



Articles and Sermons :: The Crucified Lord

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The Crucified Lord
by Jimmy Humphrey

The following essay is an abridged version of a sermon that brother Paul Washer, missionary and founder of the Heart Cry Missionary Society spoke on, entitled "The Meaning of the Cross." I was very blessed by the contents of this sermon, and thought it would be fitting for the purposes of this web site to make a shorter version available to everybody else.

This message was inspired after I listened to a preacher on the radio yesterday. He wanted to talk about the meaning of the cross. He spent a lot of time talking about the cross of Jesus Christ, but he spoke with the wrong emphasis, and as a result, did not truly explain the "meaning" of the cross. What he did was something common preachers do today, but is something that ultimately departs from the historic Christian faith.

The church today is full of pop-theologians who are in reality, not theologians at all. There is a difference between a theologian and a pop-theologian. If you like, you can compare this to pop-music. It's the popular music of the day, rather short, rather jumpy, and overall is rather superficial. Corresponding to this, we have a lot of pop-theology today. We have individuals who are not truly trained in theology, yet they have a popular following. Their preaching deals more with illustrations, stories, antidotes, and cute little sayings. But their preaching has very little theology in it.

If we are to truly understand the cross of Jesus Christ, we must look at two things. One is called context, and the other is called history. First, if the Bible says, or if I make a statement that says the barn is red, it means the barn is red. Regularly when I speak on university campuses, I hear students say, "Oh, that's just your interpretation." To which I reply, "Well here, interpret it grammatically, not according to the Spirit, just grammatically, like you would in an English class. What does it say grammatically?"

Secondly, we have 2,000 years of Christian history to look at. Over the past 2,000 years, thousands and millions of books have been written by Christians. Now, if I teach something that can't be found in 2,000 years of Christian history, then one has to decide who is right? 2,000 years of Christian theologians, or Paul Washer? Obviously 2,000 years of Christian history and teachers are right. If what we say something that disagrees with 2,000 years of the Christian faith, then we are probably wrong.

And today, when we hear teaching on the cross of Jesus Christ, you usually hear a lot about His physical sufferings. The preacher will usually preach the physical suffering so heavily that he will start crying, and as a result, cause the congregation to start crying. The preacher today talks about how the nails went through a certain part of the wrist, because that was the only thing that would hold up a man. The preacher then talks about how the nails would go through a certain place in the feet, so that the man, in order to keep himself alive, would have to push upon the nail in order to take a breath. Eventually the man would be unable to push anymore, and would die of suffocation. Then the preacher will go on to talk about the crown of thorns, the beatings with the whip, and the spear to the side, and at the end of his sermon declares, "By this we are saved!" Such draws us to a certain conclusion, but simply doesn't make sense, and doesn't work out theologically. Are we actually to believe that our sins are paid for because the Romans and the Jews rejected Jesus? Are our sins paid for because they whipped him and beat him?

I was once in a German Mennonite Bible camp, in the Alps of Romania. I walked around in their theological library and saw a book about the Cross of Christ. As I looked through it, the man said, "God sent His son who lived a perfect life and then according to the plan of God, man rejected Him, they beat Him, they crucified Him, they mocked Him, they put a crown of thorns on His head, and stuck a spear in His side. Then God looked at the suffering of Jesus at the hands of men, and He considered that to be payment for all of our sins against Him." A lot of people say that this sounds like sound orthodox Christianity. But historically speaking, I tell you that this is a form of heresy! I want you to put two things together. How is it, that what happened on that cross would cause God to forgive us of our sins? My first question is why does the Son of God, God in the flesh, why is it necessary that He die? Why can't God just forgive everybody? Have you ever thought about that?

Why can't He just forgive? After all, we are called to forgive people, aren't we? If you sin against me, I'm called to forgive

you. I'm not called to require a sacrifice of anything, I'm just told to forgive you. So why can't God simply forgive? That's the first question you need to answer. Let's look at Proverbs 17:15 which says, "He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the righteous, both of them alike, are an abomination to the Lord." Let's consider this one phrase, "He who justifies the wicked is an abomination to the Lord."

Now we run into a major problem. God says that anyone who declares the wicked to be right, when they are not right, is an abomination. By such an act of injustice, God would make Himself an abomination. If God forgives the wicked, He Himself becomes an abomination. In just the same way as if a judge forgives a murder and lets him go, he's no longer a just judge. People are often mad when I speak at a university about God throwing men in hell. But you know what makes heaven mad? Heaven has a problem with what God has done. If God is a just God, He cannot forgive. If He is to be a just God, He must punish the wicked.

