

“The Purpose of Christ’s Death – Part 2”

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Scriptural Foundation: 1 Peter 3:17-18, ESV

Suffering for Righteousness’ Sake

¹⁷ For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God’s will, than for doing evil.

¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit...

A television interviewer was walking the busy streets in a large city at Christmastime while many were out shopping for toys and other presents. The interviewer stopped one young woman on the sidewalk, and asked, “What is the meaning of Christmas?”

Laughing, she responded, “I don’t know. Is that the day that Jesus died?”

The woman may have been ignorant about the details of Christmas, and many are and that is why it is important for us, as believers, to “go tell it on the mountain”.¹ It is a shame in a country in which there are so many Christians anyone would be still ignorant of the message and the meaning behind Christmas and Easter, but yet so many are. It is a shame to the church of Jesus because it indicates we are not telling our neighbors, we are not going and telling it on the mountain.

The woman may have been ignorant about the details of Christmas, but unwittingly she spoke much truth through her answer, for Christmas is not only about the birth of Jesus, but it is also about His mission and His death. We could not rejoice in the birth of Jesus if we did not exult in His death as well, for Jesus death was in full view at His birth. The Gospel writers indicate that. In fact, if Jesus would not have been born of a virgin apart from the plan for Him to die upon the cross, then Christmas would be completely devoid of meaning. The cross of Jesus made the virgin birth of Jesus necessary, and the virgin birth of Jesus made the cross of Jesus possible.

God reveals in Scripture Jesus did not begin to exist at His conception in the womb of His human mother, Mary. That is true for you and me. As creatures our life began the moment that the egg in our mother’s womb was energized, but this is not true of Jesus. God reveals Jesus existed as God the Son for all eternity past prior to taking on human flesh. At Jesus’ conception, He did not begin to be for He already was. John 1 tells it this way,

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him...

At His conception, Jesus simply clothed himself with a human nature and a human body. Why would God the Son remove Himself from the glory, joy and comfort of Heaven to become microscopically small and dependent upon creatures for his care and sustenance? Why would He humble Himself to such a low state? He did so in order to die and present Himself as a sacrifice for men and women who would come to faith in Him.

I believe there is no more beneficial way to prepare to celebrate Christmas than by meditating upon Jesus’ atoning death on the cross. Looking at Jesus’ earthly life at its conclusion gives us insight so we might better understand Jesus’ earthly life at the beginning. When we think of Jesus lying in that manger, wrapped in swaddling cloth, cooing sweetly in the face of his earthly mother, we should notice the shadow of the cross falls across His face, for Jesus came into this world, born in Bethlehem, for the express purpose of giving His life as a ransom for many. The cross fills Christmas with meaning. If there is no cross in Christmas, then there is no Christ in Christmas, for the word “Christ” literally means “Messiah”, the One who delivers from sin.

For this reason I have chosen in this study before Christmas to continue our series in 1 Peter and look once more at this colossal verse: 1 Peter 3:18. We are so small as we read it and stand before it. Here Peter is setting Jesus before us as an example of One who suffered unjustly and was richly rewarded by the Father for it. Peter is encouraging all

¹ “Go Tell It On The Mountain”, American Folk Hymn, Adapted by John W. Work.

believers who are suffering to look to the chief example God designed in these trials and God blesses us through them.

But, as Peter presents Jesus as an example to encourage us in faithfulness in the midst of persecution, he cannot help but launch into the richness of the redemptive work Jesus accomplished for us on the cross. When we began our study of this verse we observed Peter teaches six key aspects regarding Jesus' death. By way of review, we first observed Jesus' death was unjust,

¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous...

Jesus is the Righteous One. If ever anyone deserved a life completely free of ridicule, mockery, slander, physical violence, punishment, or death, Jesus certainly is that One. Peter makes note of Jesus' sinlessness earlier in this letter, in 1 Peter 2,

²² He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.

Not once in Jesus' thought, word, deed, or attitude did He disobey even the smallest aspect of the Law of God. He fulfilled God's righteous requirements completely and utterly and perfectly. Yet, sinful man condemned Him as a criminal and traitor. It is the innocence of Jesus which is pivotal to the Gospel message, for Jesus' perfection qualifies Him to be our Sin Bearer.

