

# The Meaning of the Cross

by Raymond Golsworthy

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*The sermon explores the transformative power and significance of the cross in the life of a believer, emphasizing atonement, identification with Christ, and living as a new creation.*

**Scripture:** 1 Peter 2:24, Romans 6:7, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 2:20, Galatians 6:14, Colossians 3:3

**Topics:** "The Cross", "Salvation"

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## Description

Raymond Golsworthy preaches about the profound significance of the cross of Jesus Christ, emphasizing the dual aspect of Christ's death as both substitutionary and representative, highlighting the believer's identification with Christ's death and resurrection. He explains how at Calvary, not only did Christ die for us, but we also died in Him, freeing us from the power of sin and allowing us to live in the victory of His resurrection. Golsworthy delves into the transformative power of understanding and embracing the truth of being crucified with Christ, leading to a new creation and a life lived by faith in the Son of God.

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## Transcript

"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

It is a wonderful thing when the Holy Spirit gives us insight into the meaning of the cross. And how greatly we need those insights when we approach such an immense and important subject.

The event itself took place at the very centre of the world, Jerusalem, and at a point in history which the Bible calls the fullness of the time (Galatians 4:4). All the types of the Old Testament pointed onwards towards the Cross, and all the promises of the New stem from it. It was, indeed, the wondrous cross on which the Prince of glory died. The cross, and what took place there, is the first great wonder that grips the heart of a believer. He knows that at that cross atonement was made for all his sins. Christ, the Son of God, bore them all in His own body on the tree (1 Peter 2:24). The Christian feels he can never thank the Lord enough for such redeeming love and such amazing grace.

But then comes another wonder. No sooner has that initial wonder broken in upon us than a greater one begins to dawn upon us. We, too, died at Calvary. Much has been written about this further precious truth, but it is on my heart now to share a little of what it means to me. What I shall write will be brief and as simple as possible, but God can still use it for the help and blessing of many.

I well remember when it first became clear to me that there is what we may call a representative aspect of Christ's death as well as a substitutionary one. I can only say that, at that time, a new world seemed to open up to me and I am for ever grateful. The Bible has much to say about this representative aspect of Christ's death. It is plainly stated, for example, in 11 Corinthians 5:14, where Paul said, "If One died for all, then have all died." Again, when the same apostle wrote to the Colossian believers he unashamedly told them they were actually dead people (see Colossians 3:3). This, of course, demands an explanation. What does Paul mean? To what is he referring?

He is referring to this very matter. We all need to realise that there are two ways of viewing our Saviour's death. On the one hand we can say that He was dying there instead of us, offering Himself as a substitute so that we need not die. On the other hand He was there as us, so that we may say we died in Him.

We need to see that at Calvary God's full and final, and ever-righteous judgment was falling on the whole Adamic race. Christ has volunteered to represent that race, and all of it is being put away in Him. That certainly includes you and me. We can say that we died there. This may sound very gloomy at first, but a moment's serious thought will show us what a glorious and liberating truth this is. The Bible actually speaks of the blessedness of being dead. Poor troubled Job, longing for death, said, "There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest" (Job 3:17). Paul is even more direct when he says, "He that is dead is freed from sin" (Roman 6:7).

That, of course, is very true and it is easily demonstrated. We may, for example, tempt a dead person to tell lies, but not one lie will come from his lips. We cannot even make him selfish or greedy and even the most subtle flatteries will not make him proud. Yes, Paul was right, "He that is dead is freed from sin." This is the position we may take if we really believe the word of God. We may rise from our beds each morning thanking God that our old man (and what a tyrant he is) has been crucified with Christ and we may now live in the power of His resurrection (Phil.3:10). And what a transformation that brings; the victory of faith in the unailing word of God (Matt. 9:29 and 1 John 5:4). Such faith may not come easily, because we are so limited by sight and sense, but it will come and it will grow and soon become a holy habit and a well-established understanding. And God will be pleased to see us standing where He stands and reckoning as He reckons (Rom. 6:11). And the Holy Spirit will have His required ground for working a deep death within us and likewise a real resurrection.

I shall not now attempt any further clarification of this glorious truth. I would only ask you to read Romans 6 again and again, with the earnest prayer that God's light may dawn (see Psalm 119:18). But let us beware of one thing. If we only want knowledge or theology, we shall remain in our darkness and continue in defeat. But if we truly long for holiness we shall be filled (Matt. 5:6, Luke 1:53). All praise to our risen Lord.

Let us now consider a closely related matter which is very much bound up with what we have already discussed, and equally a part of the meaning of the cross. We need to see that the same cross which delivers us from the mastery of sin, also cuts us off from a whole realm and range of natural resource on which we had been drawing, perhaps, for many years. The basic truth that lies behind all is that everything that constitutes natural man was righteously judged and terminated at Calvary. God has seen it fit, right and necessary to remove an entire old creation and to bring in a new one under the headship of His Son. He cannot accept a fallen and badly-tainted Adam, but has begun again in Christ. Christ, and Christ alone, is the Man approved of God (Acts 2:22) and the glory of the Christian gospel is that that Man, now highly exalted (Acts 5:30, 31), gives His own risen and ascended life to those who trust Him (Acts 2:33). We may say, therefore, that Christ is thus being extended into those who form His body (Eph. 1:22, 23). They are

one new organism with Him. He Himself is thus the new resource, on which they may draw for everything they need (Phil. 1:19). And what a glorious and abundant supply that is!

The main point we are stressing now, however, is that if we are to enjoy this new resource, we must obviously renounce that old resource, counting it as fully judged and for ever crucified with Christ. Paul says, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh" (Gal 5:24), meaning they have counted it as already crucified in Christ's death. It is, indeed, an abandoned entity.

Needless to say, the natural man does not like his so-called assets to be so drastically devalued and so totally condemned and he will fight long and hard against it. But that alone is the true basis for real Christian living. God has made a new creation in His Son. Old things, (whether they were good or bad in our estimation) have passed away, all has become new in Christ. (11 Cor. 5:17). Now we must learn to live by faith in the Son of God (Gal. 2:20) and taking from Him everything we need.

That is the meaning of the Cross. That is the true spiritual way. And what measureless gains it brings. As I began writing this message, some penetrating words came flooding into my mind and I wrote them down. I now share them with you, praying they may be a blessing.

Upon the Cross of Jesus,

I see I, too, have died,

My sins have borne their judgment,

My self been crucified.

I now am risen in Jesus

My new life has begun

I am a new creation

In God's Beloved Son.

May God lead us all into the meaning of the Cross and to an experience of its power.

A new creation:

"Old things have passed away, behold all things are become new." 2 Cor. 5:17

"I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live, Yet not I but Christ liveth in me." Gal. 2:20

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