

1 Corinthians 1:10-31 - The Power of the Cross

Everything we have is because of the LORD Jesus Christ (REVIEW)

Vs 2 -- sanctified in Christ Jesus

Vs 2 -- called to be saints with all who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

Vs 4 -- the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus

Vs 7 -- so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ

Vs 8 -- He will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ

Vs 9 -- God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord

Corinthians lost sight of this and instead quarreled about their teachers

1Co 1:10-25 ESV I appeal to you, brothers, *by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*, that all of you agree, and that there be **no divisions** among you, but that you be **united in the same mind** and the **same judgment**. 11 For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that **there is quarreling** among you, my brothers. 12 What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ."

Paul pointed them to what is crucial

13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

Paul's appeal to stop the quarreling

1) Encouraged them to be united in the same mind and the same judgement

- 1Co 2:16 ESV "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" **But we have the mind of Christ.**

2) Challenged them to behave as spiritual people

- 1Co 3:1-4 ESV But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the **flesh**, as **infants** in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, 3 for **you are still of the flesh**. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and **behaving only in a human way**? 4 For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," **are you not being merely human?**

Again we see the idea that there is a gap between (who or what we are in Christ) vs (the reality that we sometimes walk in) - He has given us all we need

The place of baptism (cover next week) - this is a kind of a parenthetical statement

14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name. 16 (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize but to

preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, ***lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.***

Lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power

- **Emptied of its power** -- to *make empty*, that is, (figuratively) to *abase, neutralize, falsify*: - make (of none effect, of no reputation, void), be in vain. --
- Paul is not saying that baptism is not important, He is simply *DE*-emphasizing it to emphasize the crucifixion of Christ

Not with words of eloquent wisdom - faith must rest in the power of God

1Co 2:1-5 ESV And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God **with lofty speech or wisdom**. 2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, 4 and my speech and my message were **not in plausible words of wisdom**, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your **faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God**.

The WORD of the Cross is the power of God - folly or power

17b ***lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.*** 18 For the word of the cross is **folly to those who are perishing**, but **to us who are being saved it is the power of God**. 19 For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."

What is the power of the cross?

Power to change my life

- 1Pe 2:24 NIV "He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross, so that we might **die to sins and live for righteousness**; "by his wounds you have been healed."

Power to encourage us to not grow weary or lose heart

- Heb 12:2-3 NIV fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him **he endured the cross**, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 **Consider him who endured** such opposition from sinners, **so that you will not grow weary and lose heart**.

Power to forgive sin and to disarm the enemy

- Col 2:13-15 NIV When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. **He forgave us all our sins**, 14 having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, **nailing it to the cross**. 15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, **triumphing over them by the cross**.

Power to reconcile me (God's enemy) to God and present me holy, without blemish, free from accusation

- Col 1:20-22 NIV and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, **by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. 21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies** in your minds because of your evil behavior. 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death **to present you holy** in his sight, **without blemish and free from accusation--**

Power to put to death the hostility between Jew and Gentile and reconcile both them to God in one body

- Eph 2:14-16 NIV For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, 16 **and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.**

The power to overcome the influence of the world

- Gal 6:14-15 NIV May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which **the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.** 15 Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation.

Can any of these provide what the cross has done?

20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, **the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.** 22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, 23 but we preach **Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles,** 24 but to those who are **called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.** 25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

It may seem counterintuitive to preach a message that is a **stumbling block [skandalon]** to some and **folly** to others -- But **the cross is the power of God unto salvation**, and Christ is the wisdom of God and the power of God

The offense of the cross -- Gal 5:11 ESV But if I, brothers, still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been removed.

Why is the cross offensive?

1. It tells us how sinful we are - that God in the flesh would become a curse and hanged on a tree
2. It tells us we are incapable of finding salvation - you can never be good enough - it reveals our true spiritual condition - we try to justify our existence on earth
3. It is offensive because of its exclusivity - ONLY through the death of Christ
4. It is offensive because it strikes at the core of human pride

Rom 9:33 ESV as it is written, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

An Agnostic's Challenge

H.A. Ironside was asked to give a testimony at a Salvation Army street meeting

While I was speaking, I noticed that a well-dressed man of medium build and intelligent countenance who was standing on the curb took a card from his pocket and wrote something on it. Just as I was concluding my talk, he stepped forward, politely lifted his hat, and handed me the card. On one side I read his name.... ..

