God's Master Weapon

The Cross deals with all the effects of 'the Fall' in the human race. That is why Satan is making great efforts today to induce people to treat the whole story of what happened in the Garden of Eden as merely a fable.

What has been the result of this in the lives of all people? The result is to assert our wills in direct disobedience to the expressed will of God with the result that:

- We are separated from God.
- We are sinful in nature and conduct.
- The outcome is death, darkness and falsehood.
- There is failure and weakness in our service.
- God is dethroned as supreme in and through the people in the world.
- We see the supremacy of Satan as god and prince of this world.
- The world is engulfed in pain, sorrow, war, cruelty, injustice, bondage and many other evils.

These are some of the fruits of that great tragedy in Eden. The Cross is God's way of reversing the problem and beginning to make all things new. Let's remind ourselves how He accomplishes it.

The Cross is God's <u>response</u> to our sin in Eden. (Gen. 3:16 and 1 Cor. 1:19)

Adam was the divinely appointed head of the human race. Satan came and Eve, whose mind he poisoned and whose loyalty to God he undermined, caused Adam to fall from his position. The Garden of Eden was such a lovely plan of God for mankind. It meant perfect love, great understanding, happy and holy friendship with God the Creator – God and us on the very best of terms.

Then Satan came with a very definite purpose. Man had received from God dominion over the world. Satan set himself to capture that dominion from Adam and gain control of the world for himself so he could gain control of its government and its gods in worship. Through lies and deception he succeeded. But just then, just at the moment of his victory, God was preparing His great masterstroke.

In the place of man's terrible defeat, God gave the promise of another Adam who would succeed. He would be a man born of a woman whose obedience would foil Satan's plan and send him to the abyss. Satan brought sin into man's life and that sin brought us a Saviour through whose strong death sin has been dealt with. Satan cause death to invade the life of mankind and the death of the Lord Jesus has destroyed him who had the power of death. Satan made an utter failure of the old creation. Through the new head, the Lord Jesus, a new creation has been born that has yet to bring God's plan to complete success.

Satan hates the Cross! He seeks to discourage any who speak about the Cross. He hates all preaching that proclaims the finished work of the Son of God because the working out of its purpose hits him too hard. So his most determined efforts are exerted to hide the Cross and keep it out of sermons, hymns, books and all conversations. Sadly, he is largely gaining his point. But God's time is coming. The very great victory of the Lord Jesus that defeated Satan at the Cross is at hand.

The Cross is God's <u>power</u> to save people. (1 Cor. 1:8)

It is a fact borne out in practical experience that whenever someone awakens to a sense of sin and discovers the atoning work of the Lord Jesus, that is the place where he finds rest and hope, forgiveness and reconciliation and cleansing. Each conversion proves the truth of the Fall and the desperate need for forgiveness and cleansing through the power of the Lord Jesus. It also demonstrates the coming demise of Satan and all his forces.

The Salvation of God comes in three ways:

- **By the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus on the Cross**.

  That sacrifice was for our sins. The Lord Jesus died in our place. The one fact that will bring life to your dead spirit, peace to your restless heart, cleansing from a guilty conscience and strength to your week nature is the fact that on the Cross the Son of God took your place and bore the penalty and curse of your sin. He dealt with it completely, satisfying God's claim and He is God's offer to you – a perfect Saviour through whom you can have peace with God, the forgiveness of sin and power in life. But this isn't all that is meant by salvation.

- **Salvation comes by union.** In Rom. 6:6 we see God's Master plan in operation. The Lord Jesus took the 'old man' (in us) – the Adam-nature – to the Cross with Him so that each one of us might have the option of leaving the old race and breaking away from the old head – the first Adam – to begin again in the Lord Jesus as a new creation. This is the answer of the Lord Jesus to Satan! The Lord Jesus dealt with the source of sin and the moment we accept Him as Saviour, by faith and on the authority of God's Word, we enter into union with Him.

  As we yield our lives to the Holy Spirit, we begin to find that this union means 'Christ in you'! Christ in us can enable us to do what we could never do by ourselves and be what we could never be by our own exertions. He can make us victorious where we were defeated and true and pure where we have failed.

