

THE CROSS-LESS GOSPEL THAT DOES NOT REDEEM AND PRODUCES A CRISIS OF BELIEF

"God's Holiness makes the Cross Necessary!"

The Word of God is all about the fullness of LIFE, rooted and fully wrapped in love, through the objective vehicle of the Cross—Joyful and resilient LIFE from God, who never gives up in **loving** His most precious creation—**you and me!!**

Yet God has not changed the penalty or the consequence of our sin!! Sin is DEATH!! The Church in America has not taken God's Holiness seriously. We have taken His Great Mercy, Great Power and Sufficient Grace very, very lightly. Neither God nor His Word has changed. As He said to the nation of Israel in Ezekiel 36, so too have we *profaned His holy name among the nations.* *"Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, BUT FOR THE SAKE OF MY HOLY NAME, which you have profaned among the nations. I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Sovereign LORD, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes'" (Ezekiel 36: 22-23).*

Dr. Henry Blackaby, in his book titled Experiencing the Cross, says, "Our Sin against God, our enmity against Him, required nothing less than the cross...Jesus Himself knew and accepted this divine necessity of the cross. In the cross, therefore, He made complete and total provision for every aspect of what sin has done or ever could do."

You can't have Christ without the Cross!

God makes it crystal clear to us from the very beginning, in His Word, that He is Holy. He cannot be other than Holy. Therefore He not only demands that we become holy (hence our desperate need for Jesus Christ and the cross), but He also desires and demands our uninterrupted worship in our relationship to Him, in the context of His Holiness, so He will always receive the fullness of His glory through us. God has made every provision, through the clear revelation of His written and Incarnate Word (John 1:1-5, 9-14), to make sure that His people do not worship Him (The True and Only God) in the wrong way. **If so, one is committing the worst form of idolatry!!**

In other words, the worst form of idolatry is to worship the True God in the wrong way—especially when we know not to do it. That is exactly what Aaron's two sons—Priests—Nadab and Abihu did!! The Word of God says that each *"took their censers, put fire in them and added incense, and they offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, CONTRARY TO HIS COMMAND. So fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. Moses then said to Aaron, 'Among those who approach me I will show myself holy; in the sight of all the people I will be honored.'" (Leviticus 10:1-3).* The same happened to Uzzah. God *"struck him down because he had put his hand on the ark. So he died there before God,"* neglecting the divine directive that the ark, equipped with rings and poles, is to be carried on the shoulders of priests. King David DID NOT CONSULT WITH GOD ABOUT THE PROPER ORDER of worshipping God—David consulted with the wrong people (I Chronicles 13: 1-4, 9-12; 15: 1-13). **There are many such people in the Body of Christ pretending to be Christians** (preachers—pastors and teachers), worshipping a cross-less Jesus and proclaiming a cross-less gospel with no power to redeem nor change anybody. Many are playing the pretending game of the synthetic gospel with, sometimes, a synthetic cross that does not call anyone to holiness or to suffering for Christ's sake.

The Word of God is very compelling with a very established (not to be changed by culture nor church politics), simple but yet profound, direct, clear, loving and focused message on the One Nail approach with the One Belief that really matters, the message of the Cross—Jesus Christ and Him crucified (I Corinthians 1:18; 22). He is the One who said: *"I am the resurrection and the LIFE. He who believes in me will LIVE.....AND WHOEVER LIVES AND BELIEVES IN ME WILL NEVER DIE. DO YOU BELIEVE THIS?" (John 11: 25-26---Notice in John 11 Jesus' clear and exclusive*

declaration of life because He is the Messiah!!). Jesus also declares Himself as "*THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE. No one comes to the Father except through me*" (John 14:6).

Jesus wants to make sure that no one will create for one's self a Crisis of Belief by believing, with a misdirected faith, other types of messages that may be much more appealing for immediate, apparent and satisfying human results, by following steps that will not include the cross, and therefore live in a state of great confusion, fear and uncertainty, trying to find help, and perhaps some good, from within, with no success. This lack of success is leading many within the Church to great disappointments and total despair **BECAUSE OF THE ERRONEOUS PROCLAMATION OF A CROSS-LESS GOSPEL THAT DOES NOT REDEEM AND WHICH HAS PRODUCED THIS CRISIS OF BELIEF**. For our Faith to work, it must be in total and complete sync with what God has prescribed and given for us to believe.

