

The Cross Centered Religion

Intro: Christianity centers around the cross of Christ. Notice the hymn: *The Old Rugged Cross*.

On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross, the emblem of suffering and shame; and I love that old cross where the dearest and best for a world of lost sinners was slain.

O that old rugged cross, so despised by the world, has a wondrous attraction for me; for the dear Lamb of God left His glory above, to bear it to dark Calvary.

In that old rugged cross, stained with blood so divine, a wondrous beauty I see; for 'twas on that old cross Jesus suffered and died, to pardon and sanctify me.

To the old rugged cross I will ever be true, its shame and reproach gladly bear; then He'll call me some day to my home far away, where His glory for ever I'll share.

So I'll cherish the old rugged cross, till my trophies at last I lay down; I will cling to the old rugged cross, and exchange it some day for a crown.

I. THE CHURCH CENTERS AROUND THE CROSS

A. The blood shed on the cross purchased the church.

1. Mat. 26:28 "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
2. Acts 20:28 "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."
3. Hence, if man can be saved out of the church, he can be saved without being blood bought.

B. The head of the church is the one who died on the cross.

1. Eph. 1:22-23 "And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, ²³Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
2. Eph. 5:23 "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body."

C. That which is preached by the church is the gospel which grew out of the cross.

1. 1 Cor. 1:18 "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."
2. 1 Cor. 15:1-4 "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; ²By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. ³For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; ⁴And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."

II. REDEMPTION CENTERS AROUND THE CROSS.

A. Redemption is in the blood.

1. Eph. 1:7 "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;"
2. Eph. 2:16 "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby;"
3. 1 John 1:7 "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

B. How are we saved by blood?

1. Christ blood was shed in his death.
2. We are baptized into his death; Rom. 6:3-4 “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? ⁴Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”
3. It is there we reach the blood, sins are forgiven; Acts 22:16 “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”
4. We become part of the blood-bought church; Acts 2:41, 47 “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls...⁴⁷Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

III. OBSERVANCE CENTERS AROUND THE CROSS.

A. Our observance of the Lord’s Supper shows the death of Him who died on the cross; 1 Cor. 11:26 “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.”

B. Jesus could have had us to erect a cross on every corner, but he did not; instead he gave us the Lord’s Supper as a memorial.

1. Mat. 26:26-29 “And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed *it*, and brake *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. ²⁷And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; ²⁸For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. ²⁹But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”
2. 1 Cor. 11:24-25 “And when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. ²⁵After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me.”

C. Each must examine self; 1 Cor. 11:28 “But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup.”

D. It must be taken in a worthy manner; 1 Cor. 11:29 “For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.”

IV. SEPARATION OF GOD’S COVENANT CENTERS AROUND THE CROSS.

A. The law of Moses died when Jesus died on the cross.

1. It was intended to be only temporary.
 - a. Gal. 3:19 “Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was* ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.”
 - b. Gal. 3:24-25 “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.”
2. 2 Cor. 3:7, 13-14 “But if the ministration of death, written *and* engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which *glory* was to be done away:...¹³And not as Moses, *which* put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: ¹⁴But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which *vail* is done away in Christ.”

3. Rom. 7:1-4, 7 “Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? ²For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband. ³So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. ⁴Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God....⁷What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.”
4. Col. 2:14 “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;”

B. The New Testament could not go into effect until after Jesus died.

1. Heb. 9:15-17 “And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. ¹⁶For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. ¹⁷For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.”
2. It is a better covenant
 - a. Heb. 8:6-13 “But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. ⁷For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. ⁸For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: ⁹Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. ¹⁰For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: ¹¹And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. ¹²For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. ¹³In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old *is* ready to vanish away.”
 - b. Heb. 7:22 “By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.”
3. Today we must hear Christ.
 - a. Mat. 17:1-5 “And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, ²And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. ³And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. ⁴Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. ⁵While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”
 - b. Heb. 1:1-2 “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, ²Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;”

V. SALVATION CENTERS AROUND THE CROSS.

A. Jesus died for sins.

1. Gal. 1:4 “Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:”

2. 1 Pet. 2:24 “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”
3. 1 Cor. 15:3 “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;”
4. The Jews sacrificed lambs; John 1:29 “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

B. The preaching of the cross is God’s power to save.

1. 1 Cor. 1:18 “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”
2. 1 Cor. 15:2 “By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.”
3. Man becomes free from sin when he obeys a form of it; Rom. 6:17-18 “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. ¹⁸Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.”
4. The doctrine is the death, burial and resurrection; 1 Cor. 15:1-4 “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; ²By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. ³For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; ⁴And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:”
 - a. We must obey its form.
 - b. How we obey it.
 - (1) Die to sin
 - (2) Buried in baptism.
 - (3) Raised to walk in newness of life.
 - (4) Rom. 6:3-4 “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? ⁴Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

Conclusion: Have you appropriated the benefits of the cross to your life? If not, why not obey the demands of the cross to have salvation and become a member of the Lord’s church today.