

## At the Cross

Dr. Kenneth E. Squires Jr.

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**Don't underestimate the person and power of the Man on the cross.**

**<sup>20</sup> I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.**

**(Galatians 2-NIV)**

Father,

I accept that for the preacher, the Holy Spirit is the teacher.

Today, Holy Spirit, we ask that you teach us from Galatians 2:20.

- Teach us what it means to be co-crucified with Christ.
- Show us what our death benefits can do to make us like Christ.
- Help us love like Christ.

Once again, give us the power and authority to carry out, "Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is heaven."

In Jesus' Name, and for Christ's Sake.

Amen.

**Can a person change what they do without changing who they are?**

- **Does your identity determine your activity?**
- Who we are always comes before what we do.

**What I am attempting to do in the series, "At the Cross," is show you**

- Jesus' death on the cross 2000 years ago is relevant for today.
- To make a convincing argument that Christ's atoning death on the cross:
  - o Offers every Christ-follower over 60 death benefits.
    - These benefits teach you how to live for Christ.
    - What to do and not do as a Christian.
  - o The cross is the theological north star.
  - o Our biblical guiding light about who you are as a Christ follower.

**If I had one verse to show you how to become a Christian it would be John 3:16.**

**<sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,  
that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3-NIV)**

- This is the verse that invites anyone, anywhere, at any time, and in any condition to come to Christ.

**But, if I only had one verse to show you how to live the Christian life, it would be Galatians 2:20.**

**John 3:16 teaches us how to become a Christian.**

**Galatians 2:20 teaches us how to live as a Christian.**

**<sup>20</sup> I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2-NIV)**

- This one verse summarizes how to live once you become a Christian.

**\* If you have not taken care of John 3:16, this would be a good day to trust Christ, have your sins atoned for, and become adopted into the family of God.\***

- Right over here at the end of the service we can help you with that decision at the [I Have Decided Wall](#).
- If along the way today, as you learn what it means to live and function as a Christian, and you have not taken (step one) with John 3:16, do that first. Do it today.

So many here today have had the John 3:16 experience; that born-again experience which has given you reconciliation to God through Christ.

- **Total** forgiveness of **all** your sins and provided you with **eternal life**.
- <sup>16b</sup> **“Whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3-NIV)**
- **God prepares us for eternal life by offering us Christ’s life now. Today. In this hour.**
- The book of Galatians tells us to watch out for those who would come into the church and try to herd and hamper those who have freedom in Christ, and put us back into the pen of religious rules and regulations.
- Paul was furious that one of Jesus’ own disciples (Peter) had fallen for such a trap. Such a trip. Such a trick.

- Paul is upset that some of the old guards had entered the Galatian church and begun to strong arm Christians with old-school religious tactics and intimidation, thus, inviting Christians to give up their freedom in Christ.
- Paul was furious with Christians for caving into the intimidation.

\*When you take back control that you once had given up to Christ, you will return every time to religious smoke and mirrors, religious manipulation and coercion that is nothing more than the religious practice of attempting to control others.\*

**The background of Galatians 2:20 tells us that Peter is eating ham sandwiches with some Gentiles.**

(We see this in chapter 2 of Galatians.)

- While he is eating with the Gentiles, some of the boys from the Jewish church show up, and Peter not wanting to offend the dietary practices of his own people, withdraws from the lunch table with the Gentiles and excuses himself.
- Peter stops eating with Gentiles in order to not offend his Jewish brothers' religious faith. (Now remember, Peter is a Christian, he has Jesus' faith, not Jewish faith.)
- Paul, the author of Galatians, seeing what Peter does, calls him out.

**11-13** Later, when Peter came to Antioch, I had a face-to-face confrontation with him because he was clearly out of line. Here's the situation. Earlier, before certain persons had come from James, Peter regularly ate with the non-Jews. But when that conservative group came from Jerusalem, he cautiously pulled back and put as much distance as he could manage between himself and his non-Jewish friends. That's how fearful he was of the conservative Jewish clique that's been pushing the old system of circumcision. Unfortunately, the rest of the Jews in the Antioch church joined in that hypocrisy so that even Barnabas was swept along in the charade.

