



"THE CROSS OF CHRIST!"

Booklet 2

"Effective Christian Living" Series.

By

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*THE **BIG** QUESTIONS*
#2
"THE CROSS OF CHRIST!"

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1.

*"WHAT HAS GOD DONE ABOUT
MY SINS?"*

Why does God redeem us? Why does God forgive us? Is there something about us that makes us worthy or appealing to God? NEVER!

God redeems and forgives because God chooses to redeem and forgive, not because we are worthy! We cannot earn, deserve, or purchase God's favor. God initiates God's grace - unmerited favor - totally. God loves us, not because we are lovely, but because 'God is love.' The very nature of God is love, not a sentimental love but a suffering love.

"We are redeemed and 'forgiven' through His (Christ's) blood." (Ephesians 1:7) "Love Which Bleeds Is Love Which Saves!"

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

God could neither redeem man from the bondage of sin's consequences, nor forgive man from the guilt of wrong moral choices, without the atoning blood of Christ!

It is the shed blood of Jesus Christ, which is the instrument of man's salvation. The will and pleasure of God was to save humanity from sin, but this divine intention in eternity could only become realized in time if Christ should choose to consent to the Father's request that He die an atoning death on Mount Calvary!

Christ had to die, not in the sense of absolute necessity, but in the sense of redemptive necessity. Only through the Blood of Christ can God's holy nature be honored and man's salvation is guaranteed.

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O God, I see now that your justice was maintained and your love was demonstrated at the same time when Jesus died, for, when Jesus' blood was shed, God's life was poured out! God, you took the penalty of sin upon yourself when Jesus died, for 'God was in Christ,' both dying for sin and at the same time reconciling sinners to Himself! Thank you! Thank you!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

I encourage you to be amazed by the suffering, redemptive) love of your Savior!

*Meditate on the following powerful words
of the hymn writer!*

*"And can it be that I should gain
An interest in the Savior's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain?
For me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be?
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me.
(By Charles Wesley)*

2.

*“WHY WAS CHRIST’S DEATH
NECESSARY FOR MY SALVATION?”*

So serious is sin that, in the process of punishing sin the sinner, would also be destroyed. The wage of sin is death for the sinner.

The Cross is not only the answer to appeasing God’s wrath toward sin, but also the answer to saving the sinner from suffering the just penalty for sin which is death

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

This is a moral universe, where right must be rewarded and wrong must be punished. If God could forgive the guilty one by a mere ‘wink of the eye,’ then God would no longer be just and the universe would no longer be a moral, safe, and reliable place to live. All basis for morality (right and wrong), would then be destroyed! God wanted to save humanity, but a universe run by justice and by a just God must appropriately punish sin.

The wage of sin is death; therefore, the sinning one must die. If God were to remain just in his character, he could not allow sin to go unpunished. The cross is the answer to this moral dilemma.

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O God, I know that the Bible teaches that, because you are infinite in your knowledge, your ways are higher than my ways, and your thoughts are higher than my thoughts—as the heavens are higher than the earth. However, you have chosen to reveal the marvels of your grace (your unmerited favor) towards sinning humanity. The greatest revelation to humanity is the revelation of your love (for a 'fallen race') as seen on Mount Calvary!

The wonders of your love, revealed in Jesus' agonizing death, leave every sincere person 'breathless', but thank you for unveiling a portion of that mystery to me, at this time in my life! You have revealed a (partial) understanding of this mystery of divine love!

If God should die on a cross, then my sins would be justly punished through that substitutionary death. Yet the sinner him-

self would be saved. The Cross allowed God—the great judge of the universe—to remain just in his punishment of sin and yet merciful and loving in his treatment of the sinner himself.

God, because of the Cross, You can be both just and the justifier of the ungodly. Jesus took the penalty for man's sins so that Sinners could be, forgiven justly!

Thank you for showing me your love, a love that has the power to resolve all my guilt, and forgive all my sins, and to give me assurance of eternal life! "AMAZING!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

The Cross is the center of world history! Only because of Christ's death can any person be 'saved' from his sins, and be saved for a 'good' life! Because of the cross, God is able to maintain justice in his character, and at the same time, exercise kindness in his treatment towards each sinner who has ever lived! What a wise, loving, and just God!

3.

