

Message and Content of the Cross

by Rolfe Barnard

The message of the cross is the power of God, but to those who don't believe, it's foolishness, and salvation is only possible through faith in Christ.

Duration: 54:24

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 5:25, Romans 10:17, 1 Corinthians 1:18, Ephesians 2:8-9, 1 Thessalonians 2:13, Hebrews 11:6

Topics: "Cross"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of understanding and embracing the message of the cross. He expresses his desire for people to recognize the significance of the gospel, especially for children of God. The preacher highlights the contrast between the glory and majesty of the law given on stone tablets and the surpassing glory of the cross. He emphasizes the power of the message of the cross, which may seem foolish to those on the road to hell but is the power of God for those who are being saved. The preacher encourages the audience to believe and embrace what the Bible says about the cross, as it is the means by which God reconciles the world to Himself.

Transcript

I want to make a plea to you that you hear me. I do not ask that you believe what I preach while I'm here. I do ask you to hear me.

I believe that the essence of saving faith is hearing the word of God. And while it is true that nobody but you and God knows whether you are his child by faith or not, your mama don't know, your pastor don't know, God said, well, I can tell who's a Christian. No, you can't.

The Bible forbids that. It's sort of a lonely proposition. I don't know whether you're a child of God or not.

I have no way of finding out. God knows, and you do. Is that fair? I cannot unsave you if you are saved.

But I cannot see how it would be possible. This is not truth that you ask to accept. This is expression of my own belief.

I cannot see how it would be possible for many people who are members of our churches today to really know the Lord. You never took time to seek it. You made a decision, but you never received the revelation.

Therefore, you're trusting something you've done instead of him and what he does. Now, I don't know whether that's so or not. I think it is.

And I'm willing to bear whatever it costs me that opinion, but that will color my message. I don't believe this generation of Baptists have ever been conquered by the Lord Jesus Christ. I don't believe it, do you? Have you been conquered? Have you ever died to self at the cross? Has Christ Jesus been enthroned as the absolute dictator and Lord of your every waking moment? Has he? Of course, I'm describing people who are saved now.

And I don't see how people get saved in the last 30 or 40 years. God saves everybody. He does.

I can't save anybody. And I rejoice that everybody gets saved, don't you? Because nobody listens to me. Nobody listens to me.

And I wonder if this is good doctrine. You don't have faith in Christ, saving faith. You can't work it up.

You can't decide to have it. You make all the decisions that you want to, but unless that decision follows Christ being made real inside your very heart, then doing good doesn't. And yet, God requires faith.

And he will not save you apart from you as your own act. Exercising faith. Utterly in him.

Now, there's a man that hasn't got any saving faith. I didn't say you didn't have faith in Christ. Every last one of you believe a lot about Christ.

But do you believe he's a good man? The modernists believe he's a fine teacher. The Mohammedans believe he's a nice prophet. And I'm talking about saving faith.

You've got faith in Christ. Every person speaking to me tonight can swear on the stack of Bibles, I believe in Christ, and you do. But do you savingly believe in him? That's the question.

Only you know that, and God knows it. I can't tell. How does a man receive faith by which he's literally matched to live in Christ? Well, the Bible says God has to give it to you.

Is that right? And he says that faith cometh how? By doing what? How? By hearing. I wish somebody would listen to him. I wish somebody would listen to him.

How are you ever going to get saved if you don't become a hearer? Not a church attender, but a hearer of the word of God, listening. For only as you listen to him will he give you the faith to stretch out yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

So I want you to hear him. Wouldn't it be wonderful if somebody would hear like the people did at Thessalonica. As the 15th verse speaks, for this cause we thank God without ceasing, because when you receive the word of God, receive whose word? The word of God.

We bet everything on that. If this isn't the word of God, we shall go home. When you receive the word of God, which you heard of us, you heard it through lips of clay.

You received it not as the word of men. You didn't say, well, that's just his opinion about it. That's just what the preacher thinks.

But you heard the word of God and you heard it through the lips of a man by the name of Paul, and you didn't receive it as Paul's word, but what did you do? But as it is in truth, whose word? The word of God. Oh, if a man ever does arrive at the point when he believes that he's heard from God, no power can stand when God speaks. Ah, to just hear from God.