Secondly, we talked about Jesus' death as being necessary,

¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God.

If Jesus did not die, then there is no remedy for the unrighteous who have sinned against God. Who are the unrighteous Peter speaks about? We are, for we have grievously sinned against God and we rightly fall under His just wrath as a result of it. Jesus did not suffer for our righteousness, but He suffered for our sins! The Righteous One did not suffer for other righteous ones, and often times that is how we think about it. No, He died for unrighteous people, people whose sin is so great and vile before the eyes of an infinitely Holy God, that God looks upon us and says, "I cannot have relationship with such ones. I must separate myself from them to such an extent I will not even hear their prayers."

God is infinite. He is infinite in His sovereign authority over our lives. He is infinitely worthy of our love, honor, and obedience. Therefore, because He is infinitely worthy and He is infinitely sovereign, our obligation to love, honor, and obey Him is infinitely great. When we fail, in the smallest measure, to love, honor, and obey Him, we violate our infinite obligation, and that violation is infinite in its evil and wickedness. God infinitely hates sin and is an infinite enemy of all sin, and for this reason He is just and right to act as an infinite enemy of sin and to require an infinite penalty for it. Our just punishment for our sin is infinite, deserving of an infinite sentence of death. Do you think of your sin as small and infinite? The Bible teaches us our sin is so grievous and so wicked and so evil no earthly measuring tape can adequately mark its depth, its width, and its height. We must not view our sin in relationship to other finite beings or to our finite selves. We must connect our sin to the infinite work of God. It is only then we will begin to understand the great wickedness of our own sin.

For this reason, our own sin's power to destroy our lives is inviolable and inescapable. That is the reason Jesus' death is absolutely necessary. Apart from Jesus' death we would remain in our infinite wickedness, forever and ever separated from God. We would have no one and no way we can come to Him.

In Jeremiah 30, God is speaking regarding the infinite wickedness of our sin and He says,

^{11b} "...and I will by no means leave you unpunished." ¹² For thus says the LORD: "Your hurt is incurable, and your wound is grievous. ¹³ There is none to uphold your cause, no medicine for your wound, no healing for you."

The first work of God's Gospel is to convince us of the wickedness of our own sin. This always must be a supernatural work of God's grace. Our natural mind and our natural heart recoils against the notion we have done anything deserving of an infinite penalty. Yet, if we would see our sins as God sees them, and in light of God's infinite holiness, they, too, would become utterly repulsive and heinous. It is vital we see Jesus' death is absolutely necessary and why that is so.

Next, we learned Jesus' death is substitutionary,

¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous...

There was a substitution which took place; Jesus acted in the place of the unrighteous. Notice it was not Jesus' pleading for us that freed us from God's condemnation, but it was Jesus' bleeding for us that freed us from God's condemnation and from sin's curse. That is important! It was not that Jesus said, "I am going to plead to the Father for Ritch's salvation and upon the basis of my pleading, then Ritch is going to be forgiven and find a way of access to God in Heaven." No, all of Jesus' pleading for my soul, apart from His bleeding, would have been in vain because He, in order for me to be free from my sins and to fulfill God's righteous requirement of the Law, must die and He must die in my place as my substitute.

Peter rejoices in this. He rejoiced earlier, 1 Peter 2,

²¹ ...Christ also suffered for you...²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

Jesus took our place that day upon the cross, a cross planted outside of Jerusalem. He became a curse for us; He acted as our substitute. The infinite justice and righteousness of God requires our sin be punished with the most severe of sentences.

Modern audiences, and audiences throughout all of human history, say, "I do not believe that! I do not believe my sin requires an infinite penalty." God has not left us without a clear word on this matter. In 2 Thessalonians 1, we read,

⁶ ...since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you...⁸ when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.

