

Make Your Life Bigger - Glory Only In The Cross Of Christ - 1 Corinthians 2:1-2 - "And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. [2] For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified."

I chose to launch this series with a message on *glorying only in the cross of Christ*. There is, however, a problem with that title. Most of us, when we think of the cross, think about organized religion. We think about somber, cold, sad religion. And that's a huge mistake because the cross of Christ, more than anything else, is the start of our true *life*. It is the *entry point* into eternal life. But it's so much more.

- 1) **IT IS TRULY AMAZING THAT PAUL COULD SAY HE KNEW NOTHING AMONG THE CORINTHIAN BELIEVERS EXCEPT CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED - 1 Corinthians 2:1-2 - "And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. [2] For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified."**

What can Paul mean by these words? Does he mean he never spoke about anything to these people other than the cross of Christ? Did he never talk about marriage and work and money and sex and prayer and plans and ambitions? Is that what Paul means? We know this can't be the case because Paul *did* talk about many and various subjects in the Corinthian church.

I think there's a better way of understanding Paul's words when he says he was determined to know nothing among them but Christ and Him crucified. He means *everything he talked about was tied to the cross. Everything else about the Christian life - every other aspect of understanding and practice - must be plugged into the cross*. You can never properly learn Christian stewardship just by studying money management. You must first of all understand the cross. You will never properly understand Christian marriage just by studying interpersonal relationships. You must first of all understand the cross. You will never grasp the path to victory over sin by studying behavioral patterns and habits. You must first of all have a proper understanding of the cross.

Remember, if you want to live *big* and not just *busy* begin to make much of the cross of Christ. Here are more reasons why:

- 2) **IF YOU ARE GOING TO MAKE MUCH OF GOD YOU MUST MAKE MUCH OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST**

If we would embrace the glory of God at all, we must embrace the gospel of Christ and His cross. This is repeated too many times in the Scriptures to miss:

Luke 10:16 - "The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me."

John 14:6 - "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

John 5:23 - "...that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him."

1 John 2:23 - "No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also."

There is no point in romanticizing other religions. And there is no Scriptural warrant for doing so. Jesus is the litmus test for all persons and all religions. Glory in the cross because it is not only a message for *Christians*, it is a message for the whole *world*. If you want a *big* life, and not just a *busy* life you *must* stay close to God. And if you want with all your heart to find and know God, stay close to the cross of Christ Jesus. In this pluralistic world we must become increasingly *Christ-explicit* in our God talk.

- 3) **STAY CLOSE TO THE CROSS OF CHRIST BECAUSE IT IS ONLY IN LOSING YOUR LIFE THAT YOU CAN TRULY FIND IT.**

Mark 8:35 - "For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it."

I am going to tell you the most important thing you will ever hear in your life. You will never hear anything from any source that is more germane to your well-being and happiness, both in this life and for eternity, than what I am saying now. Learn this principle: *Pursing God is exactly the same thing as pursuing your own greatest joy*.

That principle explains the logic of Jesus' words in this verse. That is why it is better - a hundred trillion times better - to *lose* your life for the pursuit of God than to *waste* your life on your own self-fulfillment.

Jesus said there is no future in trying to *find* your life. In today's language He would say there is no future in trying to *"find yourself."* To look to save and pamper and discover and find and fulfill your own life is to *shrivel and waste* your life. Lose yourself entirely in Christ and the gospel. You will save and find your life in the process.

The greatest tragedy is to *never* learn this truth. The second greatest tragedy is to take years and years to *discover* this truth. O how I wish I had discovered this by the time I was seventeen! How differently I would have pursued what I foolishly thought were my greatest dreams! How much time and effort I *wouldn't* have wasted! How much richer my reward and delight when I see Jesus face to face!

- 4) **THE PROOF THAT YOUR LIFE IS ANCHORED DAILY TO THE CROSS IS YOU BECOME INCREASINGLY DEAD TO THIS CULTURE'S**

FASCINATION WITH THE WORLD'S CHARMS

Galatians 6:14 - "But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

We need to remember Paul's earlier words about "**knowing only Christ and Him crucified**" when we read this verse. You can't glory in **both** the cross and the world at the same time. The proof that you **glory** in the cross rather than just **believe** in the cross is you begin to develop **resistance thinking** as far as the world is concerned. It doesn't fascinate you **more and more**, but **less and less**.

This loss of the **pull** of the world only **feels** like self-denial in its early phases. After a while you just aren't as **interested** in the things the world has to offer. This is the only proof you are living close to the cross of Christ. Here's how I know Paul gloried in the cross of Christ - **Philippians 3:7-8** - "But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. [8] Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ...."

The thing you glory in is the thing that makes you feel everything else is **rubbish** in comparison. What is it that makes everything else feel like rubbish to you? That's what you glory in. There are people in this church who glory in their friends. Their friends aren't Christians. Or if they **profess** to be Christians, they don't **live** like Christians. But that isn't the deciding factor in their relationships because they don't glory in the cross of Christ. They glory in their friendships. There are people in this church who glory more in success than they glory in the cross of Christ. There's nothing wrong with being successful, until it squeezes out Christ and His cross. But while they **admire** and **believe** in the cross of Christ, they glory more in their wealth and position than they do in the cross of Christ.

Remember, **what you truly glory in is what makes you feel that everything else is rubbish in comparison.**