I didn't watch the preacher say, that's God talking to me. Three, nine, six, stone, perfect order while I preach. Sometimes people get mad at me.

I throw a songbook at you, you wiggle an eyelash while I preach. So if you want to go to hell, maybe that person's sitting right next to you, don't. I don't want you to fix it so they don't care.

But if you ever hear from God, it'll get the job done. You heard this as it is in truth, the word of God, which affects your work, it gets the job done. It'll make somebody new out of you.

It'll make you a new creation. That's the word of God, get the job done. Not what Baptists believe, but what God says, it'll get the work done, get the job done.

It affects your work, it's in who? Folks that believe, God spoke to me. God bless your heart, ladies and gentlemen. I'm just an old sinner, I hope saved by grace.

Don't know much. But you are a clean fool if you call yourself a Christian on the testimony of anybody on earth except almighty God. You better seek him until he says, my peace I give you.

I'm so heartbroken, this generation of Baptists is out of God converted. Some person working, stuck a verse of Scripture in front of him, you believe that? Yeah. Well, what does that say? Well, that says so and so.

Well, God wouldn't tell the story, would he? Oh, no. Well, what does that say? That says what it says. Well, you believe it? Yeah.

Well, you're saved, aren't you? Well, I don't know. Well, God wouldn't lie about it, would he? Oh, no. Well, you're saved, aren't you? I guess so.

I want more evidence than that. Don't you? I want God to talk to me. I'm not going to put faith in your testimony.

I'm going to stretch out my soul on the testimony of almighty God. Listen to God's word. Honey, don't go to hell.

Living like hell. Doing as you please. Defending on somebody else's word.

Seek the Lord. How shall I seek him, preacher? Listen to him. My theology was changed thirty-one years ago when I was a student in a seminary in Fort Worth.

I fought the professors. As soon as the Lord saved me, I went to preaching the Sunday after. I had no better theology.

I knew I'd met the Lord. That's why I said I ought to go to school and I'd be a preacher from there on. But I went.

And the professors, they were awful dumb. I knew so much more than they did. And I'd argue with them.

They were awful hard-headed. I couldn't teach them much. But those old white-haired Baptist professors, I don't think they got any kinfolks left.

But when I went to school, those old professors knew the Lord. They tried to teach us young preachers the truth of the grace of God. And I am believed in salvation by grace.

Everybody talks about grace now, but there was nothing about it. Because it took all my pride away, I fought the professors, and I couldn't believe they were teaching me the truth of God's word. I was browsing around the second-hand bookstore, and I picked up a book and paid a dime for it.

It wouldn't take a million dollars for that book if there was no one left now. I went home and I read some sermons by Dr. B.H. Carroll, the founder of the seminary where I had the honor of going to school. And he was preaching from the 5th chapter of John's gospel where it says, And I said to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.

And Mr. Carroll, that great man of God, God was pleased to use him. I can quote verbatim a statement he made that changed me. I've been a fool ever since.

And I'd like to preface my meetings with you. Here's my theology. Mr. Carroll said, My friends, if tonight my true voice is the only voice you hear, you'll go away from here, nothing better.

But if in the sovereign providence of God, through my voice, you hear his voice, you'll go away with life, having been raised from the dead. I'd lay down here in your vestibule, or whatever it is, and let you tromp on me, if I get you to listen. Have you ever heard from God? Has that voice that's got authority, have you ever heard it? Eh? Some humble preacher or witness bringing God's word.

Did you hear God? Just like he said, Lazarus, come forth, did he speak to you? That's salvation, folks. I wish Baptists believed that. We used to.

Shut men up to listening to God. No power anywhere on this earth to bring dead people out of their graves and give them life except to your voice. Listen to him.

Many times somebody has heard from God, as this poor preacher has brought God's word. They said, that's not what Ralph Barnes had said, that's God talking to me. Oh, that is God talking to me.

I hear them talking about, you must send your children now to these terrible schools, they'll lose their faith. Not if they got their faith by hearing from God. No, hell can't change that.

