

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



GIG207 – Christ Died for You and Because of You

Hello and welcome to the podcast today. I want to talk about the Cross of Christ. I have been so burdened lately in my own meditation and prayer, and just time with the Lord, that there be something deeper in our relationship with the Cross, with Christ on the Cross, and what it does and what it should mean to us as believers. So I am hoping that this will be a real blessing to you, and that it will be something that opens up a door of a relationship with the Cross, and what really is meant for us to partake of on a daily basis with the Cross.

I want to begin by reading out of Acts the second chapter. This is when Peter was speaking on the Day of Pentecost, and He makes a statement that is very interesting. I think it is misunderstood many times, or misapplied. In verse 36 he says, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.” Now as I said, this statement has been, to me, misapplied, misused. It has been used to accuse the Jews of crucifying the Lord, and it has been something that has been the source of anti-Semitism and pogroms against the Jewish people for years, since the crucifixion of Christ. I think that Peter was trying to point to something different than that, and it is this relationship that I think that we need to really come into contact with in another way; that is, the recognition that Christ died for us.

I think as Christians, we all understand that – Christ died for our sins. It is something that just seems to be a very simple statement, and we use it so often that, to me, it can lose a little bit of its power and meaning for us. Christ died for us. But He also died because of us, and this is something that I think we need to keep an awareness of in our relationship with the Lord. That, to me, is what Peter was trying to point to in making this statement to the Jews who were listening to him on the Day of Pentecost, when he was delivering this amazing Word from the Lord explaining the detail of Christ’s life and His death, and what everything really meant, and what was being provided for them, including the baptism, the Holy Spirit for them, and salvation for them and their families. So he makes this statement, “Jesus, whom you crucified.” And it is, as I said, applied so much on a natural level, and applied as almost an accusation against the Jewish people, that I believe we miss what Peter and what the Lord were trying to get across to all of us – that we are the source of Christ’s crucifixion.

I want to read another Scripture in Acts the fourth chapter, at verse 10. It says, “Let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by this name this man stands here before you in good health.” This is when the apostles were being hauled before the magistrates because of the healing that had been performed. And once again, we see that this statement is being made – “Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified.” This idea that these individuals listening had crucified the Lord – obviously, we do not know from reading this text if these people were there or not there, and well may have been a part of everything that took place in the crucifixion of Christ. But again, I think we lose something when we try to apply it just to those individuals, because the reality of Christ’s crucifixion was for us all, and it was because of us all.

I want to look at Romans the fifth chapter, starting with verse 8. It says, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." So again, we see this when we talk about salvation. And I think this is so important, because our salvation experience is usually imparted to us in an atmosphere where we recognize that Christ died for our sins. But when we use those terminologies, it generalizes the experience to be so widespread that I think sometimes we miss the very personalized reality of the Cross of Christ, and of the death of Christ, and of the suffering of Christ. We know that, yes, this is a true statement: Christ died for us. And you can generalize that to the point of saying that He died for the whole world. He died for all mankind. He died for the salvation of everyone. But, beyond that, for it to really work, for salvation to be a personal experience, we have to realize that He did not just die for the whole world; He died for you. He died for me. And that must be a very real revelation. It must be something that our salvation is born on.

See, we are talking about the very foundation root of our salvation experience, which for us as Gentiles is our very relationship with God; because without this, we are in the world without God, without faith. Without Christ there is nothing for us as Gentiles. We are out of the loop, so to speak, because everything was given to Israel and for Israel. So when we talk about this idea of salvation, it is much broader than just the idea that Christ died for our sins. Christ died for my sins; but He died in order that I would be reconciled to God the Father, so that I would be brought into the household of Israel, brought into the promises, brought into all that God's plan is for His Kingdom on the earth, brought into eternal life, brought into so many things. So again, what I am concerned about is that we not so limit this idea of the Cross, we not so limit or generalize the concept of our salvation, that it takes away from the extremely personal nature and what we must have as a very personal experience in order for salvation to be effective in our daily lives.

Let me go on and read out of Ephesians the fifth chapter. It says, in verse 2, "And walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma." So here again, we have this emphasis that because God so loved us, and Christ loved us, that He gave Himself as an offering, as a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. Now in this concept that Christ was a sacrifice, He was an offering to God, He was a sacrifice to God, you begin to sort of lean into the deeper sense that what transpired here transpired for me as an individual. He was an offering for me. He was a sacrifice to God for me.