The Word of God reveals LIFE for our present and eternal benefit and JOY in the context of the relationship that matters the most. The One Who Gives Life for relationships to be healthy and not self-centered (Life's only Purpose—how to Experience and Live a fulfilling LIFE that counts for now and for eternity), Jesus, was Nailed to the Cross. The Cross became Jesus' exclusive vehicle for our payment to provide us WITH LIFE, abundant life that we can savor and enjoy today (John 10:10b). **The Cross must then become our exclusive One Nail approach** and vehicle FOR LIFE, as we confess with our mouth and BELIEVE in our hearts that God raised His Only Son Jesus Christ from the dead (Romans 10: 9-10)!

Life apart from the Cross is no Life at all!

*"If we are united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our OLD self was crucified with him, so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin--because anyone who has died has been freed from sin---Now if we died with Christ, we **BELIEVE that we will also live with him.** ; For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.; Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ...For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to **believe** on him, but also to suffer for him. ; ...as you hold out the word of life... ; I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his suffering, becoming like him in his death. ; Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you...many live as enemies of the cross of Christ **Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their MIND is on earthy things.**" (Romans 6:5-8; Philippians 1:21, 27, 29; 2:16; 3:10, 17-19).*

The presentation and proclamation of the Glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ is sacred. Those of us who have been called to preach the Gospel must do it as *Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us* (II Corinthians 5: 20). We must include in our message not only the real immediate and eternal benefits we are experiencing of total re-birth in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17) -- such as objective peace, joy, and forgiveness, the eternal security for a Christian for now and into eternity, humility, and love, **new attitudes towards others through Jesus Christ** that cannot and must not be detached from the Cross nor His redemptive sinless blood, nor His resurrection which defeated death for ever! But also, with clarity and much integrity, the **cost of discipleship and a Cross-like type of living that will follow Jesus Christ's example and clear directive when He said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me...And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple"** (Luke 9:23, 14:27).

A disciple of Jesus Christ is one who cherishes and lives out the Cross at all times! The Cross becomes the disciple's **exclusive identity. Everything the disciples does flows out of what the disciple has become in Christ through the vehicle of the Cross, as the disciple becomes Jesus Christ to humanity for God's glory because God is Holy!! COUNT IT ALL JOY!** (James 1:2) For a disciple of Jesus Christ, suffering for Christ is the highest honor and privilege, regardless of the consequences. One serves out of duty and gratitude, because one knows that one has been chosen by God (without one's help, contribution nor cooperation!). He has given us

his grace to repent from our sins and experience total forgiveness. We have been appointed by God to produce much fruit that will remain, which can only occur through His empowering in order that one's loving relationship with God will be in total sync and in total dependence on God (John 15:16).

A disciple of Jesus Christ is one who follows and obeys unconditionally **all** of Jesus' teachings just as Jesus obeyed His Father when He was presented with our bill for our sins, in the Garden of Gethsemane, though His soul became overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. His three most beloved disciples, Peter, James and John, could not even keep watch nor pray for one hour – (Matthew 26: 36-39). Jesus clearly lived out all that He is prescribing for our good in His Word, so we can relate to Our Father just like He does, without sin. Jesus gives us a living, eternal hope that does not disappoint (Romans 5:5) for each of us to embrace, understand (II Corinthians 1:13) and follow, with the help of the Holy Spirit who illumines one's mind and opens one's eyes of the heart that one may *know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints and his incomparably great power for us who believe* (I Corinthians 2:14 and Ephesians 1:18-20).

A disciple of Jesus Christ is one who *abides* in Him, being totally convinced that without Jesus one can do nothing (John 15:5). Knowing that Jesus is the vine, and each of us are the branches, **we are to serve Jesus without complaining or arguing** (Philippians 2:12-13), shining like a star to the One Standard, God's uncompromising Holiness.

Therefore, He reminds us that He wants for us to be in total sync with Him by continuing to work out our own salvation, which He provided through Christ on the Cross, with fear and trembling. He reminds us again that He is Holy, "*for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose*" (Philippians 2:12-13). **Notice the absolute sovereignty of God at work and His pure and good intentions toward us; He does it all yet invites us to participate in His complete and finished work**, not doing our own flips on the trapeze, like Aaron's sons did, but only doing the flips prescribed by Him. In this way, He will always be able to hold us real tight, without us falling, because He is not going to jump the fence of His Holiness with us nor for us. He is Holy!!!