But if they just went through the motions and made some decisions and joined up, why, all the devil's got to do is say boo, and they'll lose that faith. God bless you. Listen.

You might hear from God. I invite your attention tonight to the first chapter of Corinthians and the verse is 18, the 18th verse of the first chapter of the book of Corinthians. And I hope you'll not think I'm smart, but I want you to take a pencil and do a little erasing or a little writing on the Bible.

I trust you write on your Bible a lot. For I want to bring you a little better rendering of this verse. It says, For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness.

But unto us which is saved is the power of God. And nothing wrong with the term preaching of the cross, but the actual meaning is the message, the content, the word. What makes up the cross? All the truths of

God.

And that are crystallized in what we call the cross of triumph. The message, the word, the content, what took place and who was there on that tree outside the city of Jerusalem. That's unto them that perish foolishness.

But thank God unto those who are being saved is the power of God. I want tonight, the best I know how, to tackle a subject that's so big I can't even start to understand it, the message of the cross. Ladies and gentlemen, I wish, I wish that we gave evidence with children of God, for the gospel is the children's bread and they love it.

If you had to follow me around the country and go place to place and see how hard it is to get the attention of this generation of church people, just to listen. I watch people's faces. Everything's determined by your attitude toward the gospel.

If you love it, you're saved. I don't know whether you love it or not, but if you love the gospel, you'll never get tired of hearing it. Amen.

Just stay with it. Every time you hear it. I thought about that a lot.

We're under orders never to tell but one story. If the world goes on 20 billion years, we've just got one message. It's the message of the cross.

And of course it's foolishness to keep along the road to hell. But to anybody who's ever heard God speaking, it's the power of God. And it's the children's bread.

The message of the cross is to them that are perishing foolishness. But to them who are being saved, it's the power of God. I wish we could believe what the Bible says about the cross.

I hope I never get so smart and so serious that I'll never be taken for granted on my part. Such statements as this. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.

Oh, if I wasn't so dumb, that'd make me shout all over God's heaven. God was acting. You know that's even so today.

Is that so? That sure is wonderful. I hope I never get so hard-boiled at reading from Timothy Gray without controversy. Grave is the mystery of godliness.

Don't understand it. People always say, well, explain to me what you said to me. I don't understand it myself.

How can I explain it to you? Grave is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh. My soul, if that ain't something.

God was manifest. You could put your hands on it. People touched it.

People heard it. God is manifested himself in the flesh. My soul, my soul.

God effed you if you never hear that, by being thrilled from the top of your head to the bottom of your feet. God. God's invaded his own creation.

He left him not in the blue as an object. He invaded the territory we call the earth and tabernacled among us and he was flesh. Men took him with wicked hands and nailed him to a tree.

God grazed him and put him on throne and turned you over to him. And he's got you on his hands and he's got to save you or he's got to damage you. He's got to deal with you.

And we'll never change that message. We'll never try to improve on it. We must never take anything away from it.

Mustn't try to clear it up. If the world goes on for millions and millions and millions of years and people are born and people is earth, there'll never be but one message which is believed is powerful to bring men to salvation. Except this old, old story.

The message of the cross. You know, maybe you're smarter than I am, but there's nothing in the Bible that I can understand. The silliest thing, according to what little brain power I got up here, that I could possibly think of is this.

That a little baby that was born in a cow stable in a little old teeny-weeny-bitty insignificant country we all stuck off over yonder in the Mediterranean called Palestine. And he lived only 33 years. And while he lived, he ever bothered was anybody.

Looked him over and turned guns down on him. Nobody but tax collectors, prostitutes, fishermen, and people like that had anything to do with him. And finally took him and hung him up between a couple of other thieves.

Took him outside the holy city where there's going to church observing Passover week. Mailed him up there like a common criminal on a cross. Didn't have any money.

They had to borrow some clothes to wrap his body in. Didn't have any bombing methods to suppose in. Somebody had to go get some good friends to get some spices and ointments to keep his body from stinking so bad before they get to the grave.

Didn't even have a plot of ground. Somebody had to give up his burial plot to put him in. Silliest thing I ever heard of is that almighty God insists that that one is his son and that he's turned this world over to him and that your destiny will be decided by him not by you.

