

The Cost of the Cross

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- [0 : 0 0] I'm excited to preach for you this morning. I'm excited at the passage that we have this morning. After we read it, you might be thinking, something's wrong with Matt. He's excited about this passage because it's about the death of Jesus and the cross that he died on.
- I'm excited not because, obviously, it's going to be a topic that gets a little emotional, but I'm not excited just because I know next week is about the resurrection.
- I'm excited about what the cross is for us as Christians, and we're going to dig into that in just a few minutes.
- As you know, there have been a lot of people, a lot of influential people throughout the time span of human existence. People that have done really great things.
- We could name them. There would be a lot of them, but just as an example, people like Albert Einstein and Leonardo da Vinci, Marie Curie and Aristotle, William Shakespeare, and Martin Luther King Jr.
- [1 : 1 8] We could go on and on because there's been so many people that have done good things that have changed history in some way. Maybe put some things into motion that now affect our lives for the better.
- And those are really good things. Those are things to be thankful for. But none of those acts compared to the greatest act of all, and that is the death of Jesus Christ on a cross for us.
- Why is it the greatest? One of the reasons is because unlike all the other acts, Jesus' act affects everyone. All the other people affect some people at some time, but not everyone.
- And the other reason is because it affects people not just in this lifetime, but for all eternity. So you expect this act that took place, this act of love, so important and so affecting of everyone, would come at a high price.
- And it did. Because no human could achieve this. No normal human born from a man, because as we know, Adam and Eve started sin back in the Garden of Eden.
- [2 : 4 1] And anyone born from man is born into that sin. But God had an answer for that, and that was Jesus Christ.
- Romans 5.17 For if because of one man's trespass, death ran through that one man, much more will those receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.
- Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all, that is, Adam's sin, Eve's sin, led to condemnation for all men. So one act of righteousness, Jesus Christ's act of righteousness, leads to justification and life for all men.
- God knew that the only way, the only act that could fix our sin problem, and men, that relationship that was first created in the Garden of Eden, that paradise that God created, there was only one way to fix that, and that would require the death of his son.
- Amen. Jesus would have to come. He would have to live on this earth with us.

- [4 : 06] Out of his paradise in heaven, he would have to live a perfect life. He would have to go to the cross and die and take our punishment for sin and then be raised again.
- Defeating death and sin and providing a way of salvation because that's what we needed and we would never be able to do that on our own.
- Of those actions, it's Jesus' crucifixion and his death that are the greatest act of love toward us that we will ever know.
- And that's what our message this morning is about. The cross is the center of it all. It's the center of the gospel that we believe. It's the center of the gospel that we preach.
- It's the focal point of the Bible. The Old Testament points to it. Everything after it in the New Testament points back to it. It's the dividing line in human history.
- [5 : 09] And it's also the deciding factor in each one of our eternities. And by that I mean our eternity is based on your belief of that cross, of what took place on that cross for you.
- So the title, the main idea for our message this morning is this. The cross, the crucifixion of Jesus is God's greatest planned out act of love toward us in all of history.
- Our passage this morning is the second half of Luke 23. And as you know, Luke is writing to Christians for the purpose of helping them know more fully what they've been taught.
- To help them to believe how they have been taught through the scriptures. Luke's gospel has brought us up through his life and now we're coming to the end of his earthly ministry here in Luke chapter 23.
- So we're going to read this together. If you have your Bibles, Luke 23. If you don't have your Bibles, if you could throw your hand up. We have some Bibles you can borrow. Awesome.
- [6 : 25] Luke 23. And we're going to start in verse 26. And as they led him away, they seized one, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country and laid on him the cross to carry it behind Jesus.
- And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. But turning to them, Jesus said, Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.
- For behold, the days are coming when they will say, Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed. Then they will begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us and to the hills, Cover us.
- For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry? Two others who were criminals were led away to be put to death with him.
- And when they came to the place, that is called the skull, there they crucified him. And the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. And Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.
- [7 : 39] And they cast lots to divide his garments. And the people stood by watching. But the scoffers, the rulers scoffed at him, saying, He saved others. Let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, his chosen one.
- The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine and saying, If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself. There was also an inscription over him, This is the king of the Jews.
- One of the criminals who were hanged, railed at him, saying, Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us. But the other rebuked him, saying, Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?

