

“Even the Death of the Cross”

Philippians 2:86

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. *The Text in Context—*

1. Paul writing concerning the humility of heart necessary to maintain the unity essential to the accomplishment of God's purpose in the Philippian church (2:12-16).
2. The example Paul sets before them for emulation is that of Christ (2:5-8).
3. If each member of the local church had the concern that Jesus had for others above Himself, there would be no dissension in the church and the gospel would be preached to the whole world.

B. *The Last Half of Verse Eight Examined—*

1. Paul sees a unique significance in the death of Christ.
2. He writes, “Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”
 - a. The significance is not just that He died.
 - b. Paul found the significance in how he died, “even the death of the cross.”
 - c. “Even” is an adjective used in this sentence much like an intensifying adverb. (It is, as one grammar teacher told me, a “poking” word.)
3. Paul does not develop here the significance which he sees.
 - a. His point is something else, humility of heart.
 - b. This “death of the cross” is expressive of this humility.
 - c. He does not tell them how it is expressive of this humility because he is writing to an audience which understood the point without its being developed further.

C. *The “Death of the Cross” Explored—*

1. The Plan of this study —
 - a. Consider several aspects of the death of the cross.
 - b. Attribute to them their proper significance in light of this context
2. Why this study —
 - a. someone may ask: “You admit Paul did not develop the idea in this text. So, why bother?”
 - b. Because:
 - (1) Paul and other N.T. writers do develop the subject fully elsewhere.

(2) Many present who are unbelieving and must learn these “first things” (I Corinthians 15:1-4) as the Philippians did.

(3) It is always helpful to stir up the minds of the saved by putting them in remembrance (II Peter 1:13-16).

II. DISCUSSION:

A. *The Death of the Cross Was a Divinely Determined Death—*

1. Jesus did not die by mistake or accident (Acts 2:22, 23)
 - a. It was predestined (Ephesians 1:3-7).
 - b. It was foreordained (I Peter 1:18-20).
 - c. God's plan was that Jesus should die in order to save man (Revelation 13:8; 17:8; 21:27).
2. God gradually revealed his plan through His prophets (Acts 13:27, 29)
 - a. Psalms 22:16, 18 (cf. Matthew 27:35; Luke 23:34)
 - b. Psalms 69: 2, 1 (cf. Matthew 27:34, 48)
 - c. Isaiah 53:7-9 (cf. Luke 23:9; Matthew 27:57-60)
 - d. Zechariah 12:10 (cf. John 19:37)
 - e. Psalm 34:20 (cf. John 19:33, 36)
 - f. Psalm 16:9 (cf. John 19:42)
3. Jesus knew it was determined that He should die and taught men so.
 - a. John 2:19, 21
 - b. Matthew 12:39, 40; 16:4
 - c. John 10:16, 17
 - d. John 8:20-25
 - e. Matthew 20:17-19
 - f. Matthew 16:21
 - g. Matthew 17:22-23
 - h. Matthew 26:2
 - i. John 3:14-17
 - j. Luke 24:25-27; 44-46
3. The death of Jesus on the cross established His divinity:
 - a. In that Jesus being fulfilled every prophecy concerning the death of the Messiah, the method of His death is one more proof of His claims to be the Son of God.
 - b. When joined to His resurrection from the dead, it is insurmountable proof.

B. The Death of the Cross Was a Cruel Death—

1. The circumstances of Jesus' death—
 - a. Jesus had been living in anticipation of it (Matthew 26:2).
 - b. He went to the garden in fear of it praying to avoid it (Matthew 14:34-41; Hebrews 5:7; Luke 22:44).
 - c. He was arrested around midnight and kept awake all night (Luke 22:47).
 - d. Taken by a mob to the priests and abused (Matthew 26:67, 68).
 - e. He is sent to Pilate (Luke 23:1-5).
 - f. He is sent to Herod and abused (Luke 23:6-11).
 - g. He is sent back to Pilate and mocked and scourged (Mark 15:16-20).
 - h. He is lead out to be crucified around 6:00 a.m. (John 19:14, 17; Matthew 27:32) so weak he is unable to bear the cross.
 - i. At 9:00 a.m. (Mark 15:25) Jesus is crucified. He hangs there until after 3:00 p.m. (Mark 15:34)
 - j. In the intervening nine hours Jesus is railed against by Roman soldiers, Jews and even the thieves crucified with Him (Mark 15:29-32).
2. Crucifixion was an exceedingly cruel method of execution.
 - a. "Cross," *ISBE* (pp. 761-62).
 - b. "Crucifixion," *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, (p. 279).
 - c. "On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ," *JAMA* (March 21, 1986, Vol. 255, No. 11).
3. Herein lays the "pathos of the cross."
 - a. It is intended to touch the heart, and it does.
 - b. However, we must take care not to make our appeal only to the emotions.
 - c. Rather, the crucifixion was generally used to say something about the man who did it, rather than He who died of it (Acts 2:43; 3:13, 14; 5:28; 7:52; 10:39).