Being a disciple of Jesus Christ is not recommended for Christians who are namby-pamby, lily-livered scaredy cats, subject to the heebie-jeebies, waffling, episodes of the twitters, or coming apart at the seams.

As I bring this very vital and essential devotional—sermonette—to a conclusion, I want to encourage you and help you be now and for ever in total and precise sync, in your relationship, with our loving Heavenly God and Father, our Creator, so you will never defend His Holy name again by sinning against Him. **He can only hold you when you follow His Holy instructions.** He requires your total and uncompromised obedience!! **Take God's Holiness very seriously, please!!** The word "Father" appears 1,180 in the Scriptures--God truly desires to be your Father for ever, starting right now. His way, not your way!! As we saw earlier, Dr. Blackaby wants for us to see that we sometimes overlook the activity of God the Father in our salvation. But the whole plan and purpose and implementation of our ONE TIME DELIVERANCE FROM SIN is the work of the Father, coming straight from His heart. Always in Scripture, it is the Father who purposes, plans and initiates.

It is my prayer for you that today you will allow Jesus to write the "TATOOS" of His commandments, with His precious and sinless blood, still fresh at the foot of the cross, personally with His Hand, in your heart (Hebrews 10: 16) and that you will have them also in your mind, so you will never believe again the lies of the devil and thus sin against God's Holiness -- ever again, even after 20 years of great victories over sin as was the case with Solomon (you may want to read about Solomon who became a fool after great victories and success which included the completion of God's Temple in Jerusalem!). The writer to the Hebrews calls us with a sense of urgency to "*throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race* (please remember that this race requires endurance because it is a

marathon!) *marked out for us*" (it is not up to us to change the path for the race nor the direction of the race -- God has already established it, PERIOD, END OF DISCUSSION!) by "*fixing our eyes* (EXCLUSIVELY I ADD) *on Jesus, the author and Perfecter of our Faith, who for the JOY set before Him* (YOU AND I, WOW!) *endured the Cross* (OUR CROSS)..." (Hebrews 12:1-2)

I want to help you with solid biblical truth that is practical for you, so you will never again listen to the whisper of the devil, who for sure **does not love you**. Therefore a disciple of Jesus Christ positions one's self with permanency at the cross ONLY, where one will always find courage and much discernment, prudence and wisdom to do *only* what is right in the eyes of the LORD, **never forgetting that the main thing God wants for us to know is that He is HOLY and that He loves us in the context of His Holiness!!** At the Cross, and through the Cross, all of God's promises have been fulfilled in Christ Jesus for God's glory and our joyful benefit! Jesus has provided for us a complete salvation so you do not have to keep falling.

Stop doing your own unauthorized flips that will always put you out of sync with God and therefore, at minimum, will steal your joy. **God is so Holy that He never needs to call a meeting to revise His plan. He does not need to discuss His operations in a committee.** He is never wrong. He has taken care of all of our needs thru the Cross. It is up to you to maintain yourself in sync with God by embracing the Cross, which reminds us that because God is Holy and God is Love, He dealt radically with our sin through the Cross. Jesus was bruised and crushed (Isaiah 53:4-5) because of the loving purpose of God. This suffering is what creates the opportunity and occasion for you and for me to be forgiven. To be a Christian is to be forgiven. To be a Christian requires that you and I live by FAITH in the complete and finished work of Christ, purposed by the Father, on the Cross (Hebrews 7:22-28).

You cannot and will never be able to control the consequences of your sin by removing the Cross. The cross-less gospel does not work, it is powerless. You cannot have victory over sin apart from Christ and the Cross!! Take your position at the Cross and **do not ever leave your position again!!!**

We must not surrender to the devil any of the territory Jesus conquered for each of us through His atoning sacrifice on the Cross!! God will always keep all of His promises.

But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved (Hebrews 10:39). *Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God* (II Corinthians 7:1).

BE HOLY!

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*Written by Manny Mill, Executive Director
Koinonia House® National Ministries
www.koinoniahouse.org*