And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds. But this man has done nothing wrong. And he said, Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

And he said to him, Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise. It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, when the sun's light failed.

[8 : 55] And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. And having said this, he breathed his last.

Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, Certainly this man was innocent. And all the crowds that had assembled for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, they returned home, beating their breasts.

And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance watching these things. Now there was a man named Joseph from the Jewish town of Arimathea.

He was a member of the council, a good and righteous man who had not consented to their decision and action, and he was looking for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud and laid him in a tomb cut in stone where no one had ever yet been laid. It was the day of preparation and the Sabbath was beginning.

[10 : 07] The women who had come with him from Galilee followed and saw the tomb and how the body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments. On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

There's a lot in this passage. There's a lot about the cross and we only had this building until one o'clock. Now I say that just because there may be aspects about this passage that we may not be able to cover for sake of time.

If that leaves you with questions, please come up and see me afterwards. See Sean, see Ray, bring it up in your community group. But wrestle with it.

Those are good rustlings. Those are helpful to our soul and our belief in what we read here. But in this passage we're going to look at three aspects. Some of these are repeats from two weeks ago when Sean brought his message.

But they are aspects that are in this passage so I feel like Luke put them there. We need to bring them out and see what he's talking about because they're important. Because if we're talking about the greatest act in history then it's important to look at the details of that greatest act.

[11 : 35] To look at the smaller acts that made that larger act so large. So we're going to be looking at Christ's compassion and forgiveness. We're going to be looking at Christ's innocence.

And we're going to be looking at Christ's deity. And as we go through the passage these aspects are going to come out at different times. So to try to help the flow I'm just going to point them out as we go chronologically through the passage instead of just picking out all the compassion or all the innocence.

So hopefully that's a help to you. It was in my mind so we're going to go that way. But we're not just pulling out things from these sections because Luke put them in his gospel but we're going to talk about them because they're helpful to us.

So when we look at Christ's compassion if Jesus had shown no compassion then what kind of friend what kind of savior or shepherd would he be? Forgiveness that's a big one that's kind of obvious.

Forgiveness is all about the cross. Forgiveness for all the atrocities toward God that we've done. Christ's innocence if he wasn't innocent then he's not the perfect son of God and he would have no power over sin and death.

[13 : 04] And Jesus' deity if he wasn't deity then he's not the son of God he's just another man and he couldn't have accomplished what he accomplished on the cross. So these three things because they're in the passage because I think that they will be extremely helpful for us this morning.

As we approach verse 26 where Sean left off two weeks ago we know that Jesus is beaten and scourged. The skin on his back and the surrounding areas have been ripped open and his muscles are lacerated.

so that combined with the amount of blood that has been lost at this point you can imagine that his strength level isn't what it normally is.

At this time someone who was being crucified wouldn't carry a full cross because it was too heavy. They would just put the cross beam on their shoulders.

shoulders but even at that it's somewhere between 40 and 100 pounds on your back that has just been ripped open.

[14 : 21] So imagine the pain as he tries to make his walk out of the city because that's where they're crucified. They can't be crucified in the city itself. He makes it out of the city but not very far so the Romans as part of what they're allowed to do is they can pick someone actually they pretty much force that person to carry that cross beam for whoever's being crucified.

In this case it's Jesus. So they grab Simon of Cyrene and they force him to carry this cross beam behind Jesus. So that's the scene where we have Jesus now just enough strength to walk himself struggling just to walk towards the place where he'll be crucified while Simon is behind him carrying his cross.

It's at this moment that you would think all the attention and all the sympathy would be on Jesus as it should be for anyone being crucified at that time that would be normal.

they are about to die. They're the ones going through the excruciating pain. But as we read verses 27 and 28 we see something a little different.

And they followed him a great multitude of people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. for him. So in that moment Jesus out of compassion turns to this crowd and tells them don't weep for me weep for yourselves.

[16 : 03] an act of compassion because he would normally just be thinking about himself any normal dying human would but he thought about them.

Compassion and love because he cared about them. Now why is he saying this? Verse 29 for behold the days are coming when they will say blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nurse.

