



Sunday, June 2, 2019
Pastor Don Denyes

Intro to 1 Corinthians 1:17-25

John Stott once described the cross of Christ as “the greatest and most glorious of all subjects.” I think any true believer would have to agree. While so much of Christ’s life is “great and glorious,” there is something about the cross that is central and essential. It is glorious that He came to earth as a baby—the Creator God humbling Himself in the form of a helpless infant. It is glorious that He would teach us about the character of God as One with authority, not with speculation or debate, but with absolute certainty. It is glorious that He performed miracles and demonstrated the power of God through many signs.

But as we read in the Gospels, it is clear time after time that the main focus of Jesus’ time here on earth was to go to the cross and suffer the wrath of God on behalf of sinners. The thing that was most necessary for Jesus to do was to suffer and die. As Mark relays Jesus’ teaching so ominously, “the Son of Man *must* suffer many things and be rejected...and be killed and after three days rise again.” That “must” keys us in on the centrality of Jesus’ mission and His most glorious achievement.

Context

It is clear in 1 Corinthians that Paul is concerned about factions and division within the church at Corinth (1:11). The people had divided themselves according to the various preachers they preferred. Paul admonishes them in the strongest of terms that neither he nor any other Christian preacher is sufficient for them, but only Christ (1:13). Rather, the power they need is found only in the cross of Christ (1:17). Paul was not interested in winning the popularity contest or gaining a following for himself. He was sent by God Himself to preach Christ crucified, and that was it (2:2). Even if the people wanted something else, Paul knew what they needed above all else.

Read and Reflect *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

Read 1 Corinthians 1:17-25

“The Power of the Cross”

First View of the Cross

Scandal: weakness

Crowd: religious

Value: law-keeping

Second View of the Cross

Foolish: nonsense

Crowd: intellectual

Value: man’s reason

Third View of the Cross

Power: wisdom of God

Crowd: believing

Value: God’s love

Discuss

- 1) If someone asked you, “What is the central message of Christianity?” what would you say?
- 2) What are some things we might be tempted to do today in conservative, evangelical churches that threaten to “empty the cross of its power” (v. 17)?
- 3) Is it possible for our methods in ministry to undermine the message of the cross? How might that be?
- 4) How can we maintain a cross-centered focus in our individual lives and in our families?
- 5) How can we maintain a cross-centered focus in our church?