

Sermon: "Who is Jesus? -- Part 2: Cross and Resurrection" Lent 3
(Hebrews 9:6-17 ; Luke 23: 34-46 & 24: 36-49) March 19th, 2017

Prayer: May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our strength and our redeemer. Amen .

1. Scan:

2. Two Engaging Questions:

a. H.M.Y. have seen more than 1 kind of Cross? (Put your hand up please.) **THANK YOU** ... (Celtic, one make of nails, .. Jesus on/ off cross)

b. Has your understanding of the cross changed over the years? (Put your hand up please.) **THANK YOU**

3. Give name/ Name of Presentation: I AM Allan Warren ...

4. Acknowledgement:

5. W.Y.W.L & K.B. Today you will:

- learn about the historic context of the cross and why it existed.

- learn a common understanding of the Messiah in Jesus day that he resisted.

- learn a new understanding of the Messiah that didn't make much sense in Jesus day and is often resisted in our own. People generally prefer the 'glory' understanding of Messiah.

6. Earn the respect to teach

i. "Can I tell you a bit (story) about myself today?" **THANK YOU**

- first ... cross as a religious symbol. while I was born and raised in the United Church I grew up with a very traditional understanding of the cross. ... It symbolized what Jesus suffered to pay the price from our sins. To save us from an angry God who would send you to hell because of those sins if you didn't believe in Jesus as Lord and Saviour. The cross bridged the gap between God's wrath and

our sins so we might experience God's love and grace. ... I remember at Queens Theological College reading a book "The Universe of Faith" by John Hicks that looked at all the major world religions ... The fact you were born in North America or Europe odds were a lot higher you would be a Christian as oppose to a Muslim or Buddhist. So it was really a roll of the dice, with respect to where you were born, whether you would be saved or damned. That didn't sit very well with me. ...

- I came to see the cross as a symbol of execution in Roman times. No matter how alienated you have felt from God in your life ... My God my God why have you forsaken me Jesus is with you in the midst of that forsakenness. He knows what it is like to be there. And just as God never forgot Jesus (as shown by the resurrection) neither will God ever forget you in the midst of your darkest moments. ... So the cross for me, has become much more of a symbol of life. That nothing can separate me, or you from God's love regardless of what the world throws at you. No matter the injustice, laid off work when the plant closes and moves elsewhere. ... a disease. God is still with you , and hear's your cries. ... What does the United Church Creed say. ... God is with us, we are not alone, thanks be to God.

7. State Change:

What does the cross mean to you? Has your understanding of the cross changed at all over the years? I realize you will only get a chance to 'dip your toe' into a discussion about the cross in the next minute ... but it is an important conversation to have because who knows, some day when you're at the mall and you are wearing a cross as a piece of jewelry or maybe doing some work outside on the church grounds during spring clean up, someone might ask you ... What is that object on the outside of your building and why did you put it there? ... What does it mean to you? Go. ... Please stop. ... **TY** ...

8. Message/ Info:

(remember "suggestology")

The cross. What is it? ... It is a symbol of capital punishment, torture and death. ... A very painful death that was used in the Roman Empire as an object lesson. ... They lined the road ways and were often put up in public places to remind people ... "Don't step out of line or this will happen to you." Do what you are told and don't ask any _____ (questions) ... **TY**

So how did a symbol of torture end up at the front of the church? Anyone. (Jesus died on. Rose again.) ... Did you notice the cross is empty? Jesus is risen from the dead and now the cross is a symbol of new life. ... Not just life after death, but new life experienced now, through our shared community. ... Our gathering and serving in Jesus name.

Do you remember what Paul said about Jesus birth in Romans ch. 1? ... **TY** ... As to his humanity he was a descendant of _____ (David) ... **TY** ... as to his divine holiness he was shown with great power to be the Son of God by _____ (being raised from the dead) ... **TY** ...

A descendant of David. Who is Bruce Springsteen? ... **TY** ... Do you remember his song "glory days". ... He talks about life when you get a bit older. Some of the problems people faces ... families splitting up, unemployment ... sit around and talk about the 'glory days' ... back in high school, life was simpler then.

For the people of Israel in Jesus time, any idea what the 'glory days' were? Back to when King David was King. ... David defeated the Philistines. All 12 tribes were united and they probably controlled the most territory they ever did. ... They were strong enough to fight off neighbouring bullies, and could control their own destiny.