*"WHY SHOULD THE CROSS BE OF
CENTRAL IMPORTANCE TO ME?"*

Jesus said, "But I, when I am lifted up from the earth (on a Cross), will draw all men to myself." (John 12:32)

The purpose of peace is reconciliation—between man and man and between God and man. "His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross." (Ephesians 2:15b-16)

The Cross demonstrated God's love for all humanity, which is God's giant magnet to reconcile man with man, "thus making peace"! (vs. 15)

In addition, the Cross satisfies God's justice - Christ receiving the death penalty of sin in his own body in the place of sinners — which provides the basis for God's reconciliation with sinners.

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Thus, the cross is the basis of all recon-

ciliation. Because the cross satisfies God's justice, the cross is Christ's appeal to God to forgive humanity. Christ has punished sin.

Being the just God that He is, God will not punish twice for one crime! The Innocent One (Christ) has died for the guilty ones (Sinners), therefore the alienated ones can become the reconciled ones.

We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of Christ's death on the cross, providing atonement for sin, Christ is our door of access to the presence of God! Further, because the cross demonstrates God's love, the Cross is Christ's appeal to man to reconcile himself with his fellowman. "The work of Jesus is to show all men that God is their friend, and because God is their friend, that they must be friends with each other." (Daily Study Bible, Ephesians, pg. 137; Barclay)

The Cross of Christ both satisfies God's justice, regarding sin's punishment, and demonstrates God's love in the midst of sinners' hostility to one another.

TIME FOR A PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"Greater love hath no one than this—that the sinless one would lay down his life for the sinful ones. O Christ, your sacrificial life and substitutionary death provide not only inspiration for change but also power for moral transformation of my life. Your blood speaks peace to my sinful heart, and draws me to make peace with my fellow-men."

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

You probably know that for centuries, humanity sought salvation in many ways—the Jews (law keeping), the Greeks (philosophy), the Romans (nationalism and many gods). Knowing that humans were helpless and hopeless, God "in the fullness of time" sent His Son to earth to become the sinless sacrifice for man's redemption and salvation! 'Cling to the Old Rugged Cross', for only through that Cross do you have personal forgiveness of sins. Christ saw you personally, when He died on the Cross! He was the perfect God-Man, truly man and truly God! The Only Perfect Sacrifice for Sin!

4.

*"WHY WAS CHRIST'S DEATH
NECESSARY FOR MY SALVATION?"*

Christ substituted and sacrificed His life on the cross for us that we might be spared divine wrath and that we might have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

The scriptures make it clear that God's wrath is visited upon sinners or else the Son of God dies for them. Either we die or He dies. The person who accepts Christ's provision for man's plight need not endure the penalty of sin, which is eternal death, but instead enjoy the gift of God, which is eternal life!

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Christ shed His blood on the Cross that humanity might live. The Scriptures are very clear that Christ's death was substitutionary in nature. Christ died that we might live! Jesus is the 'Lamb of God' who takes

away the sins of the world!

*"Redeemed—how I love to Proclaim it! "
"Redeemed—by the Blood of the Lamb;"
"Redeemed—through His Infinite Mercy,"
"His child, and Forever, I am."
(Fanny Crosby)*

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O God, your Word teaches me that, without the shedding of the blood of Jesus, I can have no salvation—no forgiveness and no peace with you! Christ's death was substitutionary—the Innocent One dying for the Guilty Ones (including me, as a member of a 'fallen race')! Life is in the blood! When Jesus' blood was shed, His very life was poured out for me!

There is nothing more sacred in the entire Universe, than the precious blood of Jesus Christ! I will forever cherish the saving and the healing blood of my mighty Savior, for I have no acceptance with God in time or in eternity, without that pure blood (sacrificed for me)! To reject that sacrifice of Christ is to remain unforgiven and to invite the wrath of God upon myself. Christ's blood alone is without defilement, and therefore no other person, institution, or

god can save me! Throughout my short life, and at the moment of my death, I will find my salvation only in the 'precious blood' of Jesus! Amen."

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Always remember that Love which bleeds is Love which saves! Jesus loved you, with a dying love at Calvary, and with an undying love now!

5.

*"AM I EMPTY-HANDED AS I STAND
BEFORE THE CROSS?"*

It is important to emphasize that God's love is in no way a contradiction of God's wrath. At one and yet at the same time, God hates sin and yet loves the sinner.

The wrath of God is against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men; and yet, the same God whose wrath is incited by sin, is the God whose love for the sinner sent his Son to become man's Savior and sin's atonement.

