

**The cross of Christ -- for decoration or salvation?**

*(Read Mark 15:25-39)*

Religious actions and symbols sometimes become the enemy of Christianity. There obviously is a place for some of it, but too often these things hold a primary place in one's life, instead of a secondary one. When too much emphasis is placed on the symbols of Christianity rather than on the substance of it, the symbols themselves become useless and meaningless.

*Crosses are the most important examples of this.* Many thousands wear crosses of gold and silver. They often are beautifully decorated - even with precious stones! But one can wear a cross, and remain completely unaware of the real meaning of the true cross, the irreplaceable cross of Jesus Christ. The cross can so easily become just another item of jewellery and decoration. It can become only be a trademark of the church, a mere symbol or logo of the Christian faith, and nothing more.

*But there were no jewels in the cross where our Lord died for our sins.* I am afraid that many lost the true understanding of the cross. How about you? What does the cross on which Jesus died mean to you?

You may be involved in religion, yet never come to understand the true significance of the cross on which the Saviour died. You may end up with little more than a sentimental feeling inspired by a beautiful golden ornament, rather than a rugged, cruel instrument of death and punishment that revealed the love of God. for sinners

**In order to understand the real significance of the cross, we have to listen to the Word of God.** There we find a radically different picture of what the cross really means. In the Bible we see a picture which, if received in faith, has the power to change your life. It is a picture that changed human history.

The true cross, a Roman instrument for executing the death penalty, on which the Saviour paid for my sins and reconciled me with God, has immeasurable faith power and immense promise.

*Because of the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, we can have hope, faith, love and salvation. Because of the cross of Christ, we receive forgiveness. Because of the cross of Christ, our lives find purpose and meaning. Because of the cross of Christ, we are made whole. In the cross we find healing and freedom. The cross of Christ has saving power.*

Paul said: *"God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself."* The cross of Jesus should make a radical difference in your life.

What does the cross of Jesus mean to you? Does it impact on your whole life and set you free from the slavery of evil?

Jesus stumbled and fell on his way to the cross. But there is no doubt that he intended to be crucified on that cross. He was born to, and lived, to die on the cross. He knew that the cross was his purpose and his calling. He knew that it was God's will for him and that it was God's way to redeem his people. The cross was the highest priority for Jesus Christ. It had precedence above anything else in his ministry.

What does the cross mean to you? *Have you experienced its power in your life?* Is the cross only a decoration to you, or have you received salvation through its saving power that would change your life? Have the old "you" died at the cross, in order to bring the new "you" who lives for God, to life?

At the foot of the cross stood a Roman officer. He had witnessed many crucifixions, but this one was completely different. The officer saw something he had never seen before. *He saw how Jesus, the Christ of God, died.*

When we see the death of the Saviour on the cross, we may, through his resurrection power know that he truly is the ever living Son of God