Then they will begin to say to the mountains fall on us and to the hills cover us for if they do these things when the wood is green what will happen when it is dry? What is Jesus talking about?

Well as he said don't cry for me cry for yourselves that's because bad things are going to happen. Normally it would be a blessing to have children but there's a time that is coming when having children will be a curse because Jesus is talking about the judgment that is coming towards Jerusalem.

He's telling the people don't cry for me because there's coming a time when you will be asking for the mountains to fall on you and for the hills to cover you to put you out of your misery. for those with children for those with children it will be worse because not only do you have to go through that pain yourself you have to watch your child go through that same pain and endure that same agony.

[17 : 34] for those who are parents and I'm sure you can imagine if you don't have kids but you would take the pain of something if you could take it away from your child.

So you can see the cursedness of someone who has a child or children.

He says in verse 31 but if they do these things when the wood is green what will happen when it is dry? In the Jewish language the idea behind this is if something great can happen how much easier it will be for something lesser to happen.

If God allows his righteous son to suffer and die on the cross what will be the judgment for those unrighteous people of Jerusalem who crucified him or for centuries have refused to follow him?

Micah 3.12 says this therefore because of you speaking of the leaders of Jerusalem Zion shall be plowed as a field and Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins you might remember just a few verses earlier in Luke after the triumphal entry when everyone is praising Jesus they lay down their coats they wave palm branches blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord then after that we find Jesus weeping over the city why because of their upcoming rejection of him he knew what was coming and he knew of the judgment that was coming to them Luke 19 verses 43 and 44 say this for the days will come upon you when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground you and your children within you and they will not leave one stone upon another in you because you did not know the time of your visitation it's such a dark and painful time for

[20 : 03] Jesus as he's walking towards crucifixion and he offers this word of compassion and of appeal for the people to turn they're crying and weeping but for most their hearts are far from Jesus and as we know the hearts of the people do not change and Jesus words come true just 40 years into the future when the Roman army under Titus comes in and destroys all of Jerusalem and the temple Jesus knew that so as we move in our passage we see more of Christ's compassion down in verse 34 two other criminals were being put to death along with Jesus and they were being brought to the place called the skull or

Golgotha it was there that Jesus and the other two criminals were to be crucified nailed to a cross and hung up naked or close to naked if they had a loin cloth on the most painful and humiliating way that you could die and at that moment we see Jesus says father forgive them for they know not what they do with all that is happening who but Jesus would be praying for the forgiveness of those who are mocking and crucifying him showing compassion and forgiveness towards his enemies in a way we could never do fulfilling for us what he taught concerning loving others loving those who wrong us it will happen strangers friends family co-workers

Christians in the church your children your spouse accidentally on purpose people do us wrong and we do other people wrong it hurts sometimes it really hurts and sometimes we will struggle because of what they have done but look to the cross where Jesus bore all our sins look to Christ to truly know love and forgiveness there's a lot more we could get into in the area of forgiveness but for now just to know this that the cross gives us the power to forgive because of what we've been forgiven moving on under the heading of

Christ's deity to to to to the 300th prophecy even at 50 prophecies it's some outrageous number that couldn't be possible so

I want to point these out because they mean something they're prophecies that like who would say these things unless you knew they were going to take place in the future we see one of those such prophecies if we look at Isaiah 53 and the second half of verse 12 it says because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors yet he bore the sin of many and many intercession for the transgressors he was counted he was numbered with the transgressors and we see this as he is hung among two criminals him being put to death for his innocence next to two criminals who were being put to death for murder for robbery for insurrection so he was numbered with them the second half of verse 34 in our passage says that they cast lots to divide his garments now there's a prophecy given for that back in psalm 22 and verse 18 it says they divide my clothes among themselves and throw dice for my garments who would say that why would anybody say this about someone who was going to die sometime in the future unless a psalmist was instructed by

