

The Cross from Different Viewpoints

Jn 19:16-30

Today's lesson will be a little shorter in order to help facilitate the LTC preview after services and help small groups not get too late of a start.

Next Sunday is Easter. To set the stage for focusing on the resurrection, I want to spend some time looking at the cross today. As we discussed a couple of weeks ago, the resurrection is what give the power to Christianity. The cross, however, give the meaning to Christianity. Without the cross, we can't have the resurrection. Without the resurrection, Jesus was just another great man who died for a cause. But, when you put those 2 things together, you have a Savior, the son of God, who did something incredible for humanity that only God could do.

I want to look at the cross from six different viewpoints to help us see that those who witnessed the event, are very much like us. Each of us may resonate with one of these viewpoints in our spiritual lives.

PRAYER

I. The Viewpoint of Judas – Silver

A. Why did Jesus chose Judas?

1. When you think of all the men that Jesus chose to be his disciples, Judas is one that I have the hardest time understanding.
2. Did Jesus only pick him to fulfill prophecy?
3. Judas wasn't just the betrayer, he was a thief as well!
4. Listen to John 12: John 12:4–6 (ESV) — 4 But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, 5 “Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” 6 He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it.
5. Judas wanted money, he wanted the easy life.
6. If selling out his savior for 30 pieces of silver, got him ahead in life, he was willing to do it.
7. Here's the crazy part. 30 pieces of silver wasn't that much. It was the price you paid for a slave that had been wounded by your ox in the Old Testament.
8. The Sanhedrin probably meant this amount as insult and figured Jesus was worth no more than a slave.
9. John figured out what kind of man Judas was later.
10. I assume he came to this knowledge through the Holy Spirit.
11. Jesus, on the other hand, had the foreknowledge of who Judas was.
12. Yet, he still included him in his inner circle, he still had him be the treasurer of the group.
13. Why?

B. Our lesson

1. As I wrestled with his question, I began to think about the reasons.
2. Maybe Jesus didn't really know what he was? Nope, scripture makes it pretty clear Jesus knew exactly what he was getting into with Judas.
3. So, here is my thinking. We are all in a way Judas.
 - a) Many of us are consumed with our silver.
 - b) We are even willing to steal from God to get ahead a little.
 - c) All of us are betrayers of Jesus.
 - d) Think of all the times you have willfully sinned, turned your back on Jesus, outrightly betrayed him by refusing to acknowledge he is Lord of your life.
4. If Jesus can love and forgive Judas, He can love and forgive me.

II. The Viewpoint of the Pharisees – Silence

A. Don't like the message, kill the messenger

1. It's always been interesting to me that the Pharisee's and Jewish religious leaders couldn't see Jesus for who he really was.
2. He checked all the boxes of the Messiah they had been praying about for ages.
3. He performed miracles, raised the dead, knew the scripture intimately.
4. But somehow, he wasn't measuring up to their idea of what the Messiah was supposed to be.
5. More importantly, he played with their power structure.
6. The people saw him as someone special...and that bothered the religious leaders.
7. It bothered them enough that they wanted to silence him. Kill him.
8. That cross was a victory from their viewpoint; they finally silenced him...or so they thought.

B. Same today

1. Not much has changed over the 2000 years.
2. Rather than seek the truth, people would rather silence Christ.
3. And like in the case of Lazarus anyone who helps his claim to be the Messiah is to be silenced as well.
4. Across the world, you see the efforts to silence Christ and his believers.

III. The Viewpoint of Pilot – Self-preservation

A. Pilot

1. Pilot knew Jesus was innocent. Lk 23 states he told the chief priests he found no guilt in Jesus.
2. When they saw he might waiver, they threatened his political career.
3. When he had to choose between his own welfare and that of Jesus, the choice was easy; Jesus dies.
4. This rabbi of no social standing didn't mean anything to Pilot.
5. He had himself to look out for and if it was at the cost of another dead Jew, so be it.
6. So, for his own self-preservation, he sent Jesus to the cross

IV. The Viewpoint of the Father – Substitution

A. Human to spiritual understanding

1. These men all looked at the cross from a human viewpoint

2. But there is a much higher viewpoint as well. The spiritual one.
3. When God looks at the cross he sees a very different viewpoint than man does.
4. Hebrews 2:9 (ESV) — 9 But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.
5. Paul makes it even more clear in Rom 5:8-10: Romans 5:8–10 (ESV) — 8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son...
6. That cross should have us hanging on it, instead God substituted Jesus for Jim.

B. Understanding the situation

1. I think it's important we understand the situation.
2. Often, we talk about sacrifice to save others.
3. A soldier will fall on a grenade to save his fellow soldiers.
4. A father will step in front of a gun to save his family.
5. Some will even give up their family member's lives to save others.
6. This is deeper than all that.
7. God SUBSTITUTED his son for me.
8. He willingly and knowingly made that decision before I was even aware of the need.
9. Could you imagine telling a judge to execute your child in order to spare the life of the man who murdered your wife or husband? And then set him free!?
10. That is in essence what God did.

V. The viewpoint of Jesus – Submission

A. The good son

1. I always wondered about the story of Abraham and Isaac when the sacrifice was about to happen.
2. Everything about that story shouts that Isaac could easily have escaped his father if he wanted.
3. I believe Isaac submitted to his father and allowed himself to be sacrificed.
4. Jesus was the same way.

5. He could have said no, he could have called 10,000 angels, but he chose submission because he knew it was the only way you and I could be saved from our sins.

6. Philippians 2:8–9 (ESV) — 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,

7. Several times Jesus told his disciples what was about to take place. He knew what was coming.

8. In the garden, he begged God for a different way. But he finished with not my will, but your will be done.

9. He submitted to the cross so I could be saved.

VI. The viewpoint of the Saints – Salvation

A. Back to earth

1. So let's bring this back home. All the way home.

2. Let's look right into our hearts.

3. We can stand here today praising God because of the cross.

4. That instrument of death became our instrument of salvation.

5. 1 Corinthians 1:18–24 (ESV) — 18 For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." 20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. 22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

6. We should view the cross through grateful eyes as our salvation.

B. Obedience to salvation

1. Just as Jesus obeyed God, we need to obey God.

2. He asks for one thing, our hearts.

3. Will you give him your heart after all he has given you?