

The Alluring Attraction of the Cross

by Russell DeLong

The cross of Christ is a powerful symbol of salvation, attracting, inviting, and challenging people to receive Jesus as their Savior.

Scripture: Luke 23:33, John 12:32, John 19:30, Galatians 2:20, 1 Peter 2:24

Topics: "The Cross", "Salvation"

Description

Russell DeLong preaches about the profound significance of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ on Calvary, highlighting the ultimate sacrifice made for humanity's salvation. Despite the mockery and rejection Jesus faced, His act of love and redemption on the cross remains the pivotal moment in human history, where the debt of sin was fully paid. The cross of Christ has a transformative power that draws individuals to surrender to Him, inspiring a deep sense of love, trust, and commitment to follow His teachings.

Transcript

"And when they were come to a place called Calvary, there they crucified him" (Luke 23:33).

The most significant event in the history of man took place on the summit of a hill, enacted by one lone figure silhouetted against a darkened sky as he hung between two thieves on a roughly hewn cross. Single-handed He was fighting the greatest battle of all ages. A bloodthirsty mob had cried for His blood in Pilate's judgment hall, which echoed and re-echoed with the devilish demand, "Let him be crucified -- let his blood be upon us and upon our children."

Pilate evaded responsibility. He feared the populace. He washed his hands but he didn't wash away his guilt.

They took Jesus and placed a heavy cross on His shoulders. They goaded Him up

Golgotha's brow. Weak and worn, burdened and tortured, He trudged painfully to the summit. He was raised upon the cross, a crown of thorns upon His head. A howling mob stood at the base of the cross, hissing and jeering and crying: "If thou be the Son of God, come down," "He saved others, himself he cannot save." But Jesus had more important business that hour than saving Himself. He was saving us.

What a picture? So terrible, yet so sublime. So awful, yet so grand. So painful, yet so

productive. At length Jesus breathed out, "It is finished," and when He did, "the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom" Our salvation was completed The Holy of Holies was wide open for every penitent soul A new moment had come; A fresh day had dawned. Man was reconciled with God, and his sins were forgiven The debt and penalty of sin had been paid in full. Yes -- it was the supreme highlight of all human history.

The cross of Christ does something to you. The cross attracts the attention, invites the

understanding, allures the emotions, and challenges the will. One's better self is stimulated in its presence. There comes from the cross a pull, a tug -- a drawing, some explainable spirit grips one's soul. You stand transfixed in its presence. It confronts you with purity, goodness, and truth. The best within you is stirred. Your higher, better nature would clasp it and accept its Christ as your Saviour.

Dr. Leslie Weatherhead in his recent book, *A Plain Man Looks at the Cross*, illustrates this overpowering appeal of the cross as he recounts the stirring event in London, as a young girl sings to a sophisticated, critical audience.

The scene is the Queen's Hall. A cultured audience has gathered to listen to a concert. Here you have not the uncivilized savage possessing little of culture or education. Rather, you have the West End of London rolling up in expensive motor cars and stepping from them dressed in evening clothes. One of the items on the program is a song by a young girl whose name is unknown. She is making her first appearance before the critical musical public of London. She sings, with perfect voice and that artless grace which is the height of art, a song which she has practiced many hours with her distinguished tutor. At the end of the song the applause is deafening and continued, and both tutor and audience demand that she shall sing again. Once again she sings the same song.

It is a long time since the audience has heard anything so fresh and understanding and

altogether captivating. It is imperative that she should sing yet again. Hurriedly she and her tutor confer together. She has arranged to sing only this one song. The tutor was not ready to risk more. She was to have this one chance only. "What else have you got?" he asks. From her music case she takes out a song and says simply, "I should like to sing this to them." She goes to the platform. The noise and tumult and cheering subside. In perfect stillness she begins:

There is a green hill far away,

Without a city wall,

Where the dear Lord was crucified,

Who died to save us all.

She sings it to Gounod's glorious setting. The effect is electrical. It is a long time since

many of those who listen have heard any religious message, and a very long time indeed since they have heard the message of the Cross. The beautiful voice goes on:

We may not know, we cannot tell,

What pains He had to bear;

But we believe it was for us

He hung and suffered there.

The silence became almost tangible. The tension is almost more than people can bear, and still the voice goes on:

He died that we might be forgiven,

He died to make us good,

That we might go at last to heaven,

Saved by His precious blood.

No chocolate boxes are passed during that song. No whispered comments of the singer's

ability are exchanged. That night in the Queen's Hall, the singer is forgotten by many, in a song which carries them away on its wings to a lonely hill outside a city, where a Man whose great loyalty and love nothing could break -- a Man who was all that God could pour of Himself into a human personality -- hung in anguish on a cross of shame. The singer goes on:

There was no other good enough

To pay the price of sin;

He only could unlock the gate

Of heaven, and let us in.

There are few dry eyes. Women weep openly, unable to restrain their tears. Men grip the

seat in front of them, their knuckles white with the intensity of their grip, their faces strained by the depth of their emotions. The singer seems almost unconscious of the audience. The song is so precious to her own heart that she is not singing to please the audience. She has forgotten it is there. She is bearing out, through Gounod's music, the adoration of her own heart for the crucified Lord. So to those final and wonderful notes the young voice travels on:

Oh dearly, dearly has He loved,

And we must love Him, too,

And trust in His redeeming blood,

And try His works to do.

The soloist forgets to bow. Certainly the audience notices no omission. There is no applause -- only a great silence.

So it is in Africa, so in London, so with the outcasts, so with the educated and civilized, so with men in olden days, so with modern men and women who are willing to be quiet and to consider. His words are true, and they are true only of Him: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto myself." And when bound to His cross, He is lifted up before men's eyes, by some strange power which defies analysis, dying, He brings them life; bound, He brings them liberty; suffering, He redeems them from the greatest anguish the soul can know, the agony of hopeless despair; and everlastingly loving He challenges them, and claims them, and will never let them go until He makes them His forever.

Christ is pulling upon your heart just now. Your better self is saying: "Give yourself to

Him." Your heart craves for His word of peace. Your entire being wilts and surrenders in the presence of the cross of Christ.

On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,

The emblem of suffering and shame,

And I love that old cross where the Dearest and Best

For a world of lost sinners was slain.

So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,

Till my trophies at last I lay down,

I will cling to the old rugged cross,

And exchange it some day for a crown.

May I inject a bit of personal testimony? When I was a high school senior, sixteen years of age, I was away from God, burdened and bound by sin. One night I left the back seat in a church in Everett, Massachusetts, and walked down the long aisle and knelt at an old-fashioned altar, confessed my sins and left my burden at the foot of the cross. Jesus spoke, "Peace," to my troubled heart. He can do the same for you. When I arose from my knees the people were singing:

Alas! and did my Saviour bleed,

And did my Sov'reign die?

Would He devote that sacred head

For such a worm as I?

At the cross, at the cross where I first saw the light,

And the burden of my heart rolled away,

It was there by faith I received my sight,

And now I am happy all the day!

But drops of grief can ne'er repay

The debt of love I owe;

Here, Lord, I give myself away,

'Tis all that I can do!

As you read these words, make your confession, leave your burden at the cross, and you,
too, can know the peace that Christ can give.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/russell-delong/the-alluring-attraction-of-the-cross/>

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