Those are not my words, those are God's. God's very Word stands with the clear testimony He will not be charged with judicial neglect. He will inflict the just penalty of the punishment of eternal destruction on all those who sin against Him, and that includes every one of us. We will never believe and cherish the Gospel if this truth does not take root in our soul. Yet, God, in love, determined to rescue sinners from His own justice.

When we talk about being "saved", one asks, "Saved from what? What is a believer saved from?" We are saved from God's justice. We are saved from the eternal penalty which our sins merit. How could God both maintain His justice and yet deliver us from suffering under the just penalty of our sin? In divine wisdom God devised a plan in which God the Son would be born of a virgin and take on human flesh so He could act as our Substitute. As a man, He could represent man and yet still maintain His deity. As God, He could take our sin upon Himself and suffer an infinite penalty in time and fully pay it. At the cross, the sin of God's people was taken from us and transferred onto Christ, and God treated Jesus as though He were the Liar, as though He were the Murderer, as though He were the Sexually Immoral, as though He were the Greedy and the Idolater and the Proud Mockers.

I love what Martin Luther wrote regarding the substitutionary nature of Jesus' death: "Our most merciful Father...sent his only Son into the world and laid upon him...the sins of all men saying: Be thou Peter that denier; Paul that persecutor, blasphemer and cruel oppressor; David that adulterer; that sinner which did eat the apple in Paradise; that thief which hanged upon the cross; and briefly be thou the person which has committed the sins of all men; see therefore that you pay and satisfy for them. Here now comes the Law and says (to Christ): I find him a sinner...therefore let him die upon the cross. And so he sets upon him and kills him. By this means the whole world is purged and cleansed from all sins." That is the nature of Jesus' substitutionary death upon us.

One day each of us will give an account of our life as we stand before the Righteous Judge who knows all and sees all. If we do not have a Substitute on that day who has born our sins for us, then we must carry our sins with us to that bar of justice. How awful it is to think of the prospect of standing before the infinitely Holy One bearing our own sins in our hands, but we are not left without a Substitute. That is why there is Good News of this Gospel. God has given us Jesus who has offered to bear our sins in His body and to suffer for them on that tree.

Is Jesus your Substitute? Do you know Him as your substitute? If not, call out to Him today, "Jesus, save me. Take my sins upon yourself. I need you to be my Savior and my Lord." If Jesus is your substitute, then let us learn to rejoice in Him and in His atoning works. The story never grows old. Chew on the meat, each day, of the substitutionary atonement of Jesus. Let us learn to glory in Christ and Him crucified. Let us learn to say, "Lord Jesus, I am your sin, You are my Righteousness. You have born upon yourself what is rightfully mine, and have given me what is rightfully yours. You became what you were not so I might become what I was not!"

We now consider the fourth characteristic and aspect: Jesus' death is final, it is complete,

¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous...

I like other translations such as the New American Standard Bible or the New International Version which read, "Christ also suffered for sins once for all." When Jesus died, He cried out, "It is finished!"² The work of redeeming sinners from their sin is complete and fulfilled. Sin has been paid in full. In essence, Jesus is saying, "Mission accomplished! I did what I came to do." This work of Jesus cannot be repeated and need never be repeated. All who will be redeemed will be redeemed as the result of what happened back then, that once for all sacrifice of Jesus upon the cross.

Why does Peter emphasize this truth to such a degree? Why is that important to Peter? Peter is a Jewish man and he grew up following God's instructions in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, the way sin was dealt with was by sacrifice, upon sacrifice, upon sacrifice made by the priest. There was no end to the work of the priests in the Temple. It was one continuous, long line of bloody sacrifices. Peter wants us to know in Christ, all that ends. No priest had any more work to do after this Priest completed His work. He sat down. Everything demanded by God's justice for the forgiveness and the removal of our sin is completed once for all.

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews explains this more in depth in Chapters 9 and 10,

^{9:24} For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.²⁵

Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own,²⁶ for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

^{10:10} And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.¹¹ And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.¹² But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God,¹³ waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet.¹⁴ For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

All the sins of all time, past, present, and future, were placed upon Him there at Calvary. In that work, Jesus satisfied God's justice completely for all time and for all who would come to Him in faith; one death completely and sufficiently providing atonement for all sin, for all who would come to Him. His was unlike any other sacrifice which preceded Him. There is no more work Jesus must do to accomplish our redemption; the payment for sin is paid in full.

