

Come To The Cross

1 Corinthians 1:18

Ice Breaker

This past Friday evening and yesterday morning, seven men joined me for a men's conference at Camp Baldwin down at Wolf Bay. We had a great time and were each challenged in the areas of our faith, relationships, and how we view life. This was the first ever men's conference held by the Baldwin Baptist Association and there were 64 men in attendance. I was especially proud of our men because we had more men present than any other church.

The men from our church made a pack when we arrived. It went something like this; "What happens at Camp Baldwin stays at Camp Baldwin."

Well, I have been praying about that and as a Pastor, I am not so sure I should have entered into such an agreement. I feel sort of like the Baptist Preacher who went camping with the Catholic Priest and Methodist Pastor. Around the campfire and feeling inspired, the Catholic Priest confessed that his greatest sin was that he had a bad drinking problem. The Methodist Pastor confessed that his sin was in the area of lust and there were some inappropriate things going on between him and the church secretary. After a very long time of silence, they turned to the Baptist Preacher and asked what his greatest sin was. He sighed and said; "Well my sin is gossiping and I don't know what I am going to do when I get back to town."

I feel that way today, I am dying to tell some stories but I am bound by that silly pack. However, I will tell you:

1. While eating a large salad Friday night, my roommate informed me that salads give him gas. Apparently salads had that effect on a number of the men.
2. My roommate left packets of face wash around that read; "Facial Make-up Removal Cloth". This caused me to adopt a "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy with my roommate.
3. Bobby Rohm had to be dragged out of the cafeteria as we were leaving Saturday after lunch. The problem was that the WMU ladies had arrived for a meeting.

Seriously, we had a great conference and were challenged to answer some very probing questions such as:

1. If you could live your life over, what are some things you would do differently?
2. What are the three most important things that need to happen in your life in order for your life to be a success?
3. What things would you like to change about your life?

There were many other questions and thoughts that will surely change our lives for the better. I felt as Pastor I had to report some of the scoop on the men's conference. The really good stuff remains under the gag order of the pack.

Preface

Illus: Show video of people being interviewed about the meaning of the cross. Point out that people have all sorts of misconceptions and opinions about the significance of the cross.

It isn't our opinions or philosophies about the cross that matter. What matters about the cross is what the Bible says and how we personally respond and experience its power.

Scripture

¹⁸For 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 NIV

Introduction

We see the cross on jewelry, monuments and other places. The cross has become a well known symbol of Christianity.

For many, the cross is a symbol of confusion. For many there is little understanding about the power of the cross and the fact that it is the ultimate symbol of God's love and grace given to mankind.

The cross is much more than a symbol of peace or a symbol of the Christian faith. The cross is the key to spiritual life.

The cross is home. It is the place where the soul returns to find peace. The cross is the place where we find meaning and love. The cross is the place where the madness stops and life makes sense.

The questions we must each answer is this; **"Is the cross foolishness to you or is the cross the power of God?"**

Today I invite you to come to the cross.

1. Come to the cross when sin is heavy

The will of God was for Jesus to die on the cross for the sin of all. Jesus took the sorrow and shame of sin upon himself and crucified it.

At the cross, our sins are crucified and just as Jesus rose from the grave by the grace of God, the cross and resurrection bring to us the incomprehensible grace of a loving God.

Illus: If you are like me you have been watching the 2008 Olympics. I really enjoy watching the swimmers. I am amazed at the lengths they go to make their bodies streamlined for swimming. They wear tight suits, tight caps and miniature goggles all to keep down the resistance as they streak through the water.

Sin is the bulky resistance that weighs us down. Sin brings this heavy burden upon us that makes our hearts heavy and our souls bruised.

Romans 10:9 says; *“If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord”, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”*

“While we were yet sinners, Jesus died on the cross that we might be saved.” Through the cross, we are saved from the punishment and burden of sin.

Come to the cross when your sin is heavy.

