

THE POWER OF THE CROSS

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

1 Corinthians 1:18 (NIV)

If a man guilty of a capital offense is put to death and his body is hung on a tree,²³ you must not leave his body on the tree overnight. Be sure to bury him that same day, because anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse.

Deuteronomy 21:22-23 (NIV)

❖ The Cross RECONNECTS...

Through the Son, then, God decided to bring the whole universe back to himself. God made peace through his Son's blood on the cross and so brought back to himself all things, both on earth and in heaven.

Colossians 1:20 (TEV)

... Yet the Cross also DIVIDES.

But we preach that Christ was nailed to a cross. Most Jews have problems with this, and most Gentiles think it is foolish.

1 Corinthians 1:23 (CEV)

❖ The Cross brought PAIN...

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:2 (NIV)

... Yet the Cross is the source of HEALING.

Christ himself carried our sins in his body to the cross, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness. It is by his wounds that you have been healed.

1 Peter 2:24 (TEV)

But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Isaiah 53:5 (NIV)

❖ The Cross is an instrument of DEATH...

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!

... Yet without the Cross there is no hope for LIFE.

"So far as the Law is concerned, however, I am dead—killed by the Law itself—in order that I might live for God. ²⁰ I have been put to death with Christ on his cross, so that it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. This life that I live now, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave his life for me."

Galatians 2:19-20 (TEV)

❖ The Cross was seen as a CURSE...

But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing. For it is written in the Scriptures, "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."

Galatians 3:13 (NLT)

... Yet the Cross frees us from our CURSE.

Because of the sacrifice of the Messiah, his blood poured out on the altar of the Cross, we're a free people—free of penalties and punishments chalked up by all our misdeeds. And not just barely free, either. Abundantly free!

Ephesians 1:7 (MSG)

❖ The Cross was the Roman's tool to end REBELLION...

Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. ¹⁷ Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). ¹⁸ Here they crucified him, and with him two others--one on each side and Jesus in the middle.

John 19:16-18 (NIV)

... Yet the Cross was God's tool to bring RECONCILIATION.

... and by Jesus God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of his blood on the cross.

Colossians 1:20 (NLT)

"God doesn't want our success; He wants us. He doesn't demand our achievements; He demands our obedience. The Kingdom of God is a Confusing Kingdom, a Kingdom of Paradox...where through the ugly defeat of the cross, a Holy God is utterly glorified. Where victory comes through defeat; where healing is born out of brokenness, where we truly find ourself through losing self."

Chuck Colson

❖ There were 3 RESPONSES at the Cross and there are 3 RESPONSES to the Cross.

One of the criminals on a cross began to shout insults at Jesus: "Aren't you the Christ? Then save yourself and us."

Luke 23:39 (NCV)

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

John 19:25 (NIV)

But the other criminal told the first one off, "Don't you fear God? Aren't you getting the same punishment as this man?"⁴¹ We got what was coming to us, but he didn't do anything wrong."⁴² Then he said to Jesus, "Remember me when you come into power!"⁴³ Jesus replied, "I promise that today you will be with me in paradise."

Luke 23:40-43 (CEV)

❖ WHAT will you DO with the CROSS?