

# CHRIST CRUCIFIED

## A FAMILY DEVOTION

(Good Friday – 10 April 2020)

Call your family together for a Family Devotion. (The time you would have gone to church) Set 60-90 minutes aside for Praise and Worship, Word Reading and Study and Prayer. Encourage the involvement of every family member. The outline below will assist you. **Marius Gradwell**

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### Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 & 2:1-5

When the Apostle Paul went to the great and intellectual city of Corinth, he said, *"I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified"* (1 Corinthians 2:2). When Paul described what his message was, he said, *"We preach Christ crucified"* (1 Corinthians 1:23).

To the people of Corinth, the preaching of the cross was foolishness, nonsense. But Paul said, *"The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men"* (1 Corinthians 1:25). In that great intellectual centre, the cross of Christ was a stumbling block (an offense) to the children of Israel, and to the Gentiles it was sheer idiocy.

This Gospel of Christ and Him crucified is still foolishness to millions who are perishing all over the world today. How few people recognise that the answer to all the world's problems can be found at the foot of the cross?

As we stand at the cross today and gaze on a confused and frustrated world, God asks the question, *"Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe"* (1 Corinthians 1:20-21, NIV).

*"We preach Christ crucified."* This is the focal point of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is a picture of blood flowing from Christ's veins as He hung on the cross. The message of shed blood is repugnant to many, and they turn from such a gory sight. Many people will accept Christ's character, but they reject His crucifixion.

The people of Corinth were blind to Christ crucified and what it meant. To them, His death in this manner was foolishness. The Greek word here is *moria*, which literally means "idiocy." Out of this Greek word comes the word *moron*. This is how the Corinthians evaluated the crucifixion of Christ.

The idea of a world being saved by Christ crucified was indeed foolishness to those who were proud and boastful and who thought the wisdom of the world was vested in them. How different it is for those of us who, in simple faith, know Christ crucified. For us, the cross is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

The people of the world stumble on blindly toward eventual judgment and destruction, not realising that they are rejecting Christ and Him crucified, which is the only hope for salvation.

### Questions:

1. How does the "foolishness" of the Gospel (the way people may see Jesus's death, burial and resurrection), influence your willingness to share it with others?
2. Do you think it is possible that we might water down the Gospel to make it more "acceptable" or less offensive for others?
3. How would you answer the question: "Why was it necessary for Jesus to die on a cross?"

When we look at the cross, we see several things:

**1. First, in the cross we see the clearest evidence of the world's guilt.**

At the cross of Christ, sin reached its climax. Its most terrible display took place at Calvary. It was never blacker nor more hideous. We see the human heart laid bare and its corruption fully exposed. The Scripture teaches that man's heart is desperately wicked.

In the judgment hall of Pilate, the cry was heard, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" The people had seen Jesus's miracles. They had heard His gracious words. They had seen how He relieved suffering humanity. Then why this cry? Why this murderous spirit?

The answer is found deep in the human heart. Human nature has not changed, and as we stand and gaze at the cross, we see clear evidence that mankind is basically wrong, and we hear the thunderous verdict of God Himself when He says, *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23).

**2. Second, in the cross we see the strongest proof of God's hatred of sin.**

God has stated that the soul that sins shall die (Ezekiel 18:20) and that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23).

To gain a clear understanding of God's attitude toward sin, we must consider the purpose of Christ's death. The Scripture says, *"Without shedding of blood there is no remission"* (Hebrews 9:22). Here is a positive statement that there can be no forgiveness of sin unless our debt has been paid.

God will not tolerate sin. He condemns it and demands payment for it. God could not remain a righteous God and compromise with sin. His holiness and His justice demand the death penalty.

The tendency today is to feel that such a position on God's part is too severe. So, we find ourselves manufacturing another gospel. We may say that sin is not that bad—but God said it is very bad. So bad that He demands the death penalty. When we look at the cross, we see how drastically God deals with sin. The Scripture says, *"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us"* (2 Corinthians 5:21). If God had to send His only Son to the cross in order to pay for sin, then sin must be dark indeed in the sight of God.

**3. Third, in the cross we see a glorious exhibition of God's love.**

When we look out upon the world of nature, and in the provisions and plans made for our happiness we discover a revelation of God's love. Yet as wonderful as these things are in revealing divine love, nothing is comparable to the sacrifice of Calvary. *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life"* (John 3:16).

Paul writes to the Roman Christians, *"For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:6-8).

**4. Fourth, in the cross we see the way to victory.**

Satan seeks to defeat us, hold us in bondage to sin and control us by his deceptive power. The cross is the instrument by which God delivers us from the penalty of our sins and from the hand of Satan.

God makes it plain that our carnal nature was dealt with at the cross, so that in our standing in Christ this nature has no more power over us. We are told that our *"old man was crucified with Him"* (Romans 6:6) and that we do not need to serve sin any longer. The Scripture promises that sin shall no longer have dominion over us (Romans 6:14).

Thousands of Christians wrestle with temptation and sin. Satan uses jealousy, pride, gossip, gluttony, sex and sinful appetites to control us. However, in the cross there is power to overcome these temptations and sins. God is more than able through the cross of His Son to give us daily victory, so that we can say with Paul, *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me"* (Galatians 2:20).

The cross of Christ is not only the basis of our peace and hope—but it is the means of our eternal salvation. The goal of the cross is not only a full and free pardon, but a changed life lived in fellowship with God. No wonder Paul said 2,000 years ago, *"We preach Christ crucified."* The world needs this message today. This is the message of hope. This is what the world calls "foolishness" but what God has been pleased to call "wisdom."

**As you break bread together, present the portion below and have a conversation by asking the following questions:**

1. Why is it important to keep our focus on the Gospel: man's sin and guilt – God's love – Jesus's death, burial and resurrection – our victory? What happens if we make other good things the priority?
2. In what practical ways can we be the "Body of Christ" to one another and to others around us?

**Breaking of Bread**

*Acts 2:42 NLT All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.*

The Acts 2:42 church loved the word of God; they loved the deep partnership/fellowship they enjoyed in the Gospel and they loved to call out to God together in prayer. However, they also loved to eat together and, as they did so, to remember and celebrate through bread and wine all that Jesus had accomplished on the Cross.

Breaking bread is vital for at least three reasons: -

1. It keeps us focused on Jesus and the magnificent salvation He won for us at such huge expense on His part at Calvary. By breaking bread again and again and again we are reminded that the Cross is everything to us.
2. It reminds us of our need to live in right relationship with each other. There is a vitally important "one another" element to our breaking of bread (see 1 Corinthians 11:27-34).
3. There is an eschatological (future) dimension to breaking bread; we do so "until He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26). There is a day coming when we will drink wine with Jesus in the kingdom at the Wedding Supper of the Lamb (Matthew 26:29).