

sensational and as spectacular as some things we hear preached about. To many people, the preaching of the cross is just "plain vanilla," and they seek something more spirited and scintillating. But to those who are called, it is the power of God. Read 1 Corinthians 1:18: "For the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God."

My friend, have you rejected the grace of God, resisted His calling, and are you still living in sin, apart from Him? I feel that you believe in Him and the atonement of the blood of the cross, or you would not have heard me this far. Then why not, obey Him, be baptized with Him into His death. Be buried with Him and raised with Him to

walk in newness of life. Time is very fleeting! Don't procrastinate.

May I stress, to each one in our listening audience, Christ died for your sins. It is true that He died for the sins of the world, but the important thing is that He died for YOU. It was our sins that brought about His death. I care not what your sins may be, how heavy they hang on your conscience, or how light they may be in your estimate. By God's grace, He made forgiveness of all that possible by the death of His Son on the cross.

He asks that you believe in Him and His redemptive work, that you by the obedience of baptism reenact His death, burial and resurrection. He will set you free from all guilt. Baptism is the very act that

puts you into the body of Christ. Will you not place your faith and confidence in Christ; repent or turn from your sins; confess your faith in Him as God's Son; and then be baptized into the body of Christ. The Father will then add you to His family. ~

Radio address by Jack Thompson based on material by Mack Lyon

1 Corinthians 1:18:

"For the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God."

We meet on James M Harvell Rd next to the public library in Navarre.
Call for directions and more information
(850) 939-8109

Navarre church of Christ
8490 James M Harvell Rd
Navarre, FL 32566

Place
Stamp
Here

Assembly Schedule
Sunday

Bible Class for all ages ___ 9:00 AM
Morning Worship Service ___ 10:00 AM
Evening Worship Service ___ 6:00 PM

Wednesday
Bible Class for all ages ___ 7:00 PM

**VISITORS ARE
WELCOME!**

This entire publication and previous issues are available online at navarrechurchofchrist.net along with some more useful information

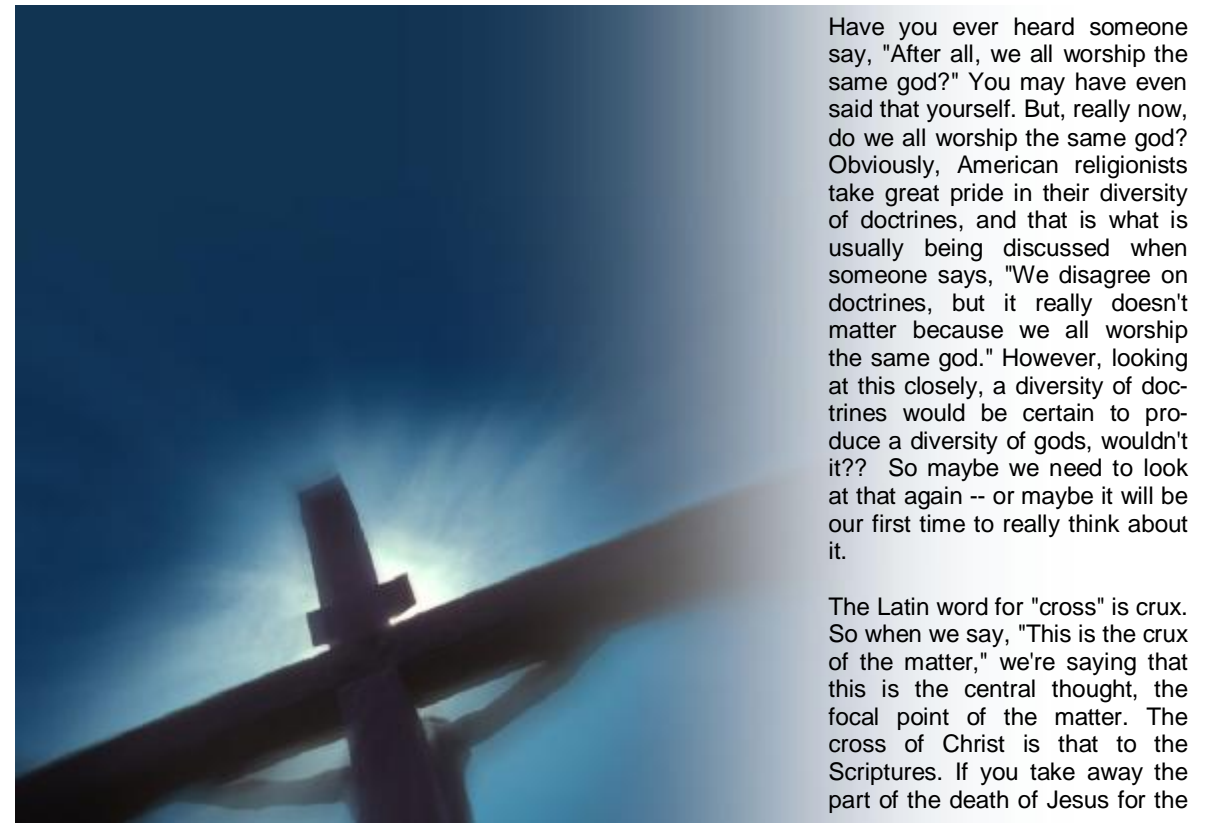
For a free Bible correspondence course by mail, call us.

