

THE ENIGMA OF THE CROSS

(I Corinthians 1:18-31)

- Introduction:
1. An **enigma** is something that is hard to explain and hard to understand.
 2. Thus, the cross of Christ may aptly be called an enigma.
 - a. The Gentiles thought it was foolishness (1:23).
 - b. To the Jews it was a stumblingblock (1:23).
 - c. Today the cross has become a trinket, a beautiful piece of jewelry while its meaning is forgotten.
 3. Let us refocus our eyes on the cross of Jesus and perceive with clarity, the significance of this unparalleled event.

I. THE PARADOX OF THE CROSS

- A. One reason that the cross has been misunderstood is because it is a great paradox.
- B. Notice some of the paradoxes:
 1. It saddens us - but it gives us joy.
 2. It was tragic - but it was glorious.
 3. It was Satan's victory - but it was also Satan's defeat.
 4. It brought shame to mankind - but it also brought glory and honor.
 5. It shows God's hatred of sin - but His love for the sinner.
 6. It brought death - but it also brought life.
 7. On the cross, Jesus won by losing, and He overcame by surrendering.
- C. Although the cross of Christ appears to be full of contradictions, it is the means by which God chose to save us (I Corinthians 1:18).

II. THE PURPOSE OF THE CROSS

- A. Why did God send His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross?
- B. (Psalms 8:4) "What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?"
- C. There are two reasons that Jesus endured the cross.
 1. Theologically.
 - a. It was necessary for salvation - atonement had to be made for our sins.
 - b. (II Corinthians 5:21; Romans 6:23).
 2. Personally.
 - a. God loves us dearly (John 3:16; Romans 5:6-8).
 - b. (Hebrews 12:1-2).
 - c. (Ephesians 2:16).

III. THE PLEDGE OF THE CROSS

- A. If our reconciliation to God was accomplished by Jesus on the cross, then is the work done (I Corinthians 1:29-31)?
- B. Although we are saved by the grace of God manifest on the cross, some may:
 1. Fall short of the grace of God (Hebrews 12:15).
 2. Receive the grace of God in vain (II Corinthians 6:1).
- C. "**Jesus is the Answer**", but He's not an easy fix.
- D. (Luke 14:25-28; Matthew 16:24-26).

- Conclusion:
1. Thank God for the cross of Christ.
 2. Let us glory only in the cross of Christ (Galatians 6:14).
 3. (Romans 6:1-14).