Turning the card over, I read on the opposite side, as nearly as I can now remember, the following challenge: "Sir, I challenge you to debate with me the question 'Agnosticism versus Christianity' in the Academy of Science Hall next Sunday afternoon at four o'clock. I will pay all expenses —."

.....I will be glad to agree to this debate on the following conditions: namely, that in order to prove that Mr.—— has something worth fighting for and worth debating about, he will promise to bring with him to the Hall next Sunday two people, whose qualifications I will give in a moment, as proof that agnosticism is of real value in changing human lives and building true character.

First, he must promise to bring with him one man who was for years what we commonly call a 'down-and-outer.' I am not particular as to the exact nature of the sins that had wrecked his life and made him an outcast from society — whether a drunkard, or a criminal of some kind, or a victim of any sensual appetite — but a man who for years was under the power of evil habits from which he could not deliver himself, but who on some occasion entered one of Mr.——s meetings and heard his glorification of agnosticism and his denunciations of the Bible and Christianity, and whose heart and mind as he listened to such an address were so deeply stirred that he went away from that meeting saying, 'Henceforth, I too am an agnostic!' and as a result of imbibing that particular philosophy he found that a new power had come into his life. The sins he once loved, now he hated, and righteousness and goodness were henceforth the ideals of his life. He is now an entirely new man, a credit to himself and an asset to society — all because he is an agnostic.

"Secondly, I would like Mr.—— to promise to bring with him one woman — and I think he may have more difficulty in finding the woman than the man — who was once a poor, wrecked, characterless outcast, the slave of evil passions, and the victim of man's corrupt living." As I spoke I was within perhaps a stone's throw of San Francisco's infamous Barbary Coast, where so many young lives have been shipwrecked; and so I added, "Perhaps one who had lived for years in some evil resort on Pacific Street, or in some other nearby hell-hole, utterly lost, ruined and wretched because of her life of sin. But this woman also entered a hall where Mr.—— was loudly proclaiming his agnosticism and ridiculing the message of the Holy Scriptures. As she listened, hope was born in her heart, and she said, 'This is just what I need to deliver me from the slavery of sin!' She followed the teaching until she became an intelligent agnostic or infidel. As a result, her whole being revolted against the degradation of the life she had been living. She fled from the den of iniquity where she had been held captive so long; and today, rehabilitated, she has won her way back to an honored position in society and is living a clean, virtuous, happy life — all because she is an agnostic.

"Now, Mr.——," I exclaimed, "if you will promise to bring these two people with you as examples of what agnosticism will do, I will promise to meet you at the Hall at the hour appointed next Sunday, and I will bring with me at the very least one hundred men and women who for years lived in just such sinful degradation as I have tried to depict, but who have been gloriously saved through believing the message of the gospel which you ridicule. I will have these men and women with me on the platform as witnesses to the miraculous saving power of Jesus Christ, and as present-day proof of the truth of the Bible."

Turning to the little Salvation Army captain, I said, "Captain, have you any who could go with me to such a meeting?" She exclaimed with enthusiasm, "We can give you forty at least, just from this one corps, and we will give you a brass band to lead the procession!"

"Fine!" I answered. "Now, Mr.——, I will have no difficulty in picking up sixty others from various Missions, Gospel Halls, and evangelical churches of the city, and if you promise faithfully to bring two such exhibits as I have described, I will come marching in at the head of such a procession, with the band playing 'Onward, Christian Soldiers,' and I will be ready for the debate."

I think Mr.—— had quite a sense of humor, for he smiled rather sardonically, waved his hand in a deprecating kind of way as much as to say, "Nothing doing!" and edging through the crowd he left the scene, while that great crowd clapped the Salvation Army and the street-preacher to the echo, for they well knew that in all the annals of unbelief no one ever heard of a philosophy of negation, such as agnosticism, making bad men and women good, and they also knew that this is what Christianity has been doing all down through the centuries.

Our gospel proves itself by what it accomplishes, as redeemed people from every walk of life, delivered from every type of sin, prove the regenerating and keeping power of the Christ of whom the Bible speaks.¹

This is the power of the cross

This is the testimony of your life

Maybe we should focus more attention on the amazing work Christ has done and will do for others rather than argue about so many things that really have no power to change us or offer hope to others.

Preach the Gospel

1Co 15:1-5 ESV Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, 2 and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you--unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that **Christ died for our sins** in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that **he was buried**, that **he was raised on the third day** in accordance with the Scriptures, 5 and that **he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.**

¹ <https://www.wholesomewords.org/etexts/ironside/irsrem4.html>