

# Another Look at the Cross

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This past Easter I was asked to participate in the Easter Sunrise Service put on by our host church. Much of the focus of that service was the "Cross," and Jesus' death, but also his glorious, triumphant resurrection from the grave. This caused me to do some extra thinking about Christ's death on a Roman cross. Why is the cross so well remembered and talked about? Hundreds, if not thousands, of people died on Roman crosses. What was so important about this one? Why are there so many crosses on churches, in paintings, on jewelry to be worn around the neck, or pins to be attached to one's clothing, or tattooed on muscular bodies? The cross has been the most significant symbol of the Christian faith throughout history. It has been estimated that there are over 400 forms or designs of the cross which are available to us today.

What was so significant about the death of Jesus Christ on a cross? Nothing, unless Christ was resurrected from the dead! But if He was resurrected from the dead - that is a game changer, an event that is unique in all of history. As Christians we accept this to be true. Is this conviction based only on blind faith? Certainly not. The Bible tells us that Jesus was seen alive on earth for 40 days after His resurrection - talking, eating, moving among friends - even being seen by 500 people at one time. But there also is a lot of evidence from sources other than the Bible confirming Christ's resurrection. Flavius Josephus, a Jewish historian who lived and wrote during the time of Christ and was still alive during the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, wrote of the resurrection of Christ. E.M. Blaiklock, professor of Classics in Auckland University wrote, "I claim to be an historian. My approach to classics is historical. And I tell you that the evidence for the life, the death, and the resurrection of Christ is better authenticated than most of the facts of ancient history." Many other scholars over the centuries have said the same thing. So the importance of Christ's death on the cross is purely the result of His resurrection.

Why was the death of Christ, the Son of God, necessary? It was required by our Holy God to justify His being able to forgive us of our sins, and admit us into His kingdom. We read in Hebrews 9:22, "**According to the Law, one may almost say all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.**" Then in Hebrews 10:4 we read, "**For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.**" Thus we have the conclusion that only the unstained, sinless, divine blood of Christ, God's son, was sufficient to cover our sins and impart to us God's forgiveness. We can be declared holy and pure before God - by the sacrificing of Christ's blood on our behalf.

Have you accepted this gift from the cross? All you have to do is take it, and trust that Christ's death was sufficient for you. As we read in John 1:12, "**But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God...**" If you do this, life will take on a whole new meaning. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "**Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.**"

This good news has certainly changed my life, and I hope that it has for you too. Think about it - we only have the present, so use it to prepare for the future.

*Larry*