the mind. It is a process that God takes us through till the end of our time on this earth.

The thing that I've enjoyed about our Christ-Life fellowship is how all the members have shared with one another. I would rather sit and listen to Warren speak than get up and speak myself. There was a time I quit ministering, and he got me back into talking. So I hope this article means a lot. Warren and Robbie are very dear friends of mine. They have certainly been a blessing to my life. It has been wonderful knowing them and loving them, and loving you all.

It is our mutual desire to get this message to as many as possible.