

Morning Thoughts: Faithful Prayer

“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 (NIV84)

Apart from Christianity, Jesus' journey to the cross would seem to be of little importance – 2000 years ago a man was arrested, put on trial, and executed by his fellow Jews. How does that hold any meaning for me? Why should I care about this man named Jesus? While many look at the cross in this way, Paul writes that the message of the cross is not a message of foolishness or mediocrity, but a message of strength and power. Through the cross, God displays the immense the power to save us from sin's penalties, as well as the power to set us free from sin's control over our lives.

The Power to Save (2 Corinthians 5:16-21)

Primarily, the power of the cross is seen in that Jesus' death on the cross has completely saved us from the penalty of our sins. In our natural selves, we are all lost without God, and the many things we've done against him have earned us death (Romans 6:23). With the penalty of our sin hanging over our heads, God knew he had to provide a sacrifice that would take our place – Jesus. What an amazing display of God's power! Satan, sin, and death have no power over God. The sacrifice of his son shows that God is more powerful than the forces of hell, and we must see this power as we look at the cross.

Q: Take a moment to describe your life before meeting God. What sins did/do you typically struggle with throughout the week?

Q: How do you feel knowing God has saved you from the penalty of those sins?

The Power to Set Us Free (Romans 6:17-19)

Not only does the death of Jesus save us from the consequence of death, but it also gives us freedom from the control that sin can have over our lives. The scripture above in Romans 6 explains that without God, we are enslaved by our sin. This is a scary concept! Satan has us under his control if we are not living for God, and many of us have experienced this in our own lives – bad habits we can't seem to shake, temptations we've tried to overcome but seem to just stick around. The fact is that we cannot be set free from our slavery to sin without the cross. With the freedom God offers also comes an expectation – that once we are set free from the control of sin, we must instead be slaves to righteousness.

Q: How have you seen the control of sin over your own life? Are you grateful to God that he has provided a way for you to be freed from that burden?

Q: How are you doing in being a “slave to righteousness?” What area do you need to grow in to become a better servant of Christ?

Focus for the Day:

Take more time this week to study out the cross in the gospels