And that he's the only person that's got crown rights to your life. That you do not have a right to do what you want to do. You just got a right to do his will.

I'm telling you the truth. If you can understand that, you're smarter than I am. Oh, wouldn't it be wonderful if like a little child you could get converted and just believe it and to say Jesus Christ hanging on that cross now sitting on the throne the message of him is foolishness to perishing men but it's the power of God and the folks will be saved.

I wish you'd believe that. Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could believe it? Not argue about it? Not try to understand it? Just believe! Just believe! That you'll never perish unless God almighty speaks to you. The testimony of me that you have not known.

Nobody but a fool or a Christian would ever believe that Jesus is God manifest in flesh. No wonder it's foolishness. And because of that, if I knew how going against the grain, I've done it for 36 years made 10

million mistakes, will make a lot more.

But because I believe that a man cannot be saved apart from almighty God working a miracle causing that man to come to him God enough to act upon what God said I set men up to God and got a bit of confidence in myself and I got a lot less confidence in you. Our only hope is once more before we die we'll see God work and the flame of the Lord shall diminish. For all of this truth by which he saves men and condemns men is summed up in the word, the message of the cross.

Briefly tonight what is this message of the cross? I think in its essentials it's three things. When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died I see first the sinfulness of men. Now ladies and gentlemen this generation of sick church people I wonder how many of you folks like that.

Not enough religion to make you miserable not enough to take you to glory this generation skipped the question of sin and this generation skipped the question of the holiness of God but the first message of the cross of Jesus Christ is simply this that God's holy law nailed Jesus Christ to that cross and unless by saving faith you become absolutely joy and pleasure and wholly wedlocked in vital union for hell is going to be full of Baptists who say they believe Jesus died for them but that won't save you and hell is going to be full of Baptists that are trusting in the death of Jesus but trusting in the death of Jesus won't save you there is no salvation for any human being apart from being absolutely united to the Lord Jesus who died he must be the vine and you must be the branch drawing all your strength from him you must by definite act of faith be wedded absolutely joined in holy marriage in vital living union with the living Christ hear me? hear me?

Jesus Christ was in the clutches of God's holy law when he hung on that cross and the law in all of its severity exacted the penalty and that's eternal death and unless you can by faith become so united to Christ that what he did is for you and what he is is for you why then you've got to deal with God's holy law by yourself and there's no hope for any human being if he has to deal with God's law by himself some Christian interviewed Mr. Eichmann the German butcher who was hung some time ago for the burning of the Jews he read about it some Christian got to see it and sought to talk to him about the law and the papers published Mr.

Eichmann's reply he said he believed in God he believed in the God of nature and he did not need a mediator God bless your heart I do all hell is nothing on God's earth except the place where men and women pay the lawful penalty of the holy law of God I don't want to have to go to hell to pay the penalty that's the law of the man I mean, salvation that's the law of the man who can raise the gap between God and man and he shall have his own God and all men to be able to reach for and to stand and face the claims of God's holy law in my stead if I don't have that I'm a goner I'm a goner that's the message of the cross of Christ why did Christ hang on that cross?

I'll tell you why because of the sins of men and the holy character of God you know, you just try to get these faith gauges now you don't feel in the need of it in this generation we can keep talking about that there's no conviction of sin how could there be?

God at least came to constitute the message of the cross that this generation refuses faith on a faith budget the cross first talks about the sinfulness of men there's still such a thing as a sign of sin and from Genesis to Revelation the Bible says man's a sinner and the best proof that man's a sinner is that man nailed the son of God to a Roman cross and they broke him folks they did exactly what you'd have done in their stead and talk to me about how nice people are tell you how nice they are when heaven invaded this

whole world wicked men with hatred in their hearts fetishism him being delivered by the definitive counsel and full knowledge of God what do you do with it? we have taken from the wicked hand wicked hand that crucified and slain you don't ever face that you're just bound

to go to hell you don't ever come to the morning that's been spared snow for you brother you remember the human race that took the eternal son of God and nailed him to a cross that's how sinful you are that's how sinful I am the sinfulness of man is seen better in the cross of Christ than anywhere else for three reasons when our guilt was upon the Lord Jesus Christ and I believe it was I have no hope absolutely no hope unless all of my guilt was laid on the Lord Jesus Christ you can call that a cheap state to first goodness if you want to it's a whole lot deeper than that I haven't got a chance on earth to keep an eye on it unless younger forever in the heart of God is this son of Israel slain before the foundation of the world that's when time nineteen hundred years ago on a hill called