[25 : 50] God to write that all all the other scoffers said he joined in and like all the other scoffers Jesus doesn't respond that was one of the criminals but we see something different happen with the other one before we get into that just a brief mention of Jesus innocence when you have two hardened criminals hanging on either side of you they know who's guilty and who's not both of them knew they were hanging for what they did but they knew Jesus was hanging for nothing that he did that was never in question in this mocking that took place it's your Jesus save yourself the other one we'll get to that he asked for repentance but neither one of them was never in question that Jesus was not innocent of guilty of anything that he did so we have one criminal who's mocking Jesus and we have another one that may have started out mocking Jesus we think he started out mocking Jesus because in the gospels of Matthew and Mark they both read similarly by saying those who were crucified with him also reviled him they seem to point out that both of the criminals at one point reviled against Jesus or at Jesus but at some point while hanging on the cross while forced to look at their own punishment and upcoming death and hanging and hanging there's a change that takes place in one of their hearts why because as one criminal rails against them we see in verse 40 the other one rebukes him saying do you not fear

God since you are under the same sentence of condemnation we indeed justly for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds but this man has done nothing wrong and then as we look at verse 42 that same criminal says Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom hanging on the cross just a few hours from death and this criminal is asking Jesus to remember him another act of compassion and forgiveness because if that was me I would say no way man I'm hanging on the cross I'm gonna die I didn't do anything wrong you're the murderer you screwed up your life you're up here because you deserve it and you want me to remember you

I don't think so I don't think so man but that wasn't Jesus in that moment out of love he saves this sinner this criminal accepts his punishment because he knew he had done wrong and Jesus sees that as an act of confession he's confessing what he did wrong he's believing that Jesus is innocent and he knows Jesus has the power to save him if he didn't why would he ask him to remember him see this criminal can't reform himself he can't fix what he has done wrong he's got no time left even if he could but he knows who can and what he does know about

Jesus is very limited but he turns to him and says remember me and that's exactly what Jesus the savior of the world does in verse 43 and he Jesus says to him truly I say to you today you will be with me in paradise this is truly a death bed conversion or salvation if you aren't saved today let me encourage you not to wait not to hope in a death bed conversion a time where I'll wait till I'm older or maybe when I'm sick in the hospital and I'm thinking about death then I might come to Jesus because you may not get that opportunity actually most people don't get that opportunity the message of

[31 : 27] Jesus the cross his salvation it's here it's in this passage that we're looking at this morning so I ask if you don't believe in this cross of Jesus I ask you to pray I ask you to dig deep into what is taking place and not allow 2019 to end before you know where your eternity will be if you're not sure how to go there from the questions you have in your mind then please come up and see me after the service see Sean after the service grab anyone here and they'll be able to direct you to somebody I don't want to miss an opportunity to help show in the salvation that he offers in the next section we see some events that point to the deity of

Christ that is things that wouldn't have taken place unless Jesus was truly the son of God they wouldn't have taken place if just an ordinary man were being crucified verse 44 it was about the sixth hour and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour while the sun's light failed that is from noon until three in the afternoon when the sun is normally the brightest it was dark now they can calculate this going pretty far in either direction on the timeline and determined that there wasn't an eclipse going on at this time even if it had been an eclipse that caused the darkness an eclipse doesn't last that long I looked it up and they calculated that the longest solar eclipse where the light of the sun is blocked from hitting the earth between the time of 4000

BC and 6000 AD so we've got like 10,000 years the longest one will be in 2186 and depending on where you're located it will last about seven minutes so it wasn't an eclipse it wasn't just a cloudy day outside Luke said that the sun's light failed I don't I don't know what that means but I know the only one who has control over the sun is God this was also prophesied in Amos 8 9 so back in the Old Testament and on that day declares the Lord God I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight the darkening of the whole earth could be a sign for all humanity to see that they were responsible for this one death of

Christ as the sun the light of the earth goes dark so Jesus the son of God was dying and going dark darkness it signifies divine judgment and in this case it's the wrath of God being poured out on his son on that cross for our sins right after that it says in verse 45 that the curtain of the temple was torn in two the curtain that separated the holy place from the most holy place or the holy of holies that curtain was split in half it says that it was torn from top to bottom now this wasn't an ordinary curtain these are pretty big curtains I'm sure if we got a strong person we could rip them in half if we wanted to but that's not the curtain that separated these two holy places it said that this curtain is about four inches thick it couldn't be split by human means it might be able to be cut with a lot of work but you would know it was cut it was ripped in half from the top down this was done for a reason because this curtain is what blocked access into the holy of holies this was set up so that once a year the high priest could go behind that curtain to where the presence of

