

Introduction

The **CROSS** of Christ is **essential** to the Gospel message! I'm talking about the everything that the **CROSS** means and represents! Take away the **CROSS** of Christ and we have no forgiveness and we are left in our sin!

We know that it was on the **CROSS** that Christ died for our sins!—My sins and your sins, in fact He died for the sins of the whole world!

It is through Believing on (trusting, if you will) the Gospel of Christ alone that we, as Believers, are in possession of eternal life!

- 1) Believing and trusting in His atoning death for our sins on the **CROSS of Calvary**,
- 2) Believing also that He was buried, and
- 3) Believing and trusting that three days later He gloriously arose from that tomb as He overcame death!

THAT IS WHERE OUR HOPE AS BELIEVERS LIES! BUT IF THE CROSS OF CHRIST IS ELIMINATED THERE IS NO HOPE!

I like THE MATHEMATICS OF THE CROSS:

•It “added” the righteousness of Christ to my account (and yours too if you are saved!).

2 Corinthians 5:21—“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

•It “subtracted” or “took away” my sin and judgment (and yours too if you are saved!).

•It has “multiplied” many to the family of God.

•It has “divided” the saints (i.e. saved sinners) from the lost sinners.

Paul said that he gloried in the CROSS and Paul’s life proved that he gloried in the cross. *Galatians 6:14—“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”*

But not every one embraces the **CROSS**. There is much hostility towards the **CROSS** and those who embrace it! And that hostility is increasing! (*vs 18* says “...for **MANY** walk...that...are the enemies of the cross of Christ”).

This world, by and large, has contempt for the CROSS of Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:18—“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”

• The CROSS is under attack by Religionists and others those who want to do away with true Christianity!

“Away with this slaughter house religion.”

• The CROSS is under attack by the cults!

The Jehovah’s Witnesses and other cults today attack the Christian **CROSS**. The allegation often has been made that Jesus Christ did not die on a **CROSS**, but on a “torture stake” or “pale.” Some of them say that the Christian **CROSS** is of pagan origin. Much of the evidence they use to support this argument is misquoted and is not really actual evidence but rather mere quotes of un-researched opinions.

•The cross is under attack by atheists.

Efforts to remove the **CROSS** from public displays abound! Many court battles have been fought over these public displays even against some that are displayed on private property!

Many other examples could be shared as this has become more and more prevalent in our world!

I. WHO ARE THE FRIENDS OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST?

A. Friends Of The Cross Are Exemplary In Their Conduct! (Vs. 17)

1. It’s not enough to just read the Bible, we must also put it into practice.

Motivational speaker John C. Maxwell put it this way: ,
“Your talk talks and your walk talks, but your walk talks louder than your talk talks.”

That’s speaking of living what you say you believe!

FRIENDS AND FOES OF THE CROSS
PHILIPPIANS 3:17-21

Are you a good example of how a Believer in Christ should walk?

2. **There are two examples we need to MARK!**
(The word “*mark*” here comes from the same word that we get the word “*scope*” from).

•**We Are To Mark Some To Associate With**
That is, we are to identify them so we can associate with them!

•**We Are To Mark Others To Avoid.**
Romans 16:17—“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.”

Friends Of The Cross Are Exemplary In Their Conduct!

B. Friends Of The Cross Are Emotional In Their Concern!
(Vs. 18)

I’m talking about their concern towards the enemies of the CROSS.

Psalm 119:136—“Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.”

1. **We Who Are Saved Should Be Broken-Hearted Over The Lost!**
Does it hurt you to see people reject Jesus? It should.
2. **We Who Are Saved Should Be Broken Hearted Over What Our Sin Did To Our Saviour!**
As we reflect on what Christ’s death on the CROSS involved, we can’t help but get emotional:

Especially when we take time to think of the excruciating *pain*; the *shame*; the *agony*; the *horrors* He endured for us all!

FRIENDS AND FOES OF THE CROSS
PHILIPPIANS 3:17-21

Paul could not help but get emotional about something that was so very near and dear to him.

And the CROSS should be near and dear to every Christian! (Lyrics to “*The Old Rugged Cross*”).

Friends Of The Cross Are Exemplary In Their Conduct.
Friends Of The Cross Are Emotional In Their Concern.

C. Friends Of The Cross Are Expectant In Their Conversation. (Vs 20-21)

1. **They are focused on heaven—their eternal home!**
(*Colossians 3:1-3*)
2. **They are looking for the return of Christ!(Titus 2:13)**
3. **They live in the reality that this world is not our home!**
1 Peter 2:11—“Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;”

We must continually remind ourselves of this fact lest we get too comfy such that we become like the world!

4. **They understand the truths of Scripture here:**
 - a. **When the Lord comes back we will get a new body free of decay and depravity.**
(*Cf. 1 Corinthians 15:35ff*)
Won’t THAT be a wonderful thing! Amen!
 - b. **When the Lord comes back He will bring everything under His rule—“subdue all things unto himself.”**
(*Cf. 1 Corinthians 15:23-28*)

I can’t wait for that either! Amen!