Alabatha you can go see it they took a man by the name of Jesus Nazareth nailed him to a tree and hung him up God was pleased God was pleased to bruise him and God laid on him I don't know whether you have any on this or not laid electricity on him that's my hope that's my hope my guilt my guilt my guilt was laid on him it cost him nothing that's how sinful sin is my guilt was on him there's a change in his death and death and awful agony our guilt in men must be the sinfulness of men is best shown in the cross not only by the fact that our guilt was on him it occasioned his awful death of agony but in the plan and purpose of almighty God there could be no way whereby a so great a sinner as I am could be forgiven God kept you except in the agonies of the shed blood of the son of the livid

God in the only way as well nailed the Prince of Glory to a Roman tree how wicked sinful man is what's the message of the cross tells the source of the sinfulness of man I give my right arm we could reach people today when we had a chance to reach them we chased tadpoles and jackrabbits and this world's going to hell comparing its sin I'll shoot it in the jackrabbit cross as a path of the gospel but what on God's earth is the use of wasting your time shooting at a bunch of jackrabbits you're going to go to hell brother for two reasons first when you were in the lawns of your great daddy Adam you reached step in the face of God tried to pull him off the throne, be God yourself and when you were present in your kinfolks and your representatives when in time, in due time, God's son came and

was manifested in the flesh it is your voice that cried away with him it is your voice that cried crucify him from somebody else no more about you in the back and going to the picture show honey you were in trouble, deep trouble you tried to be God and when God tabernacled him to flesh you nailed him to a tree you're a big sinner you need a big salvation you need great forgiveness the cross tells about the sinfulness of men he said dear boy now it ain't no hard to do this and this and do that but don't bother me I ain't got time but you're right smart ass car the scripture don't say that you're going to die and go to hell because Adam sinned it says you're going to die and go to hell because you sinned that's right God's not going to send you to hell because some people back yonder nailed

Jesus to the cross he's going to send you to hell because you didn't because in the heart of God Jesus has always been on the cross and men have always rejected him that's the message of the cross of Christ the message of the holiness of God the holiness of God at Sinai when the law was given and tablets were stolen we see the glory and majesty of the Lord glory but the majesty of Sinai fades away before the glory of Calvary like the flickering candle before the noonday sun do you believe that the law of God shall stand in its awful majesty do you believe that every disobedience every disobedience and every transgression will receive a just reckoning from the Lord do you believe that? of course you don't we do get to the plead

now and say do you believe that God's law cannot be done away

with it is established in the heavens forever God almighty will send every last one of us to hell before he'll violate one god particle of his holy law do you believe that every transgression big ones and little ones the law takes them all in and every disobedience will receive what? a just recompense of the Lord if you do not believe that God's law does it then oh God then take a look at Calvary what's the Lord doing there on that tree if God doesn't stop the eyes and cross the teeth of his holy law when my Lord Jesus Christ is the man hang that on that cross and out of the wagon of his suffering he cried in language I can't even repeat right my God my God why hast thou forsaken me the answer comes back thou art holy and when Christ took my face he had to be excused cause God is holy I

wish you'd read this the man upstairs that all the television boys radio boys talk about that one person the God American Christian well without being an old fogey you'll hear me when I say that they're not knows his son as a holy God about how to treat this holy day every Lord's day if he wasn't God of mercy wouldn't have to worry about the the bombs God would wipe us off the face of the earth my God we have just sung to God the mind is business we gonna do as we please but the Lord says he's holy this day is the day that we want to eat take one day out of the week to keep the way of the Lord we got time to go with God that's the way of the cross we are not going to change it it was normal we are not going to improve it the message of the cross says God is holy he's holy you must have a