This is really brought to light more clearly, even, in Romans the fourth chapter, starting at verse 25. It says, "He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification." Again, we see that Christ on the Cross died for our sins, but He died because of our sins. So He did not just die **for** me, He died **because** of me. And I know this is something that really has been diverted off in people's thinking where they go into "the Jews crucified Jesus," and we go through all of the anti-Semitic tropes about Christ's crucifixion. In doing that, I want us to see that not only is this anti-Semitism on the deepest levels, but it is missing, for me as an individual, for us on a very personal level, this idea that the crucifixion of Christ, the Cross of Christ, was for our sins, and it was because of our sins.

If we had no sin, there would be no need for Christ to have died. Therefore, you have to get this idea that He was crucified because of you. He was crucified because of me. And I think that in our salvation, in our accepting Christ as our Savior, we have to be careful not to just generalize it. I know a lot of times people are saved in mass conferences, or in arenas, hearing about the Gospel and the Good News; and we see thousands and thousands are saved at one time. And it concerns me at times that just the

vastness of the crowd itself takes away from that personal reality that I am a sinner. It is my sin that Christ died for. It is because of my sin that Christ had to die. He was an offering for my sin, and because of my sin. So, yes, Christ died for us, but He died because of us. It has to be something that makes the Cross of Christ extremely, extremely personal to us. And I think that not only does our salvation begin at this revelation, but it must continue in our walk with God, even in our maturing in God into more and more levels of His impartation. This cannot be lost. Where we begin cannot be lost, and we cannot lose sight of this. It has to be something that is very real to us on a daily basis.

Romans 8:32 says, "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?" We see that Christ went to the Cross by the will of the Father, and it was God who gave His own Son to be this sacrifice for sin; and He delivered Him over for all of us. At some point you have to take out the plurality of that, and you have to make it very singular: God gave His own Son and He delivered Christ to the Cross for me; and therefore, He will freely give me all things in His plan and purpose. But God delivered Christ to the Cross as a sacrifice for me, and it was done out of necessity: because of my sin, Christ had to die, or I had to die eternal death and damnation without His sacrifice.

So again, our salvation is extremely personal. And however many years we have walked with God, however long we go, however much we grow and mature in the things of God and move in gifts of the Holy Spirit, or whatever we do, I think that there has to be something that brings us back to this point and keeps this alive to us. I think it should be alive to us every day.

Galatians 2:20 says, "I have been crucified with Christ." You see in the life of Paul, I think more than any other expression in the Scriptures, the reality of his daily revelation and daily expression of the fact that Christ died for him and because of him. It says, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me." I like this, because Paul is bringing this down to a very personal level. Now we are not talking in the generalities that he speaks of in Romans, or in some of the other expressions like Ephesians; but now he is making it very, very plain that the Son of God who loved him gave Himself up for Paul. It was all about Paul. Paul needed a Savior, he needed a Messiah, he needed forgiveness of his sins.

Remember, Paul was murdering Christians. Paul was sinning in very, very real ways, not just in a general way because of the flesh nature, or because of original sin through Adam, or whatever. You know, Paul was a sinner on his own, and he was very much in need of forgiveness. He was very much in need of a sacrifice for that sin. And because of all of those things, and because of how real his experience was in salvation... Remember, he was on his way to Damascus when the Lord appeared in the light, and he was cast off of the donkey that he was riding and he was struck blind; and he was blind for several days, and the prophet was sent to lay hands on him. So His salvation experience was something that I believe is an example to us of what a salvation experience is meant to be – it is meant to be something very personal. When Paul cried out in his blindness and he said, "Who are you, Lord?" He replied, "I am Christ whom you are persecuting." It was a very definite recognition that Paul's life was being lived against Christ. He was persecuting Christ, not Christians – what he was doing was against Christ. And what Christ was coming to do was be personally a Savior to him. And so, Paul lived with this reality that Christ gave His life for Paul. That was his salvation experience; and I feel like it needs to be all of our salvation experience. This was an experience that, as we read about Paul's life, Paul never gave up on this.

He never gave away the realness of this expression. He kept it as something that was daily a reality to him, and it was the very basis and foundation of the strength that he walked in.

We look at Paul, and I think that many, many times he is regarded as the chiefest of the apostles. But why? What was the strength? What was the foundation? I think you have to go back to the way he was saved, and what that salvation meant to him, and how real it was for him on a personal basis. And I hope that through this podcast the reality of this can become a greater impartation to each of us as we move along.