SO, WE’VE SEEN THE FRIENDS OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST

II. WHO ARE THE FOES OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST?

•The **CROSS** stands for **SALVATION BY GRACE THRU FAITH!**
—So, anyone who adds ANYTHING to the work of Christ on the **CROSS** is at enmity with the **CROSS**. Jesus said, “It is **FINISHED**.”

•The **CROSS** shows **GOD’S HATRED FOR SIN!** —It displays Christ’s **PAYMENT** for sin! The **CROSS** proves God judges sin!
Anyone who habitually engages in sinful activities is at enmity with the CROSS!

•The **CROSS** stands for **DYING TO SELF!**—Anyone who lives their lives selfishly is at enmity with the **CROSS!**

•The **CROSS** shows **GOD’S PROVISION FOR FORGIVENESS OF SIN!** — Anyone who fails to forgive others as Christ forgave us on the **CROSS** is at enmity with the **CROSS!**

A. The Foes Of The **CROSS** Are Worldly In Their Determination! “... *mind earthly things...*” (Vs 19)

Temporal minded...i.e. They don’t care what God thinks!

1. They have a “*here-and-now-only*” type of thinking!
2. They have a fixation on the earthly—Obsessed with the physical!
3. Their attitude is diametrically opposed to what we read in Colossians 3:1-2,
“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” (Cf. **Philippians 3:20**)

B. The Foes Of The **CROSS** Are Corrupt In Their Depravity!
“... *glory is in their shame...*” (Vs 19)

1. They are proud of what they should be ashamed.
We hear a lot in our day about people being proud in their depravity! But that’s nothing new!

Jeremiah 6:15—“Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the **LORD**.”

1 Corinthians 5:1-2—“It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father’s wife. 2And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.”

2. This world is getting more perverse with each passing day!

- The Sodomites flaunt their sinfulness in the open!
- The Abortionists hold their rallies!
- The Atheists fight for the removal of all religious symbols from public display!

And while all kinds of sinful acts are coming out of the closet, many Christians are retreating into the closet!

3. Some who call themselves Christians boast in the fact that they are under grace and have “*liberty in Christ,*” so they think that they can live in sin!

That is shameful! It is turning the grace of God into lasciviousness! (i.e. “*morally unrestrained.*”)

Are Christians to have moral restraint in their lives! Absolutely! Liberty is not a license to live anyway we want to!

*The Foes Of The Cross Are Worldly In Their Determination!
The Foes Of The Cross Are Corrupt In Their Depravity!*

FRIENDS AND FOES OF THE CROSS
PHILIPPIANS 3:17-21

C. **The Foes Of The CROSS Are Carnal In Their Desires!**
"...*God is their belly...*" The belly is a reference to the seat of carnal affections!
Romans 16:18—"For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."

1. **They make a god of their fleshly appetites!**
(i.e. they are self-indulgent.) They **deify** their love of sensual pleasure—"Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God."
2. **To the "foes" of the cross, the cross does not represent a relationship, but merely a "religion," to benefit them personally.**
(i.e. it is a "What's-In-It-For-Me" Club).
3. **They live for self and self alone!**
They are enemies of the cross because they refuse to deny self and take up their cross and follow Jesus.

The Foes Of The CROSS Are Worldly In Their Determination!
The Foes Of The CROSS Are Corrupt In Their Depravity!
The Foes Of The CROSS Are Carnal In Their Desires!

D. **The Foes Of The CROSS Are Consummated In Their Destruction!**
"...end is destruction...." (Vs. 19)

This is speaking of the destruction of their natural lives!
1 Corinthians 3:17—"If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

Conclusion

Are you a Friend or Foe to the CROSS?

1) **Where is your mind focused?**

FRIENDS AND FOES OF THE CROSS
PHILIPPIANS 3:17-21

2) **What do you glory in?**
Galatians 6:14—"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

1 Corinthians 1:21—"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

1 Corinthians 10:31—"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

3) **What is your purpose in life that others can see?**
Philippians 1:21—"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

The inventor of dynamite was Alfred Nobel. He made a fortune from the manufacture and sale of weapons. One morning in 1888 he awoke to read his own obituary. Now, the newspaper made an error. It was Alfred's brother who had actually died and a French journalist reported the death of the wrong brother.

But it was an eye opener for Alfred because he saw himself as the world saw him—"the dynamite King (the weapon maker), the great industrialist who had made an immense fortune from explosives" (so said the obituary). That—as far as the general public was concerned—was the entire purpose of his life. In the eyes of the public he was only a merchant of death, and for that alone he would be remembered.

As he read his obituary he resolved to make clear to the world the true meaning and purpose of his life. He felt that this could best be done through the final disposition of his fortune. He determined that His last will and testament would be the expression of his life's ideals. And the result was the most valued of prizes given to this day to those who have done most for the cause of world peace—the Nobel Peace Prize.

Have you ever wondered how your obituary would read if it suddenly appeared? What is your life known for? What will you be remembered for?