

Why the Cross?

I. Experience of Love

March 4, 2016

Isaiah 53: 1-10 - Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? ² He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. ³ He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. ⁴ Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. ⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. ⁷ He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. ⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished. ⁹ He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. ¹⁰ Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.

I. What is the meaning of the cross?

A. We **fear** God.

God is a righteous judge. (vs. 10)

Hebrews 10: 30, 31(NRSV) – “The Lord will judge his people.” ³¹It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

I Peter 1: 17 (NRSV) - If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile.

Proverbs 9: 10 (NRSV) - The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

B. We **love** God.

God gave us the ultimate gift of love. (vs. 4-6)

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.

II. How do we respond to the cross – Our fear and love for God?

Ephesians 5: 2 - walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

The cross moves us from good intentions to loving action.

A. If you think of something good, **say it**.

II. Corinthians 13:11 - ...Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

B. If you think of something special, **do it**.

Hebrews 10: 24 - And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

C. If you want something different, **be it**.

Romans 12: 10 – Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.