

# Cruciformed

October 21, 2018

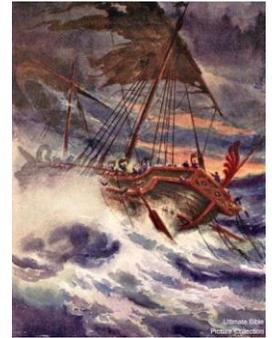
PRE-SERMON ILLUSTRATION (community time)

We call out to Jesus – Touch me, Lord Jesus!  
We are acutely aware of our need.

Paul sailing to Rome in the Mediterranean  
on a vessel that looked something like this

Storm comes up – and now it looks something like this!

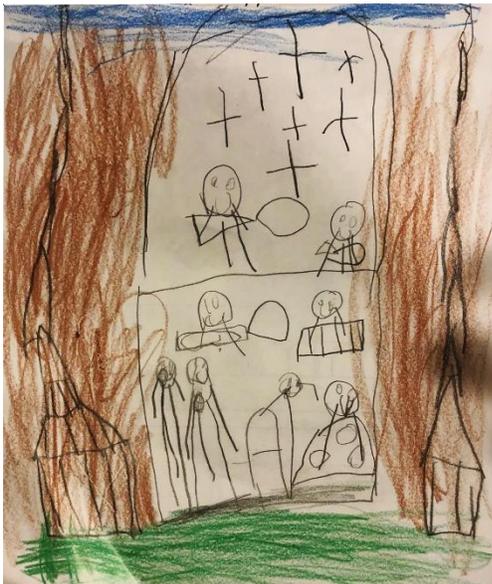
They start looking for their lifeboats.  
Who is looking for a lifeboat today?



## SERMON

Children often understand intuitively  
what we adults try to capture with our many words.

Here's a picture that Nico (My 5-year-old grandson) drew at school last week.



Any guesses what it is?  
Why, that's New Beginnings at worship.  
You can see the church building on the outside.  
And here on the inside is the worship team.  
We have 3 guitar players, the piano player,  
the drummer, and singers with their mic stands.  
This one in the middle, Linda, is you!

Isn't that great?!  
But what touches me so much are all the crosses.  
That's the centerpiece of our worship—the cross.  
Very intuitively, a child has gotten the message.  
Have we?

Today, on Gospel Sunday,  
we harken back to a style of music that captured people's hearts and imagination.  
What better day to harken back to the gospel of Jesus.

So here it is:

Paul writes in 1 **Corinthians 15:1-4**

Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel (*good news*) I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand.

By this gospel you are saved.

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance:

that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,  
that he was buried,

that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

That's the gospel.

Christ died for our sins.

And the proof that it worked is that Jesus rose from the dead.

**The cross is the centerpiece of the gospel.**

Just how central is the cross?

Here's how central Paul thought it was (**1 Corinthians 2:1-2**)

When I came to you [brothers and sisters], I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God.

For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

**It's all about the cross.**

You know, growing up protestant,

we always found fault with the Catholics who had a crucified Jesus on the cross.

We always said with a certain condescension,

“We serve a *risen* Christ!”

Certainly, without the resurrection, our hope would be in vain,

BUT, Jesus didn't take the bread and say,

“**This is my body which is *risen* for you.**”

He said,

“This is My body which is *broken* for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”

For (*as Paul reminds us*) as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's *death* till He comes. (**1 Cor 11:24, 26**)

**It's all about the cross.**

So what really happened on the cross?

I'm not talking about watching Mel Gibson's rendition of the immense suffering.

Yes, that was probably a true depiction of what happened in our time and space reality.

But what happened in the ultimate reality, the eternal, cosmic, other dimensional reality, of which our 3-dimensional reality is but a mere shadow?

Something happened on the cross

that profoundly changed ultimate reality for all eternity.

What happened? What changed?

Paul makes it clear in **Romans 1:16**

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ:

for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes.

Some of you may say, **Oh, yes, I get that. I'm saved.**

**That's means if I believe that Jesus died for my sins,**

**I get to go to heaven when I die.**

If we reduce the cross, the gospel, to just a free pass to heaven after we die, we have missed the cross thoroughly.

The cross is not primarily about what is going to happen after we die.

This is what it is about:

**2 Corinthians 5:15, 17**

Christ died for all, that those who live (not in the sweet by-and-by but in the here and now) should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation;

old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

(When? Right here and now!)

What happened on the cross was is as eternity-altering as the first creation.

Becoming a new creation, a radically new person on the inside

has become an eternal possibility.

We seldom, if ever, embrace the full impact of what happened on the cross.

Many of you good—church going people—

have not embraced or experienced the full impact of this new creation.

It doesn't matter if you have an Rev. in front of your name – or a “ministry leader” title.