  It isn't faith that saves us. It is the living Lord Jesus. Not all the creeds in the world can give you the power not to sin. What you need is the living Lord Jesus in you. Salvation also incorporates victory over the self-life which is such a trouble to us. As the Lord Jesus enters in and lives His life through us, His power is there to overcome the downward drag of sin.

  The difference between our belief in the Lord Jesus and every other world religion is that the Cross alone deals with the source of our trouble and weakness. Other belief systems result in darkness, deception, the growth of sin and the increase of fleshly passions. They have no Cross and no Saviour. Only the Lord Jesus can give us power to receive a new nature, possess a new life and find ourselves triumphant over things that have held us captive. Why is this so? At conversion every man and woman receives the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- **Salvation comes through victory in the practical things of life**. (Eph. 6:2, 16) Victory becomes our experience when we put into practice what God has provided for us. ***"Take the whole armour of God".*** (Eph. 6:11-13) We must take hold of the armour and 'use' it in the next temptation. We must face Satan and his demon forces with the Cross and as we do so, claim for ourselves the protection of the precious blood of Jesus. So let us stand against his schemes in spirit and will, trusting the Holy Spirit to make the power of Jesus' victory real in our situation. Let us meet each temptation from behind the Cross and believe God will give us grace to overcome it.

The Cross is God's <u>master power</u> for transition in our lives.

It makes two transitions possible:

- **Out of darkness** (Col. 1:13) How? By an act of God's sovereign grace. Deliverance comes from the Father and two proofs of it are given:
  - ✓ Forgiveness (v. 14) through the blood by which we belong to Him.
  - ✓ The fact that we have qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints (Col. 1:12). The Cross purchases us and prepares us since it deals both with the sin **principle** and the sin **practice**. It delivers us out of darkness and brings us into the Kingdom of the Son. It continues to work in our characters to form the life of Jesus there providing all things necessary for us to reach the likeness of Christ.
- **This is followed by translation out of the world** (1 Thess. 4:17). God's sovereign grace is also the power that accomplishes this. The second coming of the Lord Jesus crowns His first coming.

The Cross is a demonstration of God's <u>Master passion</u> for mission. (2 Cor. 5:15)

"He died for all, that those who live, should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again."

The love of the Lord Jesus is the power behind the witness of men. The Cross proves His love and is the dynamic calling believers into service and inspiring in us to do our utmost in all we are called to do. David Livingstone was asked by the students of Edinburgh University what enabled him to keep going in his task of reaching Africa with the Gospel. He replied, **"Do you ask what it was that kept me going and helped me? It was these words, *'Lo, I am with you always' "***. (Mt. 28:20)

James Chalmers, a pioneer in New Guinea with the passion of His Master said, **"Give me back all the sufferings, all the blows of clubs, the spears of the natives and everything else. I would do it again for Jesus' sake."**

It is the love of Christ that urges us to live lives of sacrifice and service.

The Cross is God's <u>master weapon</u> to make Christ supreme.

"But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." (Jn. 12:32)

God has stamped as the source of victory the very thing men thought was heaping great shame on the Lord Jesus! What was the result of lifting up the Lord Jesus on the Cross?

"He is before all things and in Him all things hold together … through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through the blood shed on the Cross." Col. 1:17-20

"For this very reason Christ died and returned to life so that He might be the Lord of both the dead and the living". Rom. 14:9

"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth". Phil. 2:10

"His eyes are like a blazing fire and on His head are many crowns…." Rev. 19:12

The crown of thorns will be there – the crown of His sacrifice on the Cross and of His spotless life. In that day the world will acknowledge the unquestioned supremacy of this once despised Jesus of Nazareth and the Cross will shine out in eternal glory as the source of His Sovereignty.

The Cross is God's <u>Master instrument</u> to destroy the serpent/Satan (Jn. 12:31; Heb. 2:14; Rev. 10; Mt. 25:41)

Through the Cross and the victory won there, we too can stand in this day of battle and overcome evil. The Lord Jesus needs us. He takes us into that conflict. Let us enter knowing the time is coming when the Lamb will be seen to overcome!