This is the great divide between the Roman Catholic Church and the New Testament Gospel. I do not mean to offend Roman Catholics in this study. We are thankful for you and do not desire to unnecessarily unsettle you. I hope you experience the love of Christ and open arms of welcome and friendship. Addressing this Doctrine is not out of a

² John 19:30

desire to create tension or controversy or discomfort. Both love and Scripture demand we distinguish between the things that differ, especially as they pertain to the cross of Jesus.

This grave difference between Roman Catholic Doctrine and the New Testament Gospel is no small insignificant matter, but it relates to the big question: Did Jesus die once for all or does He need to continue to make sacrifice for us? Is Jesus' one time sacrifice on the cross sufficient for us or is Jesus' sacrifice incomplete and in need of something more to finish the work of redeeming us completely from our sin?

Regarding these questions, the Doctrine of the Mass the Roman Catholic Church teaches stands as the great divide between the Roman Catholic Church and the apostles' gospel delivered by God to us. This issue is what set the Reformation aflame in 1517, and it still stands as the great wall dividing Roman Catholic Church from evangelicals today. The theological problem priests such as Martin Luther had with the church was the church required him, as a priest, to participate in a re-sacrifice of Christ, a re-presentation of Jesus sacrifice, every time they led the Mass.

Luther's study of Scripture convicted him this was desperately wrong and an offense to Jesus and to His cross. Luther, as we know, led people out of the church, and many people had a problem with that. They said, "Luther, we agree with you about what the Bible says, but why don't you remain in the church and try to reform it from the inside? Why would you leave the church when, in Old Testament history, the apostates in Israel remained in unfaithful Israel?" His response was, "The prophets in the Old Testament were never called to participate in an act that was sacrilegious and if they had been, they, too, would have left."

Someone may responds, "Pastor, you are behind the times. Vatican 2 is the model for the day and it has changed how the Roman Catholic Church thinks about these things and this no longer is an issue." I have to disagree. The Roman Catholic Church still teaches Jesus is re-sacrificed in the Mass. The Roman Catholic Church teaches Jesus' work on the cross continues in the Mass so Christ "has offered and continues to offer Himself as victim for our sins."³

I have the catechism of the Roman Catholic Church and it is the official doctrine of the church as it is presented by the Church. I know it is true many times evangelicals will misrepresent the Roman Catholic Church, and it is important for us in our conversations not to misrepresent what we are talking about before we enter into these conversations. Quoting the catechism, "The Eucharist is thus a sacrifice because it re-presents the sacrifice of the cross... The sacrifice of Jesus and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice. The victim is one in the same, the same now offers through the ministry of the priests who then offered Himself on the cross. Only the manner of offering is different. In this Divine Sacrifice, which is celebrated in the Mass, the same Christ, who offered Himself once in a bloody manner on the alter of the cross, is contained and is offered in an unbloody manner."

The Roman Catholic Church teaches us, and teaches its constituents, Jesus' sacrifice was not once for all complete, but there is an ongoing need for a re-presentation of Jesus as a sacrifice for sin in the Mass. What is the big issue? The very Gospel of Jesus is the issue. The Gospel you believe to rescue you from your sins is at stake in this.

What Gospel are you resting the eternal condition of your soul upon? Is it a Gospel in which Jesus died once for all times for all sins, or is it a Gospel in which more work still must be accomplished for your salvation? Must Jesus' sacrifice upon the cross be repeated, or can we rest our souls in His finished work? The apostle Peter teaches us the answer to those questions,

¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God.

Scottish Churchman, Horatius Bonar tells us, "Upon a life I did not live, upon a death I did not die; another's life, another's death, I stake my whole eternity."

This is a vital issue.

Next we will consider the fifth aspect: Jesus' death is purposeful,

¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God.

³ Catechism of the Catholic Church, Liguori Publications, Liguori, Mo, 1994, p. 344.

