

THE CROSS HAS CHANGED

Matthew 16:24-25

Introduction: It is said that "time heals all things." It is also known that time can change things as well. What once was unknown is now known. What once was harmful for a person is now considered alright and what once was alright is now harmful. What once could not be done can now be done, etc.

Changes have also come in the Christian World such as preaching techniques, music styles, church service styles, versions of the Bible, and even how people dress to attend church services. What was once considered "normal" has now become old fashioned and changed. There was a time when the Cross was considered sacred, it was what God's Son died on in order that believers might be able to have eternal life through what happened on that cross. Anytime anyone saw a Cross, it was remembered as something Holy. Today, however, a cross can be seen just about anywhere: tattoos, ear rings, rings, necklaces, neckties, motorcycle fenders, car bumpers, bracelets, desk decorations, wall pictures, and carried in purses and pockets. The meaning of the Cross has changed.

I. THE CROSS OF TODAY IS WORLD FRIENDLY

1. The Cross of Jesus was despised, hated and feared by the world in that day. It was thought to be the cruelest way to put a person to death, thus an enemy to man.
 - The Cross of Jesus became a sacred emblem to the persecuted Christian as it represented the story of God's great love, and Jesus' great sacrifice for believers.
 - The cross of today does not represent death nor cruelty. It does not really represent anything sacred or holy. It is just a source of fun, enjoyment and human expression with no meaning at all.
 - Both Christians and non christians wear the cross. It is worn in worship services and it is worn in bars. It is worn where Christ is respected and it is worn where the Name of Christ is taken in profanity.
 - The cross of today is not like the Cross of Christ that started the Church.

II. THE CROSS OF TODAY IS EASIER

1. The cross of today represents a new and very different approach to Godly things:
 - One doesn't have to surrender the old way of life, before receiving the "new life."
 - One lives comfortable with both life styles, using the similarities to bond them together.
 - No unpleasant demands are made but offers the same things as the world does but on a much "higher level."
 - There is really no difference between what the world offers and the Gospel offers, only the Gospel version seems to be some better.

III. THE CROSS OF TODAY IS RATHER PLEASANT

1. The cross of today does not "slay" anybody, it rather "redirects:"
 - It leads to a cleaner, more enjoyable lifestyle, thus saving one's "self-respect."
 - It says to the "know it all," "Come and lead for Christ."
 - It says to the bragging one, "Come and brag and boast in the Lord."
 - It says to the "life-enjoyer," "Come and enjoy the thrill of Christian fellowship."

- The cross of today leans to human wants and reasoning, making it seem to be sincere but it's "sincerity" is not God's sincerity.
- The cross of today is in no way the same as the Cross of Jesus.

IV. THE CROSS OF CHRIST WAS/IS THE SYMBOL OF DEATH

1. The cross of Christ stood for an abrupt and violent end to living.
 - No life was going to be "redirected."
 - There was no compromise, no modification, nothing spared, it was the end.
2. The Cross of Christ represents what every human being deserves and also the great, unlimited love of God in action and how far He has gone to redeem the believer.
3. The Cross of Christ demands repentance and belief, a total forsaking of sins and self.
 - There are no deals or terms with God but total submission before God.
4. Sorry, but the cross seen around today is just not the Cross of Christ.

CONCLUSION:

1. Probably most have not made the connection of the crosses seen today and the Cross of Jesus being so different. "A cross is a cross." For the unbeliever that is probably true as the real meaning behind the cross of today is the Cross of Jesus and he/she simply does not know the truth. Satan is a great duplicator of the things of God deceiving all he can.
2. Think about it, just how important is a Cross today?
3. Hopefully when a christian wears a Cross, it will be worn proudly, respectfully and in memory of what it really stands for.
4. Give it some thought, what does the Cross mean to you?