

Sermon: The Compelling Cross of Christ

There is nothing so satisfying as seeing a hard job completed. In his agony on the cross, Jesus' cry 'It is finished' is not one of relief- but of triumph. It is a cry of mission accomplished. In the mystery of the incarnation, the Word became flesh and came to dwell among us- from this we learn that Jesus came into the world to preach forgiveness, reconcile sinners to God, to heal the sick, and save the lost. Hence, 'It is finished' = 'Father I have completed the task you gave me'.

The only way Jesus could accomplish his mission was through his death. Jesus had to be crucified on the cross.

In the Roman Empire, crucifixion was regarded as the most humiliating and painful of all penalties. It was confined to slaves and foreigners, Roman citizens being exempt. Cruel death...

We read there were two people crucified with Jesus. Of those three crosses, the other two are of less significance. We put our focus on the cross of Jesus. That cross is powerful to transform people's lives. The Cross of Jesus saves and gives life to those perishing, gives hope to the downtrodden.

The Cross of Jesus provided Redemption for mankind:

By his cross, Jesus purchased believers out of the slave market and set them free.

"It is finished...."

The Greek word *tetelestai* was sometimes written on a discharged bill. It meant 'paid in full'. This is the assurance we have that in his death on the Cross, Jesus Christ paid the full price of our reconciliation to God. He paid a debt we could never afford. He paid a debt he did not owe. He died on your behalf, and my behalf- he had to stand in your place yet 'He had no sin'.

At one time we were alienated from God since the fall in the garden- now we are in fellowship and at peace with God. Jesus came so that we may enjoy a relationship with God- as our Father and we as God's children "To those who received Him, he gave them the authority to become children of God" (Jn 1:12).

You cannot resist the **reconciling power** in the cross: some struggle with broken relationships in families, may you experience the power and cause you to reconcile with your fellows! What a joy to celebrate restored relationship and love one another.

The Cross of Jesus resulted in forgiveness for sinners-

The cross of Jesus is the channel for forgiveness. Upon being fastened to the cross, Jesus prays, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34a). He is requesting the forgiveness of his executioners. He does not take a record of the torture and suffering they have caused on him; He does not seek vengeance. May the power of the Cross help us to forgive others as we have also been forgiven.

On the Cross, God allowed His perfect Son to die for the sake of every wrong thing we have ever done, said, or thought. Through his death, your life has purpose and meaning. You are forgiven and loved by a Saviour who died for you. **Amen**