NAVARRE MESSENGER

Volume 4 Issue 27

July 26, 2009

The Heart of Christianity



Have you ever heard someone say, "After all, we all worship the same god?" You may have even said that yourself. But, really now, do we all worship the same god? Obviously, American religionists take great pride in their diversity of doctrines, and that is what is usually being discussed when someone says, "We disagree on doctrines, but it really doesn't matter because we all worship the same god." However, looking at this closely, a diversity of doctrines would be certain to produce a diversity of gods, wouldn't it?? So maybe we need to look at that again -- or maybe it will be our first time to really think about it.

The Latin word for "cross" is crux. So when we say, "This is the crux of the matter," we're saying that this is the central thought, the focal point of the matter. The cross of Christ is that to the Scriptures. If you take away the part of the death of Jesus for the

sins of the world, you have no story in the Bible.

In all the hype and sensationalism of modern religion, a stranger to the gospel might find it difficult to determine what Christianity is all about. From listening to some preaching and teaching, he could get the idea that the heart of it all is physical healings and material prosperity. From others he might get the impression that Christianity is one continual, hilarious experience with never a care or a sigh. From just looking around, he might get the idea that Christianity consists of the erection and maintenance of beautiful cathedrals and magnificent halls of worship. My friend, what is your conception of Christianity??

The heart and soul of Christianity is the death of Christ for our sins, His burial and resurrection. Without this as the focal point of all the church's functions, such activities are no more than just that -- activities.

The death of Christ on the cross gives purpose to the very existence of the church and every act of the Christian's faith. Without it, the songs we sing, the prayers we pray, the worship we offer, the hope which we embrace, and the sermons we preach would be without meaning.

Whatever else may be the subject on which we preach, such as repentance, service, baptism, sacrifice, happiness -- whatever it is -- Christ and Him crucified MUST be at the center of it to give it meaning. We must not stray from the cross in our faith and in our teaching.

From a purely human point of

view the cross is an enigma. It's the mystery of the ages. There is really no valid explanation for it. John 1:11, tells us Jesus "came to His own and those who were His own received Him not." What a contradiction. He was rejected, condemned and crucified by His very own people to whom He came to minister.

Peter states, "He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him" (Acts 10:38). Was it for the good He did that they crucified Him? He himself once asked them, "Many good works have I showed you from my Father: for which of those works do ye stone me?" (John 10:32). Pilate asked, "What evil hath He done?" Why would they crucify Him? They had no answer.

Matthew tells us in his account of the crucifixion that Pilate "knew that for envy they had delivered Him" to be crucified (Matthew 27:17). Oh, the evil that jealousy and envy bring about. From an envious and jealous and spiteful heart comes all kinds of inhumanities to man.

Peter told the Jews who had part in the vile deed, it was "through ignorance that ye did it" (Acts 3:17). Remember, also, that Jesus prayed for them while He was on the cross, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). They could have known. They should have known. They had the Scriptures. But, they chose not to know.

Hatred played a part in His crucifixion. Jesus stated, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin. He that

hateth Me hateth my Father also...They have hated me without a cause" (John 15:22-25).

Prejudice was also a contributing factor. Jesus once said to them that their prophets had spoken of them saying, "This people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matthew 13:15). They were satisfied with their religious traditions and they were not about to hear anything Christ or anyone else had to say. Prejudice is bad. Racial prejudice! Social prejudice! Economic prejudice! Religious prejudice! It is all ugly and bad. It certainly played a part in our Lord's crucifixion.

Greed was also present, the love of money. Judas, a familiar friend who had been with Jesus for three years accepted the paltry sum of thirty pieces of silver to betray him. Others have sold him, or His cause for the gain of material things. We have even heard of people who sell their children for money.

All of these things contributed to the terrible deed: envy, ignorance, hatred, prejudice, and greed. These are some of the human factors which constituted the enigma. Yet, what was really behind it all?

It was the grace and the love and goodness of a loving Father. Did not "God so love the world that He gave His only begotten son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). The scrip-

ture says, "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so then death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Romans 5:12). The justice of God demands under the law of God that the judgment be passed on all men. But the grace and the love of God prevailed. God has said, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:20). And again, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Yet, He loved us all so much that He gave His only begotten Son to die on the cross, so we won't have to die an eternal death in a devil's hell.

That is what the cross is all about. The Word of God says that Jesus "tasted death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9). "He died for our sins" (1 Corinthians 15:1-3). We are redeemed by His blood, as a lamb slain "from the foundation of the world" (1 Peter 1:18).

Christ, in His death, brought redemption and reconciliation and peace with God, the Father. Through His resurrection He also conquered death and brought life and immortality to light. In His death, burial and resurrection, Jesus overcame physical and spiritual death. This, my friend, is the crux of Christianity. It is the story of the cross. It is the power and the wisdom of God. That is why Paul would write to the Corinthian Christians, "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received. How that Christ died for our sins

according to the scriptures; and that He was buried, and the He rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

That is the divine element in the death of Christ. It was no accident, to be sure. Envy, ignorance, hatred, prejudice, and greed crucified Him. Those who were involved did so by their own volition and their own free will. Yet, Peter told the Jews, "Him, being delivered by the determinant counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2:23). It all happened according to the determination and foreknowledge of God.

There are untold millions who believe in the historical Jesus. I mean by this, they believe He lived and died; He truly existed. But, that isn't enough. There are many others who believe in the redemptive plan of God in the crucifixion of Christ. But, to believe in it isn't enough to be saved by it. Paul makes that sufficiently clear in chapter six of the Roman letter: "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

The heart of Christianity is the cross. Baptism has meaning only when it is viewed in the light of the cross. Being a Christian has no meaning except for the cross. We must never wander very far from the cross-- in our faith, in our worship, in our living, in our preaching. Now, that is not as