Jesus' work upon the cross opens a way for us to be reconciled in our relationship with God. This is Christ's great purpose in sending His Son. We could never scratch and climb and crawl our way to God's presence. Our sins have separated us from God so God "has hidden His face from us and He will not hear us."⁴ Our greatest problem in our life and in the world is we are cut off from God as a result of our sin. Our big problem is not job, marriage, finances, world disasters, economy, wars, cancer, or disease. All of these are real problems, but big problem, the root problem, of our life is sin. It is important for us, as believers, to acknowledge when we have problems and when we are facing difficulties to ask, "What is the root problem of my life?" It will always be sin and it always relates to sin. This helps us to know the answer is always Christ. If we are brought to God, everything else takes new shape and an aspect of hope.

For instance, do you have a problem with cancer? I know some of you do. That is a serious problem and I do not belittle that problem. That disease can separate our body from our soul, but the real problem is sin because sin can do much more than that. Sin can separate our soul from God. If, while we have cancer, we are brought to God there is always hope for there is an eternity to be enjoyed with Him.

Do you have a problem with divorce? That sin can bring huge emotional misery, but only sin can rob us of everlasting joy.

Do you have a problem with your finances? That problem can squeeze us with the pressure of discouragement, difficulty, and anxiety, but only sin can squeeze us with the pressure of God's displeasure. We must keep our eyes upon the real problem so we will keep our eyes upon the real solution.

Jesus died in order to bring us to God where all problems find their end and where all joy finds its beginning. No one waltzes into God's presence in their own right. A great divide separates us from God. The Apostle Paul uses the word "alienated" to describe our natural condition in reference to God.⁵ Without Christ, we are all alienated from God.

In the Old Testament Temple, this alienation, this separation between God and man, was taught through the symbol of a curtain which hung in the Temple and which separated the "Shekinah" glory, the localized presence of God in the Holy of Holies, from the rest of the Temple. That curtain was sixty feet wide, thirty feet tall, and four inches thick. No one, save the High Priest, could go behind that curtain and into the Holy of Holies and into the presence of God, and he only once a year following very specific rituals to cleanse himself and ready himself to meet God.⁶ Matthew, Mark and Luke all record the minute Jesus died, the curtain in the Temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom.

God, by Divine act, tore that curtain as a communication to us, the way into God's presence was made; Christ through His blood, could bring us to God in a right relationship. We no longer had to be separated, alienated, from God who is life. The Divine invitation of the work of Christ is this: Come into the presence of God and come to know Him and enjoy Him forever in His Heaven and in the midst of His glory for all eternity. There is no liturgy, no formula, and no ritual. Come to Christ and He will bring you into the presence of God so you will know Him.

Interestingly, the term used in the Greek New Testament is translated "that He might bring us to God." In its noun form, it describes a person who introduces or brings another into the presence of the king. If one wanted an audience with the king, back in the New Testament times, one could not just walk into the presence of the king, "King, I am here and I want to talk to you." That was not done and not permissible; there is no access. One needed a special court official who was a "bringer", an introducer, who one would go to and say, "Could you give me an introduction to the king?" If he said, "Yes," he would take one and bring them personally into the presence of the king. That is the picture given to us. Christ, who died once for all so sins, died so He might be our introducer. He would take one's hand, as a sinner, whose has been redeemed from sin, and take them before the Father and say, "Father, here is one who wants to know you and I am commending him to you." Is that not amazing? That is the very purpose of Jesus advent.

Who can introduce us to God? Can a pastor or priest introduce you to God? No. Can a Baptist church bring you to God? No. Can the Dalai Lama or Buddha or Confucius or Islam or Deepak Chopra or Oprah bring you to God? NO. Jesus is the only One who can make an introduction of you to the Father.