2. Come to the cross when your heart is hurting

Sometimes life is just plain hard. We try our best to cope and yet life hurts. People often treat us in a manner that hurts deeply.

It hurts to see a loved one suffer. It hurts to see our children make mistakes. Sometimes life just hurts right down to the core.

Illus: Have you ever hurt so badly emotionally that you physically hurt as well? The hurt just caused you to ache in your chest?

Jesus said; ²⁸ *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28 NKJ*

At the cross we find healing for a hurting heart. At the cross we find Jesus who understands our pain when no one else does.

At the cross we find comfort from a loving God when no one else can comfort us.

At the cross we find the open arms of a loving God eager to heal our hurting heart.

Come to the cross when your heart is hurting.

3. Come to the cross when your soul is longing

God created you and me to long for our creator. In our souls, we long to know God and experience God. At the cross our souls knit with our heavenly father.

³⁶ *What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Mark 8:36*

²⁹ *Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Matthew 11:29*

Illus: Did you have a nuts and bolts coffee can in your home? In my home we had a couple of these very large coffee cans filled to the brim with loose nuts and bolts. When I was young and I was working on something and needed a screw or nut, I would have to pour out that entire coffee can on a table. Then I would start the tedious process of trying different pieces until I found that one screw or nut that perfectly matched what I needed.

The cross is the perfect match for your soul. At the cross your soul finds the peace and fulfillment for which you have longed since birth.

Illus: A few weeks ago I heard someone say, “The number one reason people come to Christ is because someone tells them.” Well it is important to tell people about Christ but that is not the reason people come to Christ.

People come to Christ because of the cross. God’s Holy Spirit is always at work calling our souls home to Him by way of the cross.

1 Peter 2:24 says; “...by his wounds you have been healed.”

By the suffering of Jesus on the cross, we are healed. This does not refer to physical healing for the verb is past tense indicating a completed action. Because of the cross, we have salvation which is healing to the lost soul.

Come to the cross when your spirit tells you it is time to go home.

Come to the cross when your soul is longing.

Conclusion

Play Video with following words:

To some the cross is a symbol of death, to me it's a symbol of life.

To some the cross is jewelry, decoration, the sign of religion. To me it is my strength, my hope and my rebirth.

The cross is yesterday, today, tomorrow and eternity. It is love, compassion, and forgiveness. The cross is truth, peace.

It is my life, my passage, my freedom!

It is my payment, my atonement.

It was unconceivable, undeniable, and un-stoppable.

It was is unjust, yet soooo perfect!

The cross was not a mistake, it's was not an option!

It held a son, a brother, a savior.

It showed our wrong while displaying his right.

The cross tells me where I have been, where I am and where I am going.

I am saved because of it. He demanded it; but I did not deserve it.

His mother watched him die, his Father allowed him to die. Because the father sent His son to that cross, I am free!

Nothing could have stopped him from dying on the cross and nothing shall stop me from living my life for the cross.

The cross is my salvation!

The cross is my everything!

Closing Remarks

The speaker at the conference was great but there was one thing he said that I have heard so much lately. He said, "The reason people aren't interested in Christianity is that they don't see Christ in other believers."

I believe that is a lie Satan wants Christians and non-Christians to buy into. Yes we are to be a witness and share our faith but nothing in God's word says we are the reason people are to come to Christ.

People refuse to come to Christ because their heart is hard and they refuse to believe. The Bible says to be saved, one must believe in

their heart and confess with their mouth that Jesus is Lord. It doesn't say you have to find a good Christian example.

The Bible does say that we all have plenty of things including a longing in our soul to know and believe in God.

My living good or bad will never save anyone. I want to be an instrument to share the gospel and I pray that others will see Christ in my life, if in no other way than to see my sins forgiven.

However, each person must understand their ultimate response to the cross rests in their own heart. Will you come to the cross or will you be hard hearted?

Is the cross foolishness to you or is it the power of God in your life?