

## THE CROSS HAS LOST ITS MEANING

### 1 Corinthians 1:17

**Introduction:** People wear little silver, gold, jeweled crosses on chains, stuck in their ears, even noses, carry them in their purses, pockets, stuck on ties and coat lapels and dresses. Some even have a cross tattooed on their body somewhere. Crosses are used in vampire movies, in demon possessed movies, painted on fenders of cars and trucks, even on airplanes. Some hang them from the wall, some have them as little statues on shelves some put them into little containers, such as bottles. It is obvious that the cross that Jesus Christ died on and the reason He died has lost it's true, original meaning.

What if Churches replaced the beautiful crosses they have on their church steeples, Church yards, Church stained glass windows, hanging over the baptistry, over the pulpit, etc., with a simple, rugged cross made of black timbers and crude nails driven into it? What if all the "beautiful" jewelry crosses were replaced with simple wooden crosses? How would people react? People have become accustomed to the "cross" as something beautiful and a thing of decoration. The cross of Jesus Christ has lost its meaning.

### I. THE REASON FOR THE CROSS LOSING ITS MEANING

1. The story is told of three people who went to a Church for help one Sunday morning.
  - A businessman who had lost his job and was thinking about suicide.
  - A young man who had become addicted to drugs and was planning on stealing to get money to buy more drugs.
  - A young woman who loved life so much that she was being tempted to go from the path of virtue onto the path of prostitution.

So what happened during that worship service that these three went to for help?

  - The choir sang a meaningless anthem.
  - The preacher preached a sermon on whether other planets were inhabited or not.

Result: The business man went from Church and killed himself.

  - The young man stole money, was caught and was sent to prison.
  - The young woman went out to become a prostitute.
2. The Cross has lost it's meaning because of the desire of Churches to please people.
  - ***Galatians 5:11*** - The Jews wanted Paul's preaching of the Cross to include the law. It was alright to preach about the crucifixion, IF he included the need for circumcision.
  - Paul had other ideas about that for he shouted: ***"... God forbid that I should glory save in the cross. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creature..."***
3. The Cross has lost it's meaning because it has been disguised by Christians.
  - ***Philippians 3:18***
  - The story is told of a ragged, street-type person attending a revival service and when there was a time for testimonies, he stood and told of attending that very same Church as a boy. His father was an elder in the Church. There were seven boys in a Sunday School class who really liked their lady teacher and she would take them to her house on Sunday afternoons and show them card tricks and other worldly things. The boys began to play cards and got into gambling and after a while left the Sunday School class completely. Years passed

and two of those boys were put to death by the State, three were put in prison and the authorities were looking for him (the one giving the testimony) and the other of the original seven Sunday School Class boys. Their Sunday School teacher was in disguise and changed the meaning of the cross of Jesus Christ.

## II. IT IS TERRIBLY WRONG FOR A CHRISTIAN TO CAUSE THE CROSS TO LOSE MEANING

1. The Cross is the power of God.  
- *1 Corinthians 1:18*
2. People want a religion without a redeemer - a Savior without a sacrifice - a truth without a tree (cross).
3. The Cross of Jesus is the only way to peace.
  - The story is told of a man being tried on a very serious charge. While the lawyer argued his case, the man remained calm. The jury returned a verdict of guilty, still the man remained calm. The judge passed sentence and still the man remained calm. Then the man quietly produced a pardon from the Governor. That is the secret of peace.
  - The heart of peace is not wealth or health or possessions. The heart of peace lies with the "pardon" the believer receives from Jesus Christ.
4. The Cross is the only way of Salvation.
  - "But never a way will reach the goal, save the way God has given.  
For the blood-red road of the cross of Christ is the only road to heaven."
5. During one of the wars, a city was being bombed and a building that had been converted to a hospital was being hit with bombs until someone tore up a blood-stained sheet and nailed it to the roof. The bombing stopped. *"...when I see the blood, I will pass over you..."*

## III. WHAT JESUS SAYS ABOUT THE CROSS (*Mark 10:21*)

1. Jesus said to take up the cross - don't wear it, don't bottle it, don't put it on a shelf, don't tattoo it on your body, don't put it in your pocket.
2. Jesus said to lift up the cross - don't hide it, don't make it a "toy" or a piece of jewelry.  
- *"...and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me..."*
3. A long time ago Jesus Christ was lifted up by a preacher and Spurgeon was drawn to Christ.
  - Jesus Christ was lifted up by a country preacher and George W. Truett was drawn to Christ.
  - Jesus Christ was lifted up by a teacher and Scarborough was drawn to Christ.
4. A preacher, a teacher, an evangelist, personal worker, any Christian is in his/her right position when he/she is lifting Jesus Christ up.

5. Jesus also said for us to "look up."
  - We have no message for the self-righteous Pharisee who was glad he was not like other men. We have no message for the thief who, while on a cross beside Jesus, mocked Him, saying "*...if you be the Son, come down and take us with you...*"

## CONCLUSION:

1. Jesus Christ with His cross builds the worlds greatest bridge - He bridges people to God.
2. There are many wonderful, very expensive, very complicated bridges in our world that millions cross every year, but they pale in comparison to the costliness of the bridge that spanned the mighty gulf at Calvary. The Cross of Jesus Christ.
3. "*Mercy there was great and grace was free - Pardon there was multiplied to me...*"
4. From this moment on to the end of your life, don't ever be guilty of making "light" of the cross of Jesus Christ.