**14** But when I saw that they were not maintaining a steady, straight course according to the Message, I spoke up to Peter in front of them all: (Galatians 2-MSG)

- Although Peter was saved, he was new to how to function as a Christian. Peter, being new to the benefits of Christ's death, was unsure about how to bridge the gap between Jews and Gentiles.

- Paul calls out Peter because his social eating system was not dictated by his new Gospel belief system. Peter was ruled by a social eating system instead of Christ's Gospel belief system.

Peter was creating a racial divide in the body of Christ. Does that make sense? Remember what I said earlier?

- Can a person change what they do without changing who they are?
  - Does your identity determine your activity?
  - Who we are always comes before what we do.
- Christ's death benefits are designed to show us who we are in Christ.
- So, Paul's solution to this problem and reconciliation to the racial issue is to tell Peter, "I died with Christ, and so did you Peter."

**Paul tells Peter, "I died with Christ, and so did you Peter."**

- That leads Paul to tell Peter, Galatians 2:20.

**<sup>20</sup> I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2-NIV)**

**\*The moment you accepted Jesus Christ, His 2000-year death benefit was inherited by YOU!\***

- If you accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior, a crucifixion occurred.
- The crucifixion did not just happen to Jesus. It happened to you!

**\*The moment you accept Jesus Christ, the clock starts ticking for you. Now you are ready to receive the benefits of that death.\***

- Why? Because you died with Jesus. You are crucified with Christ.
- On that day, in the spiritual realm, as far as God is concerned, when Jesus died, you died too.
  - There was a dual death, and it is now being inherited by you.
    - It is being applied to you.
      - It is being received by you.

**\*At the cross a co-crucifixion took place. Jesus' and yours.\***

- When Paul says, I have been crucified **with** Christ, what is he talking about? He is talking about the fact that a union has occurred.
- The word "**with**" conveys union.
- The understanding of this union opens the door to all the benefits that are available because of Jesus' death on the cross.
- I am crucified with Christ ... I am crucified alongside of Christ.
- Paul is talking about a union because **I did it with Him.**

The best way to understand this union is to look at a marriage union.

- A man unites with a woman.
- In a marriage a union occurs.
  - I am married.
    - The goal is that the two are united as one. That is **union**.
    - The problem with the marriage is that each person drags a lot of their unmarried baggage into the marriage. Leading to conflict.
  - The reason there is conflict is that because much of their unredeemed reality or unredeemed marriage reality gets drug into the marriage relationship.
- So, the new life the marriage was designed to create gets interrupted by the old stuff that is drug into the marriage.
- So, while there is legal marital reality (**we are now married**), there may not be an experiential marriage reality of the legal.
  - The legal says we are one, but we are living like we are two.

**\*When you accepted Jesus Christ, a legal transaction occurred. God declares that you and Jesus are now one.\***

- I am crucified with Christ, but once I step into the family of God, I drug a lot of my non-saved stuff with me.

- I brought a lot of my non-Christian thinking, non-Christian feelings, my non-Christian actions into this new marriage relationship with Christ and His church. His body. His family.
- The problem is that when I came into the family of Christ, there is only one person who is out of sync, one person who is dropping the ball or only one person who has a problem. **ME!**
- When I entered into a relationship with Jesus through co-crucifixion, anything wrong with this relationship is because of **ME!**

**\*When I entered into a relationship with Jesus through co-crucifixion, anything wrong with this relationship is because of me.\***

- **So, what is the solution** to help me hold up my end of the co-crucifixion legal agreement?

The benefits of Jesus' death on the cross  
operating fully and freely in me.

- **So, what is my problem?** I have to get used to living with something new.
  - I have been used to living single all of these years, and now that I am married, I have to adjust to something new.
  - I am not used to saying when I am coming in, where I am going, who I have been with, or what have I been doing.
- That is new to me.
- This illustration or example is not only **with** marriage, but **with** Christ.
  - A union has taken place. The word, **with**, is that union.  
I am crucified **with** Christ.

So, since I am crucified **with** Christ, with the time remaining I am suggesting to you **three benefits**.

The door to reconciliation is open.

Supernatural freedom is now available.