⁴ Isaiah 59:2

⁵ Ephesians 4:18

⁶ Leviticus 16:2ff; Numbers 18:7; Hebrews 9:7

Job asks the vital question: How can a man be in the right before God?⁷ The answer is through Jesus who died to bring you to Him. There is salvation in no one else for there is no other name under Heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.⁸

How do you come to Jesus so Jesus might bring you to God? Come with a humble heart, repenting of your sins which have offended God, which have corrupted your soul, and which demanded Christ's death. Come to Him with a longing for God, to enter into God's presence, and to know God. Come with a desire to be clean. Come with confidence in Jesus, that His work on the cross was sufficient and complete for you. Come personally to rest your soul in Him and to find life. Come and He will bring you.

Finally, Jesus' death is victorious,

¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.

In short, this means the Father was satisfied with the sacrifice of His Son, and if you receive Jesus, the Father will be satisfied with you, because Jesus is your substitute, you are in Him and He is in you. Death did not and could not hold Jesus. The moment Jesus' died, He was victorious. Jesus did not die and then suffer in Hell. No, that is not the teaching of Scripture. He died in the body and was immediately made alive in the Spirit. Immediately He entered into the presence of His Father.

Then God raised Jesus physically from the tomb and transformed His body a supernatural, immortal body as the First Fruit of the resurrection which is to come, a resurrection in which all who are in Christ will participate. Jesus is victorious over sin, death, Hell, and Satan.

The six key aspects of Christ's death are: Jesus' death was unjust; Jesus' death is necessary; Jesus' death is substitutionary; Jesus' death is final; Jesus' death is purposeful; and Jesus' death is victorious.

Charles Spurgeon's comments: "The more you think of the death of the Son of God, the more will you be amazed at it. As much as a miracle excels a common fact, so doth this wonder of wonders rise above all miracles of power. That the divine Lord, even though veiled in mortal flesh, should condescend to be subject to the power of death, so as to bow his head on the cross, and submit to be laid in the tomb, is among mysteries the greatest. The death of Jesus is the marvel of time and eternity."

What do we do? There are three brief applications. First, come to the cross. He can bring you to God. Believe and embrace Him. Second, glory in the cross. If we understand the cross, nothing else in this world can capture our attention and allegiance. Nothing can gain a higher priority. Glory in the cross by worshipping. When we sing songs, as we walk to the cross, allow your spirit to connect to the glory of this magnificent event. Glory in the cross through your obedience, following Christ day-by-day through your service, giving yourself freely to Him. Finally, proclaim the cross and preach the cross. You do not want to be silent about this. This is too good of news to keep wrapped up to ourselves.

Studies have been done examining the attitudes of young adults in the church toward God. One author described the spirituality of church-going young people, even evangelical church-going young people, as a "moralistic, therapeutic deism". "Moralistic" means young adults want to be good people and they want to be moral, so they are connected to the morality which the church teaches. "Therapeutic" means they want to be emotionally whole. They recognize there is much emotional brokenness so they are attracted and drawn to the church in order to have some emotional wholeness. "Deism" means they believe there is a God and they want to be spiritual and be connected to the spiritual world. But, the huge problem this study reveals is there are few young adults who take a great interest in this ancient message of the cross; few have much time for it to emphasize it in their life or in their words.

On occasion, I will be in a store with one of my boys and I will see a shirt that looks great at a good price. I will say, "Hey, son, would you like me to get that shirt for you?" "Dad, that is an old guy's shirt." I am humbled by that! I understand and appreciate it. Young people, wear cool, new-styled shirts. They listen to funky new tunes. I appreciate

⁷ Job 25:4a

⁸ Acts 4:12

that, but young people, never, ever depart from the ancient word of the Gospel. If you do, you will do that to your own peril to a tragic end.

What rescues us from this kind of false Christianity? It is the message of the cross in Jeremiah 6,

¹⁶ Thus says the LORD: “Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.

Upon that cross of Jesus mine eye at times can see
The very dying form of One Who suffered there for me;
And from my stricken heart with tears two wonders I confess;
The wonders of redeeming love and my unworthiness.

I take, O cross, thy shadow for my abiding place;
I ask no other sunshine than the sunshine of His face;
Content to let the world go by to know no gain or loss,
My sinful self my only shame, my glory all the cross.⁹

⁹ “Beneath the Cross of Jesus,” Verses 2 and 3, Elizabeth C. Clephane.