



Course: The Foundation of the Church

The Cross

Lesson One

Lesson Title: Only by death. The Greatest Enemy; The Greatest Blessing.

Text: Hebrews 2:14-15 'Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.'

Introduction: The means that God used to win salvation was death.

Death entered into the world through the sin of Adam and Eve.

Death is mankind's greatest enemy. Yet if there was no death then there could be no salvation.

The way of salvation is through the death of the Son of God on the cross.

God used the greatest enemy of mankind to become the greatest blessing of mankind.

God is able to make all things work together for good, Romans 8:28.

Introductory Story: There is a spiritual principle that something must die in order for it to bring the fruit of new life.

Look at Christian missionary pioneers.

William Carey and his mission at Serampore arose out of the ashes of a disastrous fire

The ministry of John and Charles Wesley began after they found true salvation in Christ having returned to England from the American colonies discouraged through failure.

Christians especially young Christians enjoy excitement and things successful. Everyone likes being in the company of those who appear successful. Preachers who speak at big conventions are often those who are highly respected for their successful ministries. But real success comes out of apparent failure.

What appears destructive may be the greatest blessing – fire destroys houses and lives, but it also removes dross from gold, and clears the land for new growth.

Main Points:

1. Death - crucified with Christ; the old is destroyed.

How did God bring salvation? Romans 6:6-7 'Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.'

The old man inherited from Adam cannot be redeemed. It is irreversibly united with sin.

That old man cannot be redeemed - only through the cross can we be freed from its power over us.

Salvation is through identification with the death of Christ.

The believer in Christ is not that sinful old man patched up

He or she is a new creation, 2 Corinthians 5:17 'Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.'

New Life in Christ

We are born sinful.

The old life is wrapped up in sin.

The Lord Jesus identified Himself with us.

When Jesus died on the cross He represented us.

Our life in sin was crucified and buried in Christ.

When Jesus arose we therefore arose in Him. No longer united with sin but united with Christ.

Romans 6:8-10 'Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death has no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he lives, he lives unto God.'

2. **Dead unto sin, alive unto God.** What relationship does a Christian have with sin? Romans 6:11 'Likewise reckon also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

a) **The life of the Christian is united with Christ (*Colossians 3:1-3*).**

He or she is no longer united with sin.

Sin is like a coat - the believer must put it off.

Ephesians 4:22-24 'That you put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.'

Around this new life in Jesus is a carnal nature but now I have the power to overcome it.

I am dead to sin.

Sin will be in me till Jesus comes but I am now united in Him not in sin.

A Christian is different from an unbeliever because the unbeliever sins habitually.

1 *John 5:18* 'We know that whosoever is born of God sins not; but he that is begotten of God keeps himself, and that wicked one touches him not.'

b) **The New Covenant is the law written upon the heart and mind. (*Hebrews 10:15-18*).**

It is not legalism it is a new life.

Trying to keep the law by legalism will produce sin, *Romans 7*.

Legalism results in sin and death.

Holiness produces righteousness and life.

Legalism will turn people away from Christ.

Holiness will attract people to Christ.

Holiness is the life of Christ in the believer.

It is His love expressed through us, *Galatians 5:14*.

3. **Dead - buried with Christ, risen with Him in newness of life.**

Being a Christian is not something I do it is what I am, *Colossians 3:1-4*.

It is identification with Christ

My sin - is buried with Christ

God declares that I am righteous because of Christ (justification).

We are being made righteous because I am risen with Christ and His life is in me (sanctification).

We are able to live victoriously because I am seated in heavenly places far above all principalities and powers.

We will be changed into His likeness - 'When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with him in glory.' *Colossians 3:4*.

His life in us.

Multitude of decisions but no life.

It is not those who made a decision for Christ who are saved. It is those who have the life of Christ in them who are saved.

2 Corinthians 13:5 'Examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except you be reprobates?'

The word reprobate (Greek 'adokimos') means 'not standing up to the test'. We must have the life of Christ in us.

Paul sums up the Christian gospel in these words; *Colossians 1:27* 'To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.'

Summary:

Salvation was only possible because of death: the death of the Son of God.

1. The old man is destroyed - crucified with Christ.
2. We can reckon ourselves dead unto sin, alive unto God.
3. Buried with Christ, and risen with Him in newness of life.