I can totally forgive those who injured me.

**Let's look at each of these one at a time.**

- **Jesus' death on the cross opens the door to reconciliation.**

<sup>18</sup> All this is from God. He brought us back to himself through Christ's death on the cross. And he has given us the task of bringing others back to him through Christ. (2 Corinthians 5-NIRV)

- Earlier we saw how Paul does reconciliation, and now let's look at how Jesus does reconciliation.
  - Jesus was willing to put His Jewish lips on a Samaritan cup, and so should we since we are crucified with Christ.

<sup>7</sup> When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" <sup>8</sup> (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) <sup>9</sup> The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) (John 4-NIV)

- God is asking you to be you. And if you accept and submit to how God has made you, you can be His instrument of reconciliation.  
Black. Brown. White. Red. Yellow.  
(1) You and I are to define our humanity by our faith, not our flavor.  
(2) You and I are to define our humanity by the One who has redeemed us, not our race.

Jesus stayed who He was, but He operated from Heaven's point of view. We are defined by faith, not race.

The Book of Hebrews defines the very **best faith by faith**.

And **courage**. And **perseverance**.

- Jesus did not give up His Jewishness to reach a Samaritan woman. God is not asking you to give up who you are **to serve** someone else.

... **to touch** someone else.

... **to love** someone else.

... **to bless** someone else.

... **to understand** someone else.

- God is not asking you to give up who you are to reconcile, to repair and relate to someone else who is racially different.
- But, don't let the fact, truth and reality that since the other people in your race wont drink from a Samaritan cup, **don't let that keep you from drinking.**
- Don't be so caught up in your race that you live and operate outside the purposes and plans of God in faith and obedience to love and respect all people. **Sinners and Samaritans.**
- While staying completely true to how God has made you. So, Jesus Christ says, **"Can I have a drink of water?"**

On March 26, at 5:00pm, Bethel will participate in a Passover Seder. The idea of the Seder is a festive holiday meal which means order. This is because the meal is done in a certain order which tells the story of God's people coming out of slavery and moving into freedom.

At the Seder you will follow the story of the Passover in a book called the Haggadah.

The word Haggadah means "the telling." The Haggadah explains the foods on the Seder plate, recounts the highlights of the Exodus, and weaves in songs, prayers, candle lighting, a game of hide and seek for the kids, a fabulous Seder meal and communion to tie the Passover with Christ's death on the cross.

Sign up at the Connect Center or contact the church during the week. We have made the cost affordable, and this is a ticketed event.

### **Jesus' death on the cross supplies supernatural freedom.**

And that freedom comes because Jesus is interceding to release supernatural freedom. A lot of bad things can happen to each of us, but God is your source of refuge, strength, and ever-present help in **times of trouble**. Lock into that, **in times of trouble. The troubles are happening all the time.**

<sup>1</sup> **God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble. (Psalm 46-GW)**

Your job can release you. Your spouse can cheat on you. Your kids can steal from you. Your friend can betray you. We all have something and the same thing in common. We are all weak as humans and need supernatural freedom from our troubles.



**34b** Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. **35** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? (Romans 8-NIV)

Pressure wears on us, anxieties give us ulcers, people intimidate us,

We lose our cool and get angry,

criticism hurts our sweetheart,

disease scares the fire out of us,

death - the king of fears - eventually takes our lives.

We are fragile, weak, and sinful creatures, fashioned by the Almighty's hand.

Made in the Image of God. Called on by Heaven to do Heaven's work on earth.

- Now, to do Heaven's work in a hell-like world, you need a place to retreat to from time to time. A place to go and find supernatural freedom through the cross.

**17** The godly cry out and the LORD hears;  
he saves them from all their troubles. (Psalm 34-NET)

**Jesus' death on the cross makes it possible for me to forgive those who injured me.**

**14-15** In prayer there is a connection between what God does and what you do. You can't get forgiveness from God, for instance, without also forgiving others. If you refuse to do your part, you cut yourself off from God's part. (Matthew 6-MSG)

- When you carry unforgiveness, bitterness and resentment, it is like drinking poison and hoping the other person dies.
  - By the way, you are all eaten up over the way they injured you.
  - It keeps you up at night.
  - You are haunted and taunted by the memories. Depression has dropped a bomb and anxiety leaves you skittish like a cat.
- All the while that person who injured you is in Hawaii having the time of their life. They have not given the injury another thought.
  - Stop it. Let it go. Heal.
- Christians who are crucified with Christ, who are in union with Christ, forgive the injuries that others have caused against them.

