

1. What was the offense of the cross in Paul's day?
2. What is the offense of the cross in our day?
3. What are some compromises we tend to make in order to avoid the offense of the cross?
4. Why is it critical that we never shy away from the offense of the cross?

THE CROSS AS OUR ONLY BOAST | GALATIANS 6:14-15

GALATIANS 6:14-15 But as for me, I will never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The world has been crucified to me through the cross, and I to the world. ¹⁵For both circumcision and uncircumcision mean nothing; what matters instead is a new creation.

Paul almost certainly has in mind the words of Jeremiah.

JEREMIAH 29:23-24 This is what the Lord says: "Let not the wise boast of their wisdom or the strong boast of their strength or the rich boast of their riches, ²⁴but let the one who boasts boast about this: that they have the understanding to know me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the Lord (NIV).

We are all boosters by nature. Paul doesn't tell us to stop boasting, he tells us to start boasting in the something that is worthy of our boasting.

1. What do you think it means to boast in the Lord?
2. Even more to the point, what does it mean to boast in the "cross of our Lord Jesus Christ?"
3. Earlier, Paul said he was crucified with Christ, here he says, "The world has been crucified to me and I to the world." How are we crucified to the world and the world to us?
4. According to Paul what doesn't matter? What does matter?



360 DISCUSSION 04.09.17

THE CROSS OF CHRIST

SELECTED PASSAGES FROM GALATIANS



Calvin reminds us:

"We see that the whole of our salvation and all of its parts are comprehended in Christ. We should therefore take care not to derive the least portion of it from somewhere else (Institutes of the Christian Religion 2.16.19)."

As we enter the Easter season, we want to turn our hearts and our minds to the wonder of what Christ has accomplished for us in his life, death, resurrection and exaltation. In Calvin's words, how "the whole of our salvation and all of its parts are comprehended in him," and why we dare "not derive the least portion of it" apart from Him.

Here are the simple but profound truths we want to focus on in the next three weeks.

Christ lived a life of perfect obedience before the Father and through faith in him, his obedience becomes our righteousness.

Christ took our sins upon himself and suffered the horrors of the cross in our place, and through faith in him, his death becomes the full and final satisfaction for our sin.

Christ rose on the third day, and through faith in him, his life becomes our life.

Christ has been exalted to the right hand of the Father, and through faith in him, His gracious rule becomes our joy and portion in this life and the life to come.

Christ is all, and in all who by faith have come to Him.

As we transition from the book of Galatians and into the Easter season, we want to pause and consider some of the ways Paul refers to the cross in his letter to the Galatians.

THE CROSS AS SACRIFICE | GALATIANS 1:3-5

There is no single word or idea that can begin to describe what Christ accomplished on the cross. The New Testament writers tell us that he turned back God's wrath, took away our sin, redeemed us from slavery to sin and darkness, reconciled us to God and won a decisive victory over sin, death and Satan. Paul captures all of these ideas in the simple phrase, "gave himself for our sins."

GALATIANS 1:3-5 Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father. ⁵ To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen

1. Which of these ideas is most meaningful to you? Why?
2. Which of these ideas do you give the least thought to? Why?
3. Why does it take all of these ideas together to describe what Christ did for us on the cross?
4. Which idea would you say is permanent over all the others?
5. Paul tells us that the result of Christ's sacrifice is that we have been rescued from the present evil age.
 - a. How would you describe the present evil age?
 - b. What are some of the things God rescues us from that are part and parcel of this present evil age?

THE CROSS AS A WAY OF LIFE | GALATIANS 2:20

The New Testament describes Christ as both our "representative" and our "substitute." He becomes our representative before God by accomplishing on our behalf what we could never accomplish on our own. He lived a life of perfect obedience before the Father—he is everything Adam could never be, Abraham could never be, Moses could never be, David could never be, and you and I could never be. He is our substitute in that he took our sins upon himself and died on the cross in our place. Because Christ is our representative and our substitute Paul could vividly describe himself as someone who was a full participant in the life, death and resurrection of Christ.

GALATIANS 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. 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.

1. How could Paul say he was crucified with Christ?
2. According to Paul what are the implications of being crucified with Christ?
3. Why is faith an absolute non-negotiable in living out our new life in Christ?

THE CROSS AS THE INAUGURATION OF A NEW AGE | GAL 3:1-3

Paul sees the public portrayal of Christ's crucifixion as the ultimate game changer. Everything changes in light of the cross. We no longer live in the age of promise, we now live in the age of fulfillment—which is marked by the gift of the Holy Spirit. We were once in Adam; now we are in Christ. We were once far away; now we have been brought near. We once served Christ in the old way of the law; we now serve him in the new way of the Spirit.

GALATIANS 3:1-3 You foolish Galatians! Who has cast a spell on you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? ² I only want to learn this from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by believing what you heard? ³ Are you so foolish? After beginning by the Spirit, are you now finishing by the flesh?

1. What happened on the cross that ushered in the age of the Spirit?
2. When Paul uses the word flesh, what does he have in mind?
3. Why is it foolish to abandon the Spirit and lean into the flesh (our own ability to commend ourselves to God and procure his blessings)?

THE CROSS AS AN OFFENSE | GALATIANS 5:11; 6:12

Paul could have saved himself a lot of trouble, by downplaying the centrality of the cross. As he wrote to the Corinthians, the cross is "a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles (1 Corinthians 1:23). Yet for Paul, to compromise the offense of the cross, was to compromise the power of the cross.

GALATIANS 5:11; 6:12 Now brothers and sisters, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished... Those who want to make a good impression in the flesh are the ones who would compel you to be circumcised—but only to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ.