

Cling to the Cross

by James Smith

Clinging to the cross is the key to finding peace, confidence, and courage in the face of life's challenges and temptations.

Scripture: Psalm 34:17, Isaiah 41:10, Romans 8:37, 1 Corinthians 1:18, Galatians 6:14, Philippians 3:10, Hebrews 12:2, 1 Peter 2:24, 1 John 1:7, Revelation 12:11

Topics: "The Cross", "Atonement"

Description

James Smith preaches about the significance of clinging to the cross of Christ, emphasizing that embracing, having faith in, and clinging to the cross is essential for our acceptance with God. He highlights that the cross represents Jesus' perfect work, the atonement for sin, and the source of everlasting righteousness for believers. Smith urges the congregation to renounce self, embrace self-despair, and cling solely to the cross for true hope and acceptance with God, emphasizing the need to hold fast to the cross in all circumstances, including in times of peace, confidence in God, courage in the cause of Christ, and in the face of sins, Satan's temptations, spiritual darkness, and death.

Transcript

The cross of Christ represents his perfect work. On the cross he finished the work the Father had given him to do. Here he finished the atonement for transgression, here he expiated sin, and here he brought in an everlasting righteousness, for all who truly believe in him.

To embrace the cross, therefore, is to receive and rest upon the perfect work of Christ, as the ground of our acceptance with God.

And faith in the cross, is believing that Jesus has made a full atonement for our sins, and venturing on that atonement alone, for the salvation of our souls.

Clinging to the cross, supposes that I have let go everything else, and that I throw my arms around it, and venture the whole weight of my eternal interests upon it. Clinging to the cross, intimates that I have both arms at liberty--that I turn my back on everything else, and facing it--I clasp it with a firm grasp, as a drowning mariner would a broken mast that was floating by his side.

There must be the renunciation of self, of every good work, of every religious duty, sacrament, office, and pretension; or there will be no clinging to the cross.

Self-despair always precedes this exercise of the soul; consequently there must be sound conviction of sin, a heart-felt sense of danger, and a thorough weaning from all false refuges. The cross will not unite with anything else, in laying a foundation of true hope, or a ground of acceptance with God. It must be the cross alone.

Therefore, said the Apostle, "May I never boast--except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world!" Galatians 6:14

Having embraced the cross, we should never loose our hold of it, nor allow anything to tempt us to draw one hand from it--but firmer and firmer should we grasp it. This then is our exhortation, Cling to the cross!

Cling to the cross--if you would enjoy PEACE of conscience, and peace with God. Jesus made peace by the blood of his cross, and we can only know peace by embracing the cross. The moment the eye is taken off self and every other object--and fixed on Jesus alone as dying the just for the unjust--we have peace. And so long as the eye is kept steadily fixed on the cross--we enjoy peace; but if only for one moment, any object is allowed to come between our eye and the cross--our peace is disturbed! Nor can we recover our tranquility, until we again turn from everything else--and fix the eye on the crucified One!

The soul may try prayers, penances, ordinances, anything, everything; but there is no solid, settled peace--but by clinging to the cross.

Cling to the cross--if you would enjoy CONFIDENCE in God.

In the cross, we see that Jehovah is a just God and a Savior.

On the cross we see written in large capitals, "GOD IS LOVE!"

From the cross we hear Jehovah say, "Fury is not in me!"

The cross reveals God to us as "Gracious, merciful, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." Through the cross we see God, not exacting--but offering; not expelling--but inviting; not threatening--but promising!

If I look at God through the cross--I see a gracious Father, a loving friend, a glorious portion!

At the cross there is everything to inspire, feed, and strengthen confidence. Here slavish fears die, doubts are speedily dispersed, and joy and praise spring up in their place. At a distance from the cross, the confidence of a sinner becomes feeble--it fades, and dies. The closer we cling to the cross--the stronger, the steadier, the more influential our confidence becomes! Let us therefore cling to the cross, and thus hold fast the confidence we had at the beginning.

Cling to the cross--if you would have COURAGE in the cause of Christ! Nothing nerves the heart--like faith in his blood. Nothing emboldens the soul--like a firm hold of the cross. Courage is sure to be needed--for every Christian soldier must go to the war. Christ keeps no militia. He has no feather-bed soldiers for mere show. We must fight--if we are to conquer! And we must conquer--if we are to reign! And in order to this--courage is necessary.