It wasn't that many generations later ... two to be exact ... there was a civil war and the country split in two. .. In 587 BC the Babylonians can down and destroyed Jerusalem and they were never a nation again until modern times. First controlled by the Babylonians ... who took them into exile. ... Then the Persians who let them return home to rebuilt the Temple but they were a 'puppet' state. ... Then there were controlled by the Greeks ... remember a guy by

the name of Alexander the _____ (Great) ... **TY** Then the Romans. So they were always getting pushed and shoved around. ... Poor, oppressed and they dreamed of a new King, like King David, who was going to finally defeat their enemies and they would control their own destiny again. ... Do you remember the name they had for this ideal king? (Messiah) ... In Jesus day this theology was running ramped. So much so some people tried to revolt against Rome ... If we only get it started God will come and intervene for us and we will win. ... Kind of like the saying, "If you only have enough _____ (faith). ... **TY** Did it work? ... No. Rome came down with an iron fist and destroyed the Temple and the city again in 70 AD. This is an important date to remember. Gospels were written around this time and this 'crisis' is probably the source of the words about "tearing down this temple and rebuilding it in 3 days. (Mark 14:58)"

There were two crisis of faith for the early followers of Jesus. ...

- 1) Jesus did not fulfill the common, preconceived notions of who the Messiah was
- 2) ... Jesus did not return within their lifetime to set up God's Kingdom after his death and resurrection.

You are going to look at the first one today.

If you read the Gospel of Mark, Jesus is constantly telling people to "Suh. don't tell anyone." ... Why would Jesus do that? ... Because Jesus did not fulfill the popular notion of a Messiah being a great military hero and he knew it. ... (People took him and tried to make him king (John 6:15).)

Do you remember the 3 temptations Jesus faced? ... One was turn stones into _____ (bread)... **TY** ... Another was taking Jesus to a high mountain and saying I will give you all the kingdoms of this world (military hero), if you worship me Jesus response. "Worship only the Lord your God and serve only him."

Have you ever heard this question in scripture ... "Who do you say that I am?" Who is asking it? ... (Jesus) ... **TY** ... Who answers? ... (disciples). ... Do you remember the answers? ... (John the Baptist, one of the prophets, You are the Messiah. ... Which disciple says that? ... (Peter) ... **TY** ... (you are on a roll today).

Do you want to know what happens next? ... Jesus says, "Don't tell anyone." ... Why would Jesus said that? ... Because you are going to get it all messed up. ... At the end of Mark ch. 8, Jesus tries to teach the disciples about his suffering and death and do you remember what Peter says? God forbid it Lord that should happen to you? ... Come on Jesus, you are not following the script. ... The Messiah comes and kicks the Roman's but and we get our nation back.

Do you remember Jesus response to that theology of 'glory'. ... Get behind me Satan. Those thoughts don't come from God but from human nature. ...

Following God's will. .. Taking care of the widow and orphan and the foreigner in your midst. Making sure people get treated fairly in the market place and in the courts is hard work. Reminding people God's love is for everyone and not just people who think and believe like me ... Parable of the Good Samaritan ... is not popular. You will get insulted and scorned and rejected as Jesus was on the cross.

So Jesus wasn't having anything to do with the Trump or anyone else's we're #1 bandwagon. (Whose #1? ... God is.) ... And God asks, "How are those who are considered 'unclean' in your society doing?", and what are you doing to extend God's love and care for them. That's what Jesus' wants to know.

Have you ever had a crisis of faith? Something terrible has happened that made you question who God was or the existence of God? Jesus dying on the cross was a 'crisis of faith' for the first followers of Jesus. ... He wasn't the kind of Messiah they we waiting for. Crisis's of faith, often make you question old belief's. They sometimes also help you to understand old belief's in new ways.

That is what happened for much of the early church community and the book of Hebrews helps you to see that transformation. The rituals of animal sacrifice, that were done in the Temple, were seen in a new way. The most important sacrifice on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kipper), when the priest went into the Holy of Holies once a year for the sins the people unknowingly committed during the past year ... was seen to explain how Jesus, presented himself as the perfect sacrifice, on the cross to God, once and for all.

While such an explanation does not do justice to the meaning of Yom Kipper, it did help early Christians understand why the Messiah, God's Anointed one, died on the cross.

What I appreciated learning about The Day of Atonement, or Yom Kipper, this week, is that it is the holiest day in the Jewish year. ... It is the culmination of 10 days of introspection and repentance. ... And the Day of Atonement absolves one of sin against God, not your fellow human being *unless pardon* of the offended party is secured. It sounds a lot like Jesus teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, that if you are bringing a gift to the alter and remember that someone has something against you, leave your gift at the front of the alter, go and make peace with that person, then come back and offer your gift to God.

Wow! ... Hard work. ... I greatly appreciated all I learned about the Day of Atonement or Yom Kipper, this past week, and the danger of oversimplifying what was written to new Christians in the book of Hebrews, to help make sense of Jesus horrific death on the cross.

The cross. ... A symbol of death, torture, oppression, transformed in to a symbol of new life. God's presence with us as we, like Jesus, tried to live out God's love in the world. A message that wasn't always warmly received, but spoken with the assurance that no matter what the world throws at you, you are not alone. That God is with you as seen through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

*Hymn #352 VU "I dance in the morning when the world was begun"