

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

Lk 23:32-49

INTRODUCTION

- A. "When I survey the wondrous cross On which the Prince of glory died, My richest gain I count but loss And pour contempt on all my pride."
- B. The cross stands as the greatest symbol in Christianity.
 - 1. Jesus bore our sins in his body on the cross (1 Pet. 2:24).
 - 2. Jesus' blood was given for the remission of our sins (Mt. 26:28).
 - 3. "Christ also suffered once for sins" (1 Pet. 3:18).
- C. This morning we need to examine the "wondrous cross" on which the Lord died.

The cross is a:

CROSS OF SHAME, vv. 32-38

- A. We often picture the cross as being a wonderful experience, but the cross was far from such.
- B. Jesus was crucified with criminals, vv. 32-33.
 - 1. Isaiah prophesied that Jesus would be crucified with criminals--"He was numbered with the transgressors" (Is. 53:12).
 - 2. Jesus was led with two criminals, as though he himself were a common criminal, to be crucified.
 - 3. Jesus was crucified between two thieves.
 - 4. The cross was the Roman method of capital punishment.
 - a. The Roman government was putting these two thieves to death for their crimes--The day Jesus died was probably a day set aside for executions.
 - b. The Lord Jesus was crucified by capital punishment as though he were a thief.
 - 5. The cross was shameful—Illustration about Cicero, *Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations*, #6213.
- C. Jesus asked God to forgive those who crucified him, v 34.
 - 1. Even those who crucified Jesus could be forgiven of their sins.
 - 2. On Pentecost, Peter offered pardon to those who crucified Jesus (Acts 2:36-38).
- D. The soldiers divided his garments by casting lots, v. 34.
 - 1. Criminals were crucified naked, and soldiers would take whatever clothes they wanted.
 - 2. The soldiers who crucified Jesus took what they wanted of his clothes, but his coat was valuable.
 - a. The coat was valuable, for it was seamless.
 - b. The soldiers cast lots to see who would take the coat (Jn. 19:23-24).
 - 3. Our Lord was stripped of his clothing, and his clothing was divided among his executioners.
- E. The leaders made fun of Jesus, vv. 35-37.
 - 1. The rulers said that if Jesus were really the Christ, he'd save himself, i.e., he'd get off the cross.
 - 2. The soldiers also mocked Jesus.
 - a. They offered him sour wine.
 - b. They, too, told Jesus to save himself if he really were the Christ.
- F. This isn't a pleasant picture.
 - 1. This is a picture of shame and humiliation.
 - 2. Our sins we e so horrible, that Jesus had to go through this for us.

CROSS OF SALVATION, vv. 39-43

- A. One of the criminals also sneered Jesus, v. 39.
 - 1. He said, "Jesus, if you really are the Christ, save yourself and us."
 - 2. This man wasn't looking for salvation; he didn't want to die.
- B. The other criminal rebuked him, vv. 40-41.
 - 1. This criminal said the other should fear God since they were all going to die.
 - 2. This criminals said that they deserved to die, but Jesus had done nothing wrong.
- C. The criminal asked Jesus to remember him when Jesus came into his kingdom, v. 42.
- D. Jesus promised the criminal that he would be with him in Paradise, v. 43.
 - 1. Jesus promised this man that that very day they would be together in Paradise, not some time in the distant future.
 - 2. "Paradise" is a Persian word for "beautiful garden."
 - a. The idea here is glory, bliss.
 - b. Jesus promised this criminal salvation.
- E. Just as this criminal found salvation in the cross, we, too, find salvation there.
 - 1. Christ died for our sins (1 Cor. 15:3).
 - 2. Christ freed us from our sins through his blood (Rev. 1:5).

CROSS OF SURPRISE, vv. 44-49

- A. The death of Jesus was like the death of no other person.
- B. Natural phenomena around Jesus' death were different, vv. 44-45.
 - 1. Darkness was over all the earth.
 - 2. The veil of the temple was torn in two.
 - a. The veil which was torn was the veil between the Holy of Holies and the Holy Place.
 - b. The Holy of Holies was the most sacred place which was entered by the High priest just once a year.
 - 1) When the curtain was torn, this shows that man does not need a priest to enter God's presence.
 - 2) After all, all Christians are priests (1 Pet. 2:9).
- C. When Jesus died, he committed his spirit into the Father's hands, v. 46.
- D. When the centurion saw this, he said, "Certainly this was a righteous man," v. 47.
 - 1. The centurion knew that Jesus had done nothing wrong.
 - 2. The centurion knew there was something different about Jesus.
 - 3. The centurion stood in awe of Jesus' death.
- E. Just as the centurion stood in awe and wonder of Jesus' death, we need to do the same.
 - 1. We should be amazed that God loved us so much.
 - 2. We should be amazed that Jesus did die for our sins.

CONCLUSION

- A. The cross does stand as an amazing feat. God became flesh and died for his creatures.
- B. "Were the whole realm of nature mine, That were a present far too small; Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all."
 - 1. Because of his love for you, Jesus does deserve your all.
 - 2. Are you willing to give Jesus your all?