

MEMORY VERSE: “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

1 Corinthians 1:18, NKJV

LESSON STUDY INTRO

This week we will explore “the message of the cross.”

1. The message of the cross depends... (Sun-Tue)

- The message of the cross is comprehensive.
 - What is the message of the cross? Is it the love, justice and mercy of God? The nature of sin – its penalty, or wages? God’s pardon and forgiveness? The humility of Christ? The answer is Yes to all the above, and so much more!

With our finite comprehension we may consider most earnestly the shame and the glory, the life and the death, the justice and the mercy, that meet in the cross; yet with the utmost stretch of our mental powers we fail to grasp its full significance.... The cross of Christ will be the science and the song of the redeemed through all eternity. GC 651

- Our view of the cross is a matter of perspective (1 Cor. 1:18, 22-24).
 - “What the cross means depends on the way one looks at it.”
Qtlly, Tue, par 1
 - **Foolishness to the Greeks:** While “the Greeks believed that there was need of elevating the human race” (AA 244.2), to suggest that such a base thing as the cross was the means to accomplish it was ridiculous.
 - **A stumbling block to the Jews:** That their King was to be crucified was in itself offensive. Worse than this, however, was the implication that their good works and their genealogy were insufficient to merit salvation, and that they would require such a sacrifice in order to be justified before God (see Gal. 5:11).
 - **Salvation to the believer:** The very thing that was so foolish and/or offensive to some, has become the continued source of joy and rejoicing to those who have found in Christ wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption (see 1 Cor. 1:30).

And as Christ draws them to look upon His cross, to behold Him whom their sins have pierced, the commandment comes home to the conscience. The wickedness of their life, the deep-seated sin of the soul, is revealed to them. They begin to comprehend something of the righteousness of Christ,

and exclaim, “What is sin, that it should require such a sacrifice for the redemption of its victim? Was all this love, all this suffering, all this humiliation, demanded, that we might not perish, but have everlasting life?” SC 27.1

2. Human wisdom cannot save humanity (Mon, Tue)

- The apostle contrasts human wisdom with divine wisdom, pointing out that the wisdom of man has never been able to elevate the race (see 1 Cor. 1:19-21).
 - Subsequently, God chose to demonstrate His wisdom through that considered by the world to be “foolish,” “weak,” “base,” “despised” and utter nothingness, “that no flesh should glory in His presence” (1 Cor. 1:27-29).

Through successive ages of darkness, in the midnight of heathenism, God permitted men to try the experiment of finding out God by their own wisdom, not to demonstrate their inability to his satisfaction, but that men themselves might see that they could not obtain a knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ his Son, [except] through the revelation of His word by the Holy Spirit. When Christ came to the world, the experiment had been fully tried, and the result made it evident that the world by wisdom knew not God. FE 196.3

- “To us who are being saved...” (1 Cor. 1:18).
 - “Paul is saying that we are being saved; that is, we are not saving ourselves.” Q'tly, Tue, last par

3. Christ is the Desire of the ages (Thu)

- Paul presents that, while the Jews request a sign and reject Christ, Christ is *the very sign they seek*; and while the Greeks seek wisdom and reject Christ, He is *the very wisdom they seek* – that Christ is both “the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor. 1:24).

[W]hen a sinner once beholds the love of the Father, as seen in the sacrifice of His Son, and **yields** to the divine influence, a **change of heart** takes place, and **henceforth** Christ is all and in all. AA 245.3 (Q'tly, Fri, last par)

CONCLUSION

To remove the cross from the Christian would be like blotting the sun from the sky. The cross brings us near to God, reconciling us to Him... Without the cross, man could have no union with the Father. On it depends our every hope. From it shines the light of the Saviour's love, and when at the foot of the cross the sinner looks up to the One who died to save him, he may rejoice with fullness of joy, for his sins are pardoned. Kneeling in faith at the cross, he has reached the highest place to which man can attain. Through the cross we learn that the heavenly Father loves us with a love that is infinite. Can we wonder that Paul exclaimed, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ”? AA 209, 210