The God who justly hates sin is the God who intensely loves the sinner. Greater is the love for the sinner the greater the hatred for the sin, which has ruined the sinner!

Think of a human analogy. "The greater the love of the mother for her wayward son, the greater is the hatred of the mother toward the sin, which has debased her son".

A mother can love her drunkard son intensely while at the same time she intensely hates the vice of alcoholism. The more

she loves her son, the more she will hate his alcoholic bondage.

God’s love and God’s wrath are compatible. Indeed, God’s wrath is a manifestation of God’s love. We understand the love of God better, against the backdrop of sin, which has God’s wrath focused upon it!

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

“Yes, all-holy God, I am ‘empty-handed’ as I stand before the ‘Cross of Christ’. There is nothing that I can do to save myself! ‘In my hands No price I bring; simply to Thy Cross I cling.’ No amount of money could purchase my salvation! I cannot earn, purchase, or deserve your new life, which has been purchased by the costly blood of the dying Savior! My own carnal pride—sense of self-sufficiency and self-righteousness—lies buried in the dust!

How blasphemous of me to think that I (a wrenched sinner) could make myself ‘acceptable’ to You, most Holy God! When mankind was most powerless to save itself through morality, philosophy, and culture, O God, you sent Your Son into this broken world to die for mankind, and all of this, to rescue mankind—including an obscure per-

son like me! Thank you, my blessed Savior!

As an 'empty-handed' sinner before the Cross, I ask you just now to make me a child of God. Let me receive the fullness of Your love! Then my 'hands' shall be involved in many 'love projects' for my Living Lord! Amen!"

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

You cannot be saved, independently of the Cross of Christ. You are empty-handed without Christ, but the Savior is able to fill your hands and your life with His love, and His 'love projects'!

*"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy Cross I cling,
Look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I Naked, come to Thee for dress,
Helpless, fly I to the fountain,
Wash me, Savior, or I die."*

(A.M. Toplady)

6.

*"HOW IS GOD'S LOVE BEST
DEMONSTRATED TO ME?"*

How is God's love best shown? God's love for helpless, hopeless, sinning humanity is shown best—not through Christ's great teachings concerning love, not through Christ's great miracles and healing works of compassion, not even through his sinless, loving actions, and relationships among men.

No, as great as the teachings, miracles, and life of Jesus were, it is not those that best demonstrate God's love for humanity.

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

There is no way that God could have saved sinning humanity—you and me—except through Christ's death!

***"Christ died for the ungodly."** (Romans 5:6) Christ came into the world, not just to give us powerful miracles, profound teachings, and a pure example to follow. Christ came into the world to provide a substitutionary death for every sinner.*

God's saving love for the sinner demanded that Christ *"taste death for every man"*. (Hebrews 2:9) The penalty of sin is death. The justice of God demands the death penalty for willful transgressions against the known laws of God.

The only way for an unjust sinner to be 'justly spared' sin's penalty, is for the righteous Savior to 'unsparingly take' the sinner's death.

The Justice of God can only be maintained, through the exercise of the love of God—love that must suffer a substitutionary death for the sinner.

TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

"O God, because (unlike all the so-called gods of the world) you are a God of righteousness, justice, integrity, and holiness, you cannot look lightly upon sin! Sin must be punished, and the just punishment for sin is death. If sin were not punished You, O God, would no longer be a just God, and the moral order of the Universe would be destroyed. There would then no longer be a reliable, 'honest' universe, but instead a 'dishonest' universe (not worthy of being lived in)!

Only through the exercise of the dying love of the sinless Son, can God remain just in His character. At the same time, I, as sinner, become justified in my standing before You, O my Maker! The only way I (the sinner), can be saved, is through the Cross of Christ! The Cross of Christ is lifted high for the entire world to see, to accept, and to experience as the means of God's transforming power.

O God, I today ‘Cling to the Old Rugged Cross’! Greater love hath no man than this that He laid down His life for a race of fallen creatures including me! Hallelujah! The way of God's love is the way of the Cross, and the way of the Cross leads home (to heaven)!”

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

Lift your eyes to the Old Rugged Cross! Remember: the cross is the meeting ground for the justice of God and the love of God! The Cross satisfies God's justice and, at the same time, demonstrates God's love!

*Booklet Titles Of
"Effective Christian Living" Series."*

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