Now we are beginning to see why it was necessary for God the Son to die. God cannot simply forgive. The law, the righteous law demands that the sinner die. It demands it! You can't just push that away. You can't just say, "Ok, we are just going to let them slide this time." If God does that, according to His own standards in His own law, He is in the wrong, unjust, and sinful. Can you see the problem in that?

Now, the only way that God can forgive sinful men is if the God who made the law and demands the satisfaction of that law, actually comes down to pay the penalty demanded of the law. That is why the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ was necessary. If Jesus is not God, then everybody is going to hell, because what was done on the cross is not enough. God is the one who made the law, and it is God who has to satisfy its demands. In order for God to forgive the wicked, and still be a just judge, He must die in the place of the wicked. Without that, there is no basis for the wicked to be forgiven of their sins.

Now here's comes the important point. How does He die? What is it about the death of the Son of God that leads to our forgiveness? How does His death satisfy the law? Now, here is something I want you to understand. When someone says they have been saved- now I'd never do this to a young Christian or, but if they are a seminary students or something they are going to get this, if they say "I've been saved, " and I go "From what? From what have you been saved?" People usually say "Sin!" "Nope! ... Nope!"

They say: "What do you mean "Nope"?" "Sin wasn't after you. Sin wasn't going to throw you in hell. You have sinned, but the sin caused something else. Sin isn't going to throw you in hell! Sin is not even a person! It's not a living being that's going to judge you, and grab you and throw you in hell. From what have you been saved? This is going to really rock your boat. I'll tell you from what you have been saved.

From what you have been saved is not 'What,' it is 'Who.' You have been saved from God! You see here's what you need to understand. God is the judge of the entire universe. You have sinned, since you have sinned and made yourself an enemy of God before the just judge, when you stand before Him, He will throw you in hell!"

A lot of people object saying, "God doesn't throw anybody in hell!" That's really nice theology if you write it on the back of a Christian t-shirt, but such is not Biblical. Jesus said: "Don't be afraid of man who can kill your body, but be afraid of God who can kill your body and throw you in hell." Do you see this? Again, this God of ours is not very politically correct. He is not a tamed lion.

Have you ever heard the phrases "enemy of God" and "hater of God" from Romans? Do you know what that means? Contemporary Christianity interprets this differently than historical Christianity. You will hear preachers say: "When the Bible says that we were an enemy of God, it means that WE were an enemy against God, that WE were rebellion against God, that WE were against God. But it doesn't mean that God was against us, that God was our enemy." And then they will usually say something like this: "It's like you are holding a gun against God, and God wants you to put that gun down, and then you'll be friends." That's not true! All throughout historical Christianity when it says "enemies of God," you know what it really means? Not only were you God's enemy, holding your gun on Him, God was your enemy holding His gun on you.

You put your gun down, fine! He still has His gun on you. You are a criminal, you broke the law, you deserve to die, you can put your gun down to surrender if you want, but you are still going to hell. Because not only you are his enemy, but He is yours. God says things in the Bible like: "I will hate them." "I will come against them." "I will fight against them." "I'll raise up a standard." Again this God of 21st century Christianity is a lot different from the biblical one, and a lot different than one that has been preached throughout 2000 years of Christian history. So you see, not only were you making you

yourself an enemy against God, God was your enemy. And then one from home you need to be saved is God because He is coming, remember what Amos has said: "Be prepared to meet thy God." Remember what Revelation says and talks about:

"He is coming and the captains and the great man of the world will cry out for the rocks to fall upon them to hide them from the wrath of the lamb."

He is not coming back with his hand like going: "Oh, I just want to save you but now you have to go to hell." No! He is coming back, it says: "sword of the Spirit." I mean everything else is going on here. He is coming back and He is going to fight somebody. Because He is mad! Now, the problem that you have to see. There is punishment. We have broken God's law, so now we deserve to be punished. From where does that punishment come? Ask yourself that question.

We have grown up under preaching that tells us, well if you sin, you know some bad thing happens to you, that's not God that's just the consequences of sin just like the law of gravity, you jump off the roof you gonna get hurt, you sin you gonna get hurt. It is not God's doing that's just the way that the things are. That's not true. God talks about coming and judgment all the time against people's sin. He does, just read the Bible. All the time! "I will come against you," "I will set my face against you." OK? So we realize that we have been saved from God and his punishment.