If we look at the nature, number, experience, and determination of our foes--there is enough to dishearten and cast us down! If we consult the flesh--we shall be sure to turn cowards and run away. But if we cling to the cross--we shall be encouraged by the example of him who died on it, we shall be inspired by the love

that impelled him to endure it, and the very grasp we give it--will fire our souls and fill us with fervor; so that we shall be ready to cry out with Paul, even when we see our enemies in all their boasted glory, "None of these things move me, neither do I count my life dear unto myself." Let us therefore cling to the cross--and so shall we have courage to endure hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Cling to the cross--though your SINS rise up before you like mountains for their size; like the sands on the sea shore for their number; and glowing like scarlet and crimson, in color!

For no sins, however great, or however numerous, should tempt us to despond, or let go our hold on the cross--seeing the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from ALL sin.

There is a 'buoyancy' in the cross--which will never let anyone sink, who clings to it!

If our sins were as ponderous as the globe, or as numerous as all the particles of created matter--yet embracing the cross of Jesus--they are all forgiven, and forgiven forever!

They are all blotted out--like the dark clouds, which obscured the sun for a little while on the summer's morning!

They are all blotted out--like a stone cast from an angel's hand into the depths of the ocean! They are all forgiven and forgotten forever! Cling to the cross!

Cling to the cross--though Satan tries to induce you to let your hold go. He may suggest that you are not one of God's elect; that for you the Savior never died; that your day of grace is past; that you have committed the unpardonable sin; or that God has given you up. He may try to lead you to compare yourself with some of the saints, who are deeply sanctified; or he may point to the hardness of your heart, your lack of love to Christ, the apparent uselessness of your life, the confusion of your mind on spiritual subjects, or your lack of life and power in prayer.

But let him suggest whatever he may; let him paint whatever pictures he will on your imagination, let his fiery darts be hurled at your head or heart with ever such force--still cling to the cross! Clinging to the cross, you are a match for Satan, and he well knows that; therefore he will try by all means, to get you to let go your hold. He will pervert doctrines, misapply portions of Scripture, and labor with all possible skill and assiduity to withdraw you from the cross. But whenever he attempts this, let him use whatever means he may; remember it is written of your brethren who were once just as you are now, that, though Satan, that old serpent, the devil, deceived the whole world--yet they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb!

Cling to the cross--though dullness and gloom seem to settle on your soul. It is but for the trial of your faith. If you cannot see the cross distinctly--then grasp it more tightly! Hold it more firmly!

The cross of Jesus was hidden by darkness once--but it only lasted three hours; and the darkness that now broods over your soul, will not last long. Cling to the cross, and behind it the sun will soon be seen to rise; and mounting to the meridian, it will disperse your gloom, dissipate your fears, brighten your evidences, and give you beauteous views!

Cling to the cross--though divine providence frowns upon you. Your circumstances may change, they may become perplexed and very trying--but clinging to the cross: the soul is safe, the eternal inheritance is sure, and the end will be bright and glorious! Providence without, often tries grace within! But the promises, all of which are confirmed by the blood of the cross--are intended to support and sustain it.

All may be depressing without--and all may be gloomy within; your sin may appear to be appalling; Satan may do his worst to distress you--still cling to the cross! Cling firmer and faster--the more discouragements arise, and temptations try you. If tempted to relax your hold, say, "Never! Come what will--and happen what may; under all changes without, and all variations within--I will cling to the cross! If I must perish--here I will die!"

Cling to the cross--all through life! Never take the eye off it! Never withdraw the hand from it! By day and by night, at home or abroad, on the land or the sea, in poverty and plenty, in darkness and light, in sorrow and joy--cling to the cross!

Cling to the cross--especially in death! The sick bed, the dying pillow, the painful disease, the dying pangs--are before you. Then, Satan will make his last onslaught. Then, the heart and flesh will fail. The Jordan will roll before you--perhaps overflowing its banks, and perhaps clothed with storms! Then you must burst all earthly bonds, and withdraw the affections from all earthly loves. This, this is the time to cling to the cross!

If Satan harasses you--hold up the cross!

If death terrifies you--hold up the cross!

If conscience accuses you--silence it with the cross!

When launching away, press the cross more firmly to your heart than ever, and plunge into death's dark river, relying solely on the cross!

Cross of Jesus! You are now the ground of my hope, the object of my faith, the theme of my salvation, the subject of my song, the antidote of my miseries, and the joy of my heart. O may Your cross become growingly precious to me, and through life and all its changes, may I cling to Your cross!

But, when death--often dreaded death, shall come, though I want no crucifix, may the cross of Jesus stand out in bold relief before my mind's eye! On that may I gaze when my eyes are glazed by death! On that may I rest when I feel all around giving way! And resting on this alone--clinging fast with a death-grasp to it--may I gasp my last, exclaiming,

"O the sweet wonders of that cross,

Where God my Savior loved and died!"

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