holy savior you must experience the holy salvation as you expect to spend eternity in a holy place no inventivist and bible teacher they're fundamental they found out God's done away with his law no God hadn't, just we have and every human being is going to be judged by God knows I don't want to come to the judgment without an advocate feed my case the Lord Jesus Christ the cross not only talks about the sinfulness of men and the holiness of God thank God it points to God's provision for a man to be right with him in the blood of his justification the cross tells me there's provision for every penitent sinner who can come into a living oneness with him who died on that tree it is imperative that we get the proper order I wonder if there's anything to this church I wonder if there are any

Christian people who actually love the Lord, I'll find out this Sunday morning stuff makes Bob vomit I wonder if there's anybody there that knows the Lord you head over heels in love with him you might be glad he's sitting on the throne and you stand by the stove crying to God ladies and gentlemen I wish I knew how, I put it off when I came but is there anybody there that loves the Lord that the church of the Lord Jesus Christ in God's mercy will have one more opportunity to tell this generation the truth as it is in Christ who loves them now you can't get a corporal guard anywhere Billy Graham gets big crowds to say that he's in the city of six million people 30,000 people a night they got no Sunday school teachers in Los Angeles that he can get out I'm not discrediting him, he can do

that God didn't tell me to straighten him out I'm using his illustration, nobody can get him by much to lift before him now when I started out to preach I had to come here if they had a building there 30 years ago, man on Sunday night this thing had began in the summertime they'd be looking out the window do you remember? we've lost this generation it's gone then it's going to go on to hell and God knows I so wish we could get at people one more time and tell them the truth that nobody will be interested in the shed blood of Jesus Christ until he faces his own sinfulness and God's holiness and if you quit denying and quit turning your back, your head in the sand if you face your own sin and the truth of God's holiness you'd be interested in holiness God didn't make this world God in

Christ did hang on the cross to provide redemption for penitent men and women who by faith have been joined to his blessed son one of the most solemn things I've ever faced in my whole life David Brainerd who prayed himself to death left his bloodstains in the snows of New York State at the age of 29 years he died he came to his death in the home of Jonathan Edwards the only man perhaps that God's ever really used in America to bring revival Jonathan Edwards is in Trent State that as long as he lived he thanked God that in his merciful providence he allowed David Brainerd to die in his Jonathan Edwards home Mr.

Edwards said I was with him constantly in L.A. the last 48 hours of his life I suppose David Brainerd's the most saintly person that ever lived in America you read his diary and his journal he'll make you ashamed of yourself or of me Mr. Edwards said that the last 48 hours of David Brainerd's life that that saint of God spent them most of the time the last 48 hours of his life he spent looking at himself examining himself to see whether he could discover any evidence that he had a saving interest in the blood of Jesus Christ it would be good to spend the week you don't take hours if you didn't have anybody else it wouldn't hurt you you in a day of lots of profession very little power living in a day when nobody can trust Christ for you when nobody knows about your relation to him but you to do you good to find out whether you've got any interest in the saving death of the Lord Jesus Christ I have been shocked to read in the Bible the Lord Jesus had 12 disciples when he was here assembled up in the upper room the Lord said to them one of you is going to betray me and you can throw this out the window if you want to the one person that had perfect assurance he was alright is the person that betrayed him they let him knowing their own hearts knowing what they were capable of said Lord am I the one who's going to betray you old Judas saw he was a Baptist he said I'm saved and he's the one that sold the Lord for 30 pieces of silver ladies and gentlemen I'm a little bit interested in you I'm going to be honest with you I'm more interested in myself that self is what is sold while I'm preaching to you I don't want to go to hell myself I don't I don't want to miss Christ himself I don't if David Green had spent his dying hours trying to find out whether he had an interest in the shed blood of Christ I commend it to you for Yonder outside the city of Jerusalem he did something for somebody he hung there he hung there and somebody said amen somebody sinned and guilt was laid upon him I'm vitally interested in whether that includes me or not are you? are you? I bet you are I bet you are

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/29/SID29887.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/rolfe-barnard/message-and-content-of-the-cross/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net