So how is that punishment to be done away with? When Jesus the Son of God was dying on the cross it is not the spears of Romans, or the crowns of thorns, or the nails in His hands that save you. It is not that that pays for the crime. The suffering that the man heaped upon Jesus, God does not look at it and say "OK, good enough!"

That's not what paid for your sin! What paid for your sin? Look in Isaiah 53. This is what paid for your sin: Isaiah 53:10 "But the Lord was pleased to crush Him." Now, you've all read 53 and you've heard gazillions of sermons on the radio and everything about Isaiah 53. But isn't it funny that when you hear sermons on Isaiah 53 it is always verses 3, 4, 5 and 6 talking about the sufferings heaped upon Christ by men. But very rarely do you hear Isaiah 53:10 "It pleased the Lord."

Who's the Lord? The word here is not Adonai, its Yahweh, or as some of you may pronounce it Jehovah. I mean its God. "It pleased God to..." "What? Crush Him?" This is the Messiah. "It pleased the Lord to crush Him." The best illustration I can give of this crushing involves a millstone. A mill stone was a very large stone. And then they placed another stone on top of that, which actually rotated. Imagine you put grain, corn and everything, in between those two stones and when they may their way through there, that stone would ground them to powder. That's the terminology being used here. That is what it refers to. It pleased God the Father to crush His own Son and to ground Him into powder.

How does the cross save you? It's because on the cross, all the sin that invokes God's hatred was placed on His son. Take all of the sins of God's people, from the very first man on the face of the earth, to the very last person, and place it on the Son of God. All of God's justice and wrath that would normally be poured out on all these sinful creatures for all eternity, was instead taken out on the only begotten Son of God, and crushed Him under the weight of His own justice on that cross.

In the garden, when Jesus said, "Save me from this hour... let this cup pass from me," He wasn't thinking about the nails in His hands, the cross, the spear, or the Romans. Rather, He was thinking about this: "Father, I have never been out of your bosom. I have always been in a perfect relationship with You, as I have throughout all eternity. Now I am going to be ripped out of the heart of the Father, and the Father is going to turn His face away from me!"

Now you may think the Father turned His face from the Son because He didn't want to see His Son suffering. But you've got it all wrong. The Father turned His face away from His Son because His Son had become detestable! His Son became Sin! His Son became an abominable thing! You and I are an abomination before God, and in order for us to be forgiven God had to die as an abomination in our place. You and I deserve to be crushed under God's wrath. But in order to forgive us and save us, God crushed His own Son under His own wrath. That's what the cross is. That's what it means! And now you can see why if you ever have a revelation of what happened on the cross, it will affect you the rest of your life. You'll become a prisoner to it, and won't be able to get away from it.

Doesn't this somehow contradict the idea of a loving God? Doesn't God love everybody? He'd never send anybody to hell, would He? Yet so much is made of this loving Jesus, but it is this loving Jesus that taught us the most about hell. Look to the Old Testament and through the writings of the apostle Paul, and you'll only find a small handful of references to hell. Almost everything we know about hell comes from Jesus. The loving Jesus who died to save men spoke more about hell than everybody else in the entire Bible put together. Why?

I think there is one reason, though, this is just my opinion. Hell is so horrible that man cannot even comprehend it. The only one who can truly comprehend how horrible hell is would be God Himself, since only God is able to communicate the horrible nature of hell. So now, when you hear about Jesus dying for you, know that it was more than about His physical sufferings. Rather, it was about the Son of God being crushed by His own Father, and when He cried out, "It is finished!" that meant PAID IN FULL.

As a Christian, do you know why God will never pour out His wrath on you? He can only act toward you with His greatest love, the same love with which He loved his dear and only Son. He cannot pour His wrath on you anymore because His Son drank that wrath in full, and His wrath towards you no longer exists because His Son drank all of it, leaving nothing left for you. There is no more eternal punishment for you if you are a Christian. But if you are not a Christian, dear friend, you don't even want to know about the terrible things that await you.

Let us pray... Father, we thank you for this day. We ask Lord, your blessing and your help. And Dear God help us to appreciate what you have done for us in giving your Son, not an angel did You give us, not gold, not a piece of the throne that you throw away, but you gave us your only begotten son. And for that we will worship you throughout all eternity. That we have an older brother, and He is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters, because He has died for us. He's taken away our sin, and He's given us His own righteousness.

Re: The Crucified Lord - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2010/4/2 8:27

Just a thought for good Friday...