Many who can quote MUCH Scripture have yet to embrace and experience the full impact of what happened on the cross.

We've grown immune to the message of the cross  
We're meandering around down here, squandering our time and our energy.  
Coming to church no longer whets our appetite for this salvation,  
but rather it inoculates us.  
We settle for the occasional hand-out from God,  
a shot in the arm to get through another week.  
But embracing the power of God unto salvation?  
Becoming a new creation through and through?

God help us! . . . And he does . . .  
As a divine gift, God will, to those who are fortunate,  
put you in a boat that's about to be shipwrecked,  
to reveal to you how much you *need* the cross.  
He does that by showing you how utterly broken you are.  
and that it's not in your power to fix it.

Oh, you're aware of your bad behavior that always getting you in trouble.  
but the sin you're painfully aware of is just a symptom.  
Trust me, you haven't a clue what the underlying character defect are  
that are keeping all those symptoms in play any more than I am.

Now, if you're fortunate, God will bring you to the end of  
your own good intentions and will power.  
If you're fortunate, God will shake you to the very core of your being.  
If you're fortunate God will wrestle you to the ground and bring you to the end  
your illusion that you're capable of saving yourself.

You need a lot more than to escape from the penalty of sin.  
You need to be freed from the power of sin.

Once you embrace *this* reality and cry out to Jesus to "touch me!"  
the power of God unto salvation begins to kick in.

*That's* when the road signs marked "salvations" start to show up.  
At first, it's like looking into the foggy distance and  
the faint signpost saying SALVATION, this way.



A path of action will present itself.  
Perhaps through conversation,  
perhaps through a sermon, or through prayer and meditation on His word.

The sign will appear, and you'll have a choice.  
A choice to follow it or to say, no thanks.

Now, you'd think following a sign that says SALVATION would be a no brainer.  
Who wouldn't want salvation? Be prepared . . .

Following the road sign that says "salvation," will *feel* like it leads to suicide.  
Professional suicide  
Emotional suicide  
Social suicide  
Political suicide  
Marital suicide

Which brings us back to the story we talked about earlier.

Paul was on a ship in a turbulent storm in the Mediterranean Sea.  
It's around midnight when the captain realizes that the ships going to run aground.  
Fearing they would be dashed to pieces,  
some of the sailors started letting down the lifeboats to escape when Paul protests,  
"Unless these men stay with the ship, no one can be saved."

Paul just through up a salvation road sign . . .  
But it sure seemed like a death sentence.  
They had a choice.

Listen to Paul? What does he know about sailing?!  
Probably nothing, BUT he knows God.  
What did they choose?

The soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it drift away . . .

That had to feel like committing suicide.  
What will it mean for you to cut the rope to your lifeboat?  
Everything in you (your ego, your identity that you have created for yourself)  
will rebel and say,  
"No, that can't be the way of salvation!  
I'd risk losing way too much."  
There must be another way,  
an easier, less painful way."

Some of you have prayed and prayed for God's salvation, and it never quite comes.  
Perhaps you have thumbed your nose at the road sign saying salvation,  
and sailed off in your own life boat instead.

You hope salvation sign moved and you're on course,  
but it didn't . . . and it won't.

You come back and there it is . . . Salvation this way!

So the sailors cut the rope that held their life boats.

AND . . .

everyone reached land safely.

Salvation always takes on flesh and blood.  
Salvation is not this theoretical, theological construction.  
Salvation is always incarnate in the stories of our lives.

You may wonder,

“Will I ever get to the point where following the path to salvation  
doesn't feel like dying?”

Well, Jesus says in **Luke 9:23**

“If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself  
and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

**DAILY!**

Maybe the better questions is,

Does dying daily get a little easier with practice?

Yes, BECAUSE you begin to realize that on the other side of dying,  
is freedom, peace and joy -- there's LIFE (with a capital L)!

As Jesus went on to say,

For whoever wants to save his life (launch his own lifeboat) will lose it,  
but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it....

What's it? LIFE.

There's LIFE after death in the here and now!

That's what Paul says.

I love the King James version of **Galatians 2:20** (KJV)

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live;  
yet not I, but Christ lives in me:

We die to LIVE, transformed by the power of God.  
A new creation, in the here and now.

I came across a new word for this salvation and transformation  
through the way of the cross.

### **I'm CRUCIFORMED**



I am crucified with Christ,  
and through that dying daily,  
And as a new creation I'm transformed . . .  
I'm CRUCIFORMED!

Now that's good news!  
That's the GOSPEL.  
It's the power of God unto salvation  
being narrated daily in the story of your life.

Precious Lord take my hand,  
Lead me on . . .

### **BENEDICTION**

#### **Hebrews 12:2**

May you fix your eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of your 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.