In First Peter 2:24, it says, "And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." It was what we were in need of. His suffering was because of us. Of course, we know that Peter here is quoting out of Isaiah 53, and I will read that, starting with verses 4-5. It says, "Surely our griefs He himself bore." We have to remember that – it is my grief that Christ bore on the Cross. His suffering on the Cross was my suffering – not the world's suffering, not just Christ's suffering – it was my suffering. "And our sorrows He carried." We know that the Cross was a painful, sorrowful, tormenting place, but it was not just Christ who was suffering on the Cross; it was my suffering He was bearing. He was there because of my sorrow, because of my grief, because of my sin, my disobedience – that is why He was there. That is what He was feeling. He was not feeling sorry for Himself on the Cross. He was not feeling the pain of what was going on in His body. The pain He was feeling was my pain, my suffering. When He felt that He was separated from the Father, He was never separated from the Father; He was feeling and crying out because of my separation. I am the one who was separated from God, not Christ. He said, "I and the Father are one." So He was suffering and feeling the pain for me, of my life, of my disobedience. He was crying out because of my separation from the Father, and my destiny of hell through eternity. And hell is separation from the Father, from Christ, from the Holy Spirit.

He goes on to say, "Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our wellbeing fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed." There was a transference that happened. The Cross was a transference. My experience was put onto Him, and His pain became my healing that was transferred to me. And again, yes, I know He was the Savior of the whole world, and I know He died for us. But I also know, as Paul recognized, that He gave Himself up for me. And that has to be the source, the center point, the nexus of my salvation experience. It is all about me. It is all between me and the Lord, as it was between Paul and the Lord.

Verse 6 says, "All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him." What Christ experienced, what the Cross was all about, was my sin. He went through these things because of us. So again, going back to what Peter was saying on the Day of Pentecost when he said, "This Jesus whom you crucified," I do not think he was just pointing to the Jews saying, "You Jews crucified Christ." I do not, in myself, believe that. I think God put Him on the Cross. I think Christ went willingly. He said, "No one takes My life from Me, I lay it down." So I think that concept gives a whole wrong impression of the Cross, and it takes away from the personal reality of what the Cross was. It is not that this bunch of people hung Jesus on the Cross, and He suffered on the Cross, and because of that the sins of the world were forgiven. No, He went to the Cross for my sin. It was His personal choice. It was between Him and the Father. It was an agreement. He did the will of the Father, which was to go and suffer for me; for my disobedience, for my original Adamic

nature and sin, all of these things were done. And that is what I think Peter was trying to point out: "This Jesus whom you crucified."

I think we have to feel that way. I think something in the foundation of our relationship with Christ and the Father has to live in this reality that I put Him on that cross. He died for me, but He died because of me. And I believe that we really need to have that be very real to us. I believe it is the foundation of the words that Christ spoke in Luke the ninth chapter, at verses 23-24: "He was saying to them all, 'If anyone wishes to come after Me, He must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.'" We have this concept, "Take up your cross and follow Him"; and when we do that, we separate the Cross of Christ from my cross, and I think that is a wrong interpretation or understanding of the Scriptures. There is only one Cross. Nobody is ever going to do the Cross. I know thousands of people may have died on crosses, but none accomplished what Christ accomplished; because of the dynamics of it in the will of God and the will of Christ in what transpired, salvation was won for me in that event. So when He says, "Take up your cross and follow Me," then He is talking about His Cross. In other words, I daily should be at the Cross of Christ, and that should be a daily reality to me, and for me. And that, again, I believe is what Peter is talking about – "You crucified Christ."

When you wake up in the morning and you begin your day, and you continue your relationship with the Lord, with the Father, with the Holy Spirit, with Yeshua, I think that it should start right here where it all does start. It all starts with this reality. And without the reality of the Cross, there is no relationship with God; because remember, we as Gentiles were without God in the world. And so, to begin our day with a relationship with Him, we must go to this point of beginning: He died for me; He died because of me; and I need to go, once again, to that place of the Cross and make that the reality and the most important event in my life, not to mention, in my day.

So I bless us as believers that we not over-generalize the reality of the Cross, that we not let it get immersed into the world's salvation, but we keep it as Paul did: He died for me. And I want to keep that uppermost in our minds. I want it to be something that we give ourselves to, and we recognize the reality that we are to every day take up our cross, which is the Cross of Christ that He went through for me; and then begin our walk with Him on that basis.

I bless this to all of our lives. I hope that it helps to sharpen our relationship with Christ, and to sharpen our thankfulness, our love. We should be blown away, daily, with what God has done for us.

Amen.