God would come down and dwell for a moment no one else could go there so that mediator was the high priest so when that curtain was split from top from heaven down to earth from the bottom it was for a reason God is telling us that that need for an intermediary is being taken away those who believe and trust in Jesus and the work that he did can now pray to God directly we no longer need a priest as our intermediary Jesus alone is our high priest he intercedes for us as we pray to the father we pray through Jesus as we're praying through the work that he did on the cross see that mends that relationship that was there back in the garden of

[37 : 31] Eden God set that up Adam was able to walk and talk with God then they sinned and that was split would never happen again but God he sets up this relationship this plan so that belief through his son fixes that relationship to God again this is what makes Christianity different than any other religion is Jesus Christ the cross and dying for our sins if you take Jesus out of Christianity you're not left with anything you're still left with man separated from God and no hope in between verse Timothy 2 5 says this for there is one God and there is one mediator between God and men and that is the man

Christ Jesus after the three hours of darkness and the curtain is torn verse 46 says this then Jesus calling out with a loud voice said father into your hands I commit my spirit and having said this he breathed his last even until the very end Jesus is in control of his life he breathed his last he wanted to say this and then end his life allow himself to die to complete that payment of sin in verse 43 when he says today you will be with me in paradise this is what

Jesus is returning back to we move to verse 47 we take another look at his innocence that when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, Certainly this man was innocent.

So a Roman centurion whose job it was to crucify people, no doubt he had his share of crucifixions, and his job that day was to preside over the crucifixion of Jesus.

But he was going to see something that day that was like no other crucifixion he had witnessed before. He had probably heard the dialogue between Jesus and the criminals, and he saw how Jesus was dying.

[41 : 02] He heard what Jesus had said. He saw the darkness. He knew this was no ordinary man. How could he come to that conclusion?

So he praised God, saying this man was innocent. So like the shepherds who praised Jesus when he was born, the centurion praised God at Jesus' death.

Why? That seems odd. That's because Jesus is praised, or Jesus is glorified, when his presence is recognized through his son, Jesus.

The centurion sees divine activity at work, and he knows it is of God, and declares that Jesus had to have been innocent.

The NIV says, surely this was a righteous man, and he glorifies God because of what he has seen. But it doesn't stop there.

[42 : 08] Verse 48, beating their breasts is a phrase that means to display one's grief or remorse in a demonstrative way.

So they had already spent all their emotions and all their energies shouting for him to be crucified. But now that they have witnessed his crucifixion, something is wrong.

Something is not what we thought it should be. They were blown away by what took place. And they knew this was not just an ordinary man.

This must have been Christ, King of the Jews, like he was saying, and we just crucified him. And so in regret, in remorse, they go back to their homes, not knowing what to do with that for what they have done.

But those who knew the truth about Jesus, we see them also in verse 49. Those who did not take part in his crucifixion, all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance watching these things.

[43 : 35] Not close enough so they might be thought to be part of the crowd, but they couldn't walk away and not watch. The last section that we're going to look at today is his burial.

Verse 50. Now there was a man named Joseph from the Jewish town of Arimathea. He was a member of the council, a good and righteous man who had not consented to their decision and action.

And he was looking for the kingdom of God. Joseph was part of the Sanhedrin. Joseph is an example of how not all of the Jewish leaders were not believers in Jesus.

Joseph is one. He's a good and righteous man, meaning he followed the commandments of God. He knew Jesus was innocent. He wanted no part of that. And that Jesus was bringing about his kingdom.

In Matthew 27, 57, Joseph is called a disciple of Jesus. So being a member of the Sanhedrin, Joseph has special access to Pilate.

[44 : 59] So he uses that access and bravery. At this time to step forward and announce that you are a disciple of Jesus took some bravery.

So he goes to Pilate and he asks for his body and Pilate agrees. In verse 53, To be buried in a tomb was common.

To be buried alone, not very common. In a tomb cut out of rock, which is a lot of work, as you would imagine, to create this tomb.

