

20:20 Vision Ministries -- Devotions by Roger Browning Week 13 (March 24-30, 2013)

We read in Philippians 4:18b, "many live as enemies of the cross of Christ." I never want to be ashamed of the cross because my eternal destiny is tied to His death on Calvary. Since we are entering Holy Week (the week prior to Easter Sunday), we will focus on the power of the cross to save our souls and transform our lives.

Sunday -- March 24 (Mark 11:1-11)

Today is Palm Sunday on the church calendar. In this text, Jesus approaches Jerusalem well aware that the temporary glory He will receive on Sunday will end with His crucifixion on the cross on Friday (v. 1). He sends two disciples to bring back a young colt, one that has never been ridden. Our Lord loves taming a pure, but unbroken, animal (or person) and returning it to the owner more useful than before (v. 2-3). Are you willing to release anything (or anyone) to Jesus when you hear these words, "The Lords needs it" (v. 4-6)? This special entry into Jerusalem is the only time our Lord is honored by the multitude (v. 7-10). The same crowd will be shouting "Crucify Him" on Friday morning (Mark 15:13-14). I pray that your Sunday praise will not end in denial before the week is over.

Monday -- March 25 (1 Corinthians 1:18)

Some of your "mission giving" in 1993 may have helped sponsor a "Reimagining Conference" in Minneapolis where 2,200 "Christian" women introduced the worship of Sophia, a female goddess. One speaker said, "I don't think we need a theory of atonement, and I don't think we need folks hanging on crosses, and blood dripping, and weird stuff." She was given a standing ovation for that blasphemous statement. That comment will show you the extent of many mainline denominations in rejecting the cross of Jesus Christ. Those who reject His willing death on the cross as atonement for our sins become nothing more than social clubs with a church name. Read 2 Corinthians 5:21 and you will clearly see "the message of the cross." Do not allow anyone to diminish the necessity of that event to purchase fallen mankind!

Tuesday -- March 26 (1 Corinthians 1:18-25)

Many of today's religious intellectuals refer to themselves as "enlightened." They claim to be part of "The New Age." This is not new at all since it originated in the Garden of Eden where Satan informed Adam and Eve that they could become "like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5), if only they would eat from the forbidden tree. God's simple message of salvation through the crucifixion of His Son seems foolish to these intellectuals (v. 18-23). They think they can come to God headfirst instead of heart first! That's why "the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing" (v. 18). However, to all who accept God's provision for salvation, Christ is "the power of God and the wisdom of God" (v. 24). Make sure that you don't give in to the "politically correct" teachings that deny the necessity of the cross!

Wednesday -- March 27 (1 Corinthians 1:26-31)

This passage means a lot to me since I have few credentials to show to the intellectual community. God calls us because **we** need Him to make our lives complete, not because **He** needs our wonderful knowledge and wisdom. Can you remember the day you felt His call to salvation? Do you realize that He does not call the qualified, but rather, qualifies the called? The bottom line is stated in v. 30: "It is because of Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our **righteousness, holiness and redemption.**" Think back to your life before you invited Jesus to come into your heart (v. 26). Thank Him today for giving you abundant life (v. 27-29). Boast only about Him (v. 31)! He is your All in All!

Thursday -- March 28 (1 Corinthians 2:1-5)

Paul continues to build his point that the cross is the center of our faith. He does not speak with eloquence or superior wisdom to the audiences God assigns to him (v. 1). Instead, he focuses on Jesus and His sacrificial death on Calvary (v. 2). Paul was well educated in the Jewish law (see Acts 22:3), but his life was forever changed when he met the Lord on the road to Damascus (see Acts 9:1-19). It is imperative that listeners are drawn to the cross of Christ instead of being captivated by any preacher with a charismatic delivery and wonderful vocabulary. The **antichrist** will gain control over the world by his great oratory skills. Be careful that you don't go to church to be entertained. You must leave the service focused on God's power through His Holy Spirit, not on a human with persuasive words (v. 3-5).

Friday -- March 29 (Colossians 2:13-15)

Today is Good Friday on the church calendar. The above text reminds us of the necessity of the cross as well as the victory that is ours because of His sacrificial death on Calvary. We all were dead in our sins because of our sinful nature (v. 13). Some may think they are better or worse than others, but God does not see us like that. When we break any of His commandments, we are guilty of breaking them all (see James 2:10-11). Jesus canceled the written law that no one can keep (see Romans 10:4) and nailed it to the cross (v. 14). Satan is defeated; the victory is won (v. 15)! Glory to His Name! Now you know why we call this day Good Friday!

Saturday -- March 30 (Galatians 6:12-16)

We are nearing the day when Christians in America will be persecuted for preaching the necessity of the cross for salvation (v. 12-13). After all, if His death and resurrection are necessary to provide eternal life, only those who accept Him will go to heaven. That is not politically correct! Late in the 1950s, God used a UVA football player (Al Cash) to introduce me to v. 14. This young man wrote "Galatians 6:14" under his signature in my autograph book. It didn't take me long to learn to quote it from my King James Version of the Bible. Unfortunately, it has taken another 50 years to truly understand what it means. I can do **nothing** without the cross of Jesus (see John 15:5); I can do **all** things through Him who died on the cross (Philippians 4:13)! His **mercy** gives me **peace** to face the coming persecutions for believers (v. 16).