C. The Death of the Cross Was a Cursed Death (Galatians 3:13; Deuteronomy 21:23)

1. Crucifixion is the form of execution under Roman law reserved to those condemned for murder, theft and insurrection.
 - a. Jesus crucified among thieves (Mark 14:27).
 - b. Jesus was crucified rather than Barabbas the rebel (Mark 15:7; John 18:40).
 - c. Jesus was delivered to Pilate because He was a king other than Caesar (Luke 23:3 John 19:12-19).
2. For the Jews crucifixion was a death fitting for the blasphemer (Deuteronomy 21:23: cf. Galatians 3:13).
 - a. Jesus accused of blaspheming because He was the Son of God (Luke 23:70, 71; Mark 14:61-66; Matthew 26:63-66).

- b. For this reason the Jews delivered Him up to be crucified (John 19: 6, 7)

D. The Death of the Cross Was a Forsaken Death—

1. Jesus came to His own and they received Him not (John 1:11; Isaiah 53:3).
 - a. The nation of the Jews (cf. Matthew 21:9; 26:2; 27:25).
 - b. His family (John 7:5; Mark 6:3; John 19:26).
 - c. His disciples (Matthew 26:56).
2. My friend will you forsake Him now?
3. Jesus was forsaken of the Father (Matthew 27:45-46; Psalm 22:1) in His death.
 - a. Not that Jesus was made a sinner for us (cf. Galatians 2:17; II Corinthians 5:21).
 - b. Rather, that God allowed Him to die in our stead (I Peter 2:22, 24).
 - c. It was not that God “could not look on a sinner,” but that God was able to save Him and did not for our sakes (Hebrews 5:7).

E. The Death of the Cross Was an Atoning Death—

1. The death of Jesus is atonement for sin (Isaiah 53).
 - a. God is satisfied, appeased (Isaiah 53:12).
 - b. Propitiated (Romans 3:21-26).
 - c. Sin is expiated (John 1:24).
 - d. The sinner is redeemed or ransomed (I Peter 1:17-21; Matthew 20:28; Acts 20:28).
 - e. Jesus is sacrificed (I Corinthians 5:7).
2. This is the resolution of the sin dilemma (Romans 3:26).
 - a. The Story of the “just king”
 - b. Illustrate “judicial mercy” or clemency.
 - c. God is just and justifier.
3. Jesus died in my place.
 - a. NOT receiving a transfer of the guilt.
 - b. BUT, as my substitute in receiving the penalty.
 - c. His soul (life) was “an offering for sin” with which the Father was “satisfied.”
4. This is the “foolishness” and “stumbling block” of the cross (I Corinthians 1:18-24)
 - a. One liberal wrote, “I cannot believe that God cursed Christ in our stead, or that Christ paid some kind of blood price to satisfy God for the accumulated guilt of mankind.”
 - b. The Scripture still says, “By his stripes we are healed” (I Peter 2:24).
 - c. “By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous (Romans 5:19; Philippians 2:8; Hebrews 5:8, 9).

III. CONCLUSION:

A. The Death of the Cross—

1. A Divinely Determined Death
2. A Cruel Death
3. A Cursed Death
4. A Forsaken Death
5. An Atoning Death

B. Will You Trust in the Death of Jesus?

1. Believe in the power of Jesus' death (Romans 10:9-10; 3:25).
2. Repent of the sin that necessitated Jesus' death (Acts 3:19-23).
3. Confess your faith in the deity and Lordship which Jesus' death proves (Romans 1:4; 10:9-10).
4. Be baptized in water into Jesus' death for the remission of sins (Romans 6:1-11).