And to be buried in one that had not yet been used was even more rare. That was reserved for rich people, people of means.

And this fulfills a prophecy also that we find in Isaiah 53. It says, He had done no wrong and he never deceived anyone, but he was buried like a criminal.

[46 : 18] He was put in a rich man's cave. So buried like a criminal, but buried in a rich man's cave. Again, who would prophesy something about someone's death like that?

Unless you were instructed by the Holy Spirit to write that down. Finishing off this passage, verse 54 says, It was the day of preparation and the Sabbath was beginning.

The women who had come with him from Galilee followed and saw the tomb and how his body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments. On the Sabbath, they rested according to the commandment.

So just to get the layout of this weekend that took place is you have the day of preparation that's on Friday. The reason for the preparation is because on Saturday, the Sabbath, you were to do no work.

That was the commandment, not to work. So you needed to do all you needed to do ahead of time so that you could spend that day in rest, not working as God had commanded.

[47 : 32] And so they went and saw the tomb. They saw how the body was laid and where it was laid, knowing that they wouldn't be able to come back with their ointment and spices until Sunday because Sabbath was when they were commanded to rest.

Next week, we're going to get to part two of this epic story of love. But for today, our focus is on the cross.

The crucifixion of Jesus is God's greatest planned out act of love toward us in all of history. So, my question to you this morning is where is your cross?

Not your cross that you have to carry around, but where is the cross of Jesus in your belief, in your mind, in your heart? God made it the center of the gospel.

He made it the center of the Bible. He made it the center of the life of Jesus, the center of human history. That's where God puts it.

[48 : 55] So, there's importance there. So, where do you put the cross? Maybe the cross is nice.

It was a good thing. Jesus was a good man. The cross is a nice decoration, so I'll have it around. But, I'm going to put it over on the side because I don't want it to get in the way of my life, my plan.

So, I'll put the cross of Jesus over there on the side. And when I need it, I'll just pull it out. That's not what the cross of Christ was meant for. That wasn't God's intention for the death of his son, the cross of Christ, is to change our life.

So, as we looked at these two criminals today, all of mankind falls into these two categories. You have the category who does not believe, and you have the category who does believe.

an eternity for you is based on which category you fall into.

[50 : 27] If you find yourself unbelieving this morning, if you find yourself just a religious information seeker, then I would encourage you to look at the life of Jesus, his miracles, the events, the lives changed, his crucifixion, the prophecies, the supernatural events.

Look into that truth if you want to know the truth. Maybe you are saved this morning.

You're a Christian, so I believe in the cross. I believe what Jesus did. So there's two parts of that that I want to give you this morning as we leave.

One is a correction. If you've been living your life and you've been setting the cross of Christ to the side because you believe it but you just don't want to make it central, then I would encourage you to spend time in the Word to see how central God has made the cross of Christ and He has done it for a purpose so that your life would be changed in accordance to His plan and not your plan.

And if you do strive towards making the cross the center of your life, it is your goal to follow what God has for you and His plan, then I want you to be encouraged by the cross.

[52 : 14] The power of the cross. Looking at that phrase that Jesus says to the criminal that He will be with Him in paradise.

Today, today, today, today, today, today, today, today, you will be with me in paradise. With me. There's your words of power, with me. The criminal knew very little about the life of Jesus and His gospel, but he knew what with me meant because the criminal has no power.

So if you're following Christ, then live in the power of the cross and with Christ. God because it's love and forgiveness.

It's at the cross where we find the strength for the days that are beyond what our body can handle.

Whether we've been done wrong or we're faced with something we don't understand, we look to the cross because we see what God has done through His Son for us.

[53 : 46] Romans 5.1 says this, Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you have peace this morning? I'm not saying all things in your life are going to be great and you're not stressed and work's hard, family's difficult and you could be struggling physically with something, but is your soul at peace?

Do you have peace with God so that whatever happens, if you make it out of 2019 or if you get to go all the way through 2020, do you have peace with God? If you don't, then you will find peace at the cross of Christ.

And so I want to leave you with that this morning. The greatest act of love that God has ever showed was towards us and it cost Him His Son on the cross.