- Now, forgiveness and reconciliation are two different things.
  - You forgive theologically, biblically, scripturally because Christ forgave you.
  - The sins you have committed against Christ far outweigh in number the sins the party who injured you are credited with.
- **Forgiveness is a transaction.** An injury or offense takes place which incurs a **debt**.
  - (1) The **offending party** makes a choice to offer payment for that debt through repentance, confession and taking responsibility.
  - (2) The **offended party** makes a choice to receive **payment** for that debt in the currency of forgiveness. And grace.

In his book, *Great Church Fights*, Leslie B. Flynn tells of two unmarried sisters who lived together, but because of an unresolved disagreement over an insignificant issue they stopped speaking to each other. One of the inescapable results of refusing to forget.

Since they were either unable or unwilling to move out of their small house, they continued to use the same rooms, eat at the same table, use the same appliances, and sleep in the same room ... all separately ... without one word.

A chalk line divided the sleeping area into two halves, separating doorways as well as the fireplace. Each would come and go, cook and eat, sew and read without ever stepping over into her sister's territory.

Through the black of the night, each could hear the deep breathing of the other, but because both were unwilling to take the first step toward forgiving and forgetting the silly offense, they coexisted for years in grinding silence.

When we don't forgive, we are cast into a chamber of horrors that we cannot get free from. Then we are introduced to attitudes and actions that leave us judgmental, unteachable, and bitter.

Now, let me give you some practical suggestions for how to forgive.

#### **Four Promises of Forgiveness**

1. **Avoid rehearsing in your mind the events associated with the offense.**

2. **Refuse to bring the offense up and use it against the person at a later date.**

At the heart of forgiveness is the commitment to not only forgive, but to forget. We've all heard or even lived the motto, "OK, I'll forgive, but I'll not forget."

- If you fail to commit to forgetting, then you truly haven't forgiven.
- I think forgetting is defined by moving on.

3. **Flee the attempt to tell others about this offense.**

4. **Forsake the temptation to let the circumstances of the injury raise their ugly head and hinder the relationship.**

The only way we can do this is to know what to forgive. We don't use surgery to get rid of every little blemish and we don't use forgiveness to heal every little conflict.

So, when is forgiveness appropriate? Let's turn to author Lewis B. Smedes from Fuller Seminary and get some advice.

**We have to forgive persons.** If the church, the state, the government or some other faceless organization wrongs you, you can't forgive the institution. You forgive the people. Now the link between organizations and people can be close.

**We forgive people for what they do, not who they are.** We are not called to forgive people for being lazy, arrogant or ethnic. We are not called to forgive because they are blockheads, or dress poorly or are too loud in life. We forgive people for what they do wrong to us.

- People do not injure us by being liars, they injure us by lying to us.
- People don't wrong us being unfaithful, they wrong us by breaching trust.

**We forgive people who injury us seriously.** The Bible reminds us, "It is the glory of man to overlook an offense (Proverbs 19:11)."

- People bump us in the store, spill ketchup on our clothes, stick their foot in their mouth, and forget to use manners.
  - These are things to be overlooked because we have a magnanimous spirit – the quality of a large spirit.
  - There is difference between those who are a pain in the neck and those who break a confidence.

- When we fail to forgive correctly it dilutes the power of forgiveness. It spoils the majesty of it, and it disrupts the healing process.
  - God loves to forgive. How wonderful is His forgiveness.
  - How like Jesus we are when we forgive others.

There is not a single person sitting here or listening today that is not free from something because of forgiveness. We have been forgiven by God. Forgive others. Forgive. Forgive. Forgive. And go on forgiving.

<sup>31</sup> What then shall we say about these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup> Indeed, he who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, freely give us all things? (Romans 8-NET)

<sup>20</sup> I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20-NIV)