

General Topics :: The Powerful Sign of the Cross

The Powerful Sign of the Cross - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2017/9/29 21:10

And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. - Colossians 2:15

A sad occurrence in some circles is the diminishing of the cross of Jesus Christ. We see in many Churches the cross being taken down in sanctuaries, other symbols being used in its stead. There are other more extreme cases where believers start to think of the cross as pagan, unbiblical and even not a cross but a pole as Jehovah Witnesses teach. This should not surprise us that there is enmity and division over the cross as a symbol as it bears the very message and death of the Person of God for a lost humanity. The enemy of our souls knows this and has and continues to oppose or pervert and mis-use its symbol.

The cross gives us a powerful message and truth in visible form when looked upon. It says that the eternal God became flesh and submitted himself to death on the cross for humanity. It was death being trampled upon by the death of God. It was the triumphing over demonic hosts in the unseen. It is the love of God and forgiving of sins. Its very symbol speaks to the believer of life, the unbeliever of God's love and the demons of their defeat.

When I was in a certain city, the Holy Spirit bore witness in my heart to wear a medium size cross around my neck with a large rope. I was actively evangelizing unreached Punjabi peoples in the area with the Good News of Jesus. When I obeyed God and wore the cross an amazing thing happened, everywhere I went the Punjabi people seemed to see me very clearly and were drawn to me. I remember countless times in daily life where they would just stare and after I finished what I was doing, I would go and hand a scripture booklet to them. What that experience spoke to me was that bearing the cross of Christ in reference in a physical way had a spiritual impact. Whether they looked at me with my long beard and a cross as a holy man or devoutly religious, I am not sure. But I could not deny the difference it made. It also made me conscious that I was a bearer of this message of the Cross to the people daily.

Another way the symbol of the cross was used in the early Church was by tracing it on the forehead and other ways. This practice began with water baptism and later became an accepted way of acknowledging the Lord and the death of Christ. Cyril an early church leader in AD. 310 wrote: "Let us not then be ashamed to confess the Crucified. Be the Cross our seal made with boldness by our fingers on our brow, and on everything; over the bread we eat, and the cups we drink; in our comings in, and goings out; before our sleep, when we lie down and when we rise up; when we are in the way, and when we are still." Martin Luther as other protestants carried on this tradition of the sign of the cross. Luther said, "In the morning, when you rise, you shall make the sign of the holy cross, and you shall say: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Then, kneeling or standing, you shall say the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer." This way of doing the sign of cross was to touch the forehead, then the belly, then left shoulder, then right. This motion made a cross and it signified many things including, (1) acknowledging the Lord (2) declaring triumph over the enemy (3) testifying that our body, spirit and soul belong to God (4) putting in remembrance the death of Christ.

Should all believers wear crosses, have cross symbols in their home or church, or make the visible sign of the cross daily? This question should make us ask another question first, Do I daily remember, praise and thank God for the Cross of Christ? Is it always in my remembrance? All of these traditions of the symbol of the cross are servants to the greater reality of the very death of Christ for each of us personally. Life, time, work, vocations distract us at times from the very purpose and person that everything is all about. M. Basilea Schlink says, "You were created and redeemed to focus on Jesus alone." St. Paul the apostle said that the cross was everything to him, it was his focus and boast (Galatians 6:14).

Let us remember daily that it is this powerful cross that frees us from sin, Satan and our own very self. Let it be in our gaze daily in all the motions of life. And hear the voice of your Lord saying "Remember Me", "Remember what I did for you." Yes, Lord we will remember you, let us not lose the wonder and holiness of your Cross.

Re: The Powerful Sign of the Cross, on: 2017/9/30 9:26

Brother respectfully it sounds like you're getting ready to cross the Tiber. The sign of the cross for a Jesus follower it's not to make certain hand motions. But it is to live a crucified life so that the life of Jesus through His Spirit may live in them. I cannot see our brother Paul making the sign of the cross. But rather to die daily to the things of this world so that Jesus could live through him. This should be our example. For this is the example of our persecuted brethren who live in restricted nations. They die to themselves so that Christ may live in them.

Blaine

Re: , on: 2017/9/30 11:07

If one needs an outside symbol to remind them of the inner reality of Jesus then I would have to question their inner reality.....bro Frank

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2017/9/30 11:45

Quote:
-----If one needs an outside symbol to remind them of the inner reality of Jesus then I would have to question their inner reality.....
bro Frank

Dear brother,

Of course this is not true. If we look to the Old Testament it is clear outward symbols were commanded of God. In the New Testament there would also be outward symbols, less in number, but not in importance. Water Baptism, Bread and Wine, Head Coverings, Foot Washing, etc.

Of course we do not question someone's salvation if they require or want water baptism, as the Scriptures themselves tell us to do it as a symbol of an inward reality and experience.

I believe the symbol of the cross is the same, it is a reminder of our Lord's death and resurrection. And as shared in the short article a reminder to believers in the end times that the Lamb of God has conquered the forces of Satan. What an important truth to grasp and maintain with faith.

Early Christians also used other symbols to display their faith and belief in God. These externals are just helps and encouragements to the faith of God's elect just as the saints of Old had certain remembrances and helps such as the 12 stones piled by the river, to reckon on God's promises and character.

But what is more important here is the very cross itself which all time, eternity and the purpose of God revolve around. It is nothing else than a slain Lamb with wounds that is the centre of the heavens, and our focal point before God's throne. The question needs to be asked, can we center our minds and hearts too much on the cross of Christ?

Re: The Powerful Sign of the Cross - posted by followthelamb (), on: 2017/9/30 13:54

Though personally I have not felt led to practice making the sign of the cross, I do know that some among even Protestant believers do this. Also there are some of our persecuted brethren around the world who do believe in doing so in their own walk with the Lord.

Thinking of those 21 Coptic Christians who in 2015 were martyred by ISIS for their testimony of Jesus...If any of them, before their hands were brutally tied up, happened to make the sign of the cross in simple devotion to Him, I believe that the Crucified One did not despise or in any way belittle them for it.

And if ever we are called to physically lay down our lives by spilling our blood to bear witness to His Name, may King Y'shua give each of us such inward reality as those beheaded ones had.

