

I Will Glory in the Cross

Carl H. Stevens Jr. is pastor of Greater Grace Church located in Baltimore, Maryland. Pastor Stevens is also chancellor of Maryland Bible College & Seminary and host of the international Christian radio program "The Grace Hour." This booklet was created from a message preached by Pastor Stevens.

Pastor Stevens can be seen weekly on cable television stations throughout the United States. Call us for information regarding programming in your area.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

GRACE PUBLICATIONS

P.O. BOX 18715

BALTIMORE, MD 21206

Printed in Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A.

Copyright © 1999

Grace Publications is a ministry of
Greater Grace World Outreach, Inc.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>INTRODUCTION</i>	5
---------------------------	---

<i>Chapter 1</i>	7
------------------------	---

KNOWING CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED

<i>Chapter 2</i>	10
------------------------	----

GLORY IN THE FACTS OF THE CROSS

<i>Chapter 3</i>	13
------------------------	----

THE CROSS AND OUR BLOOD COVERING

<i>Chapter 4</i>	17
------------------------	----

THE CROSS: THE KEY TO FREEDOM

<i>CONCLUSION</i>	21
-------------------------	----

INTRODUCTION

The cross Jesus died upon was the turning point for all human history. At Calvary, Jesus Christ took upon Himself the sins of the entire world, and He gave His life as the sacrifice for every man, woman, and child ever born. That cross is where the battle for our lives was won. This is a fact so many ignore, however, and the result is defeat, even though the victory is ours.

Many believers weigh themselves down, struggling under burdens they were never meant to carry. In their minds, they have to bear a “cross” in order to please God. But that just is not true.

As this booklet will reveal, we are not here to be crucified or to crucify ourselves. Our crucifixion was accomplished for us by Christ on the cross.* The life we now live, we live by Christ through His resurrection power. That is what it means to glory in the Cross.

**In our booklets, the use of the term “the Cross” with a capital ‘C’ encompasses the literal cross and all the meaning of that event on Calvary two thousand years ago and what it accomplished for mankind. “The cross,” with a lowercase ‘c’, denotes the literal wooden structure used to sacrifice the Lamb of God. It also represents any use of the term that reflects something less than the glorious Cross (such as “my cross to bear”).*

Chapter One

KNOWING CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED

“For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2).

Allow the Holy Spirit to permeate us with the truth of this passage. Scholars give us many reasons why Paul wrote this. In Corinth, there were problems of party spirits. The church lacked order, and in many ways it was out of control. If we consider these words—“I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified”—in the light of other passages, they become very meaningful.

For example, in Galatians 1:3-4: “Grace be to you, and peace, from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, 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.”

On the cross, in His graciousness and mercy, Jesus paid for everything that we would ever do wrong, so those things would not be charged to us. But He also meant for that cross to deliver us from this “present evil world.”

Delivered and Separated from the World

“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Galatians 6:14).

Think with me about those words. “*God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross....*” Only in the Cross should I glory. There is nothing else in which to glory, for by Christ the world is crucified to me, and by Him I am crucified to the world. Whoever I am, whatever my state, whatever status symbols I may possess, God forbid that I glory in any of it. Regardless of how affluent I am, God says, “Don’t glory in any of it because you will lose it all when you die. Instead, glory in the Cross of Jesus Christ. That is the only thing you can glory in.”

By the Cross of Christ, I am delivered and separated from the world, and the world is delivered and separated from me. God keeps associating the Cross with my separation from the

world system. Consider carefully what it means to go about glorying in the Cross.

Chapter Two

GLORY IN THE FACTS OF THE CROSS

“For he that is dead is freed from sin” (Romans 6:7).

“Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Romans 6:13).

The only way we can glory in the Cross is if we have had a spiritual resurrection at salvation. When we have had a spiritual resurrection, we enter into a brand-new creation, a brand-new life. We glory because every single sin—past, present, and future—has been paid for, forever. All of us can glory in the fact that a sin will never, ever be placed on our record.

Here is another fact we can glory in: As Jesus Christ is in heaven, so are we on the earth (see

1 John 4:17).

Because of the Cross, forever and ever we are hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3)—we glory in the Cross.

Because of the Cross, we have been made new creatures. “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature” (Galatians 6:15)—we glory in the Cross.

Because of the Cross, through the power of God, we shall never taste death (Hebrews 2:9)—we glory in the Cross.

Because of the Cross, 1 John 2:1 tells us that we have an “advocate”—a lawyer—Jesus Christ, who pleads our case for us before the Father. He is qualified to represent us because He gave Himself in our place. We can glory in the Cross.

Enjoy His New Mercies

We can also glory in knowing that every single moment—not just every morning—God’s mercies are new. Glory in the fact that twenty-six times in Psalm 136, the Psalmist declares that God’s mercy endures forever. “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life” (Psalm 23:6a). Because of the Cross, that too is something to glory in.

Let us glory in the fact that at the cross of Calvary, mercy and truth met together, righteousness and peace kissed each other, and the entire sin issue was dealt with once and for all (see Psalm 85). There, every sin was taken care of—past, present, and future.

It saddens me to think of the many people who glory in their gifts. Others glory in their legalism, their separation by self-righteousness. They glory in being among the “elite” in their circles. I know because I was also legalistic when I first started out as a preacher.

God forbid that we should glory, save in the Cross of Jesus Christ. We must determine to know nothing about each other, except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. He gave Himself for us, delivering us from this present evil world, according to the will of God the Father.

Chapter Three

THE CROSS AND OUR BLOOD COVERING

“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?” (Luke 9:23-25).

When we pray we are to glory in the Cross. When we sing and worship, whether it be in the church services or in the melodies of our hearts, let us glory in the Cross.

Satan cannot touch the Cross. The devil hates the fact that Jesus Christ sanctified us through the offering of His body, once for all, and that He perfected forever them that are sanctified (see Hebrews 10:10, 14). Oh how Satan despises the preaching of the Cross of Christ. He

hates the amazing truth that when a soul is led to Jesus Christ, the Cross of Calvary covers them at that instant. Even if the person has done every sinful thing imaginable, those sins are covered by the Cross.

God's Provision for Israel

“And they shall take of the blood [of the lamb], and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper doorpost of the houses wherein they shall eat it” (Exodus 12:7).

“And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the house where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you...” (Exodus 12:13).

The Jewish feast of Passover was instituted here, as death came to smite the firstborn in the land of Egypt. In Goshen, the children of Israel put the blood of the sacrificed lambs in three places. That is a wonderful Old Testament picture of the cross of Christ. In three places, the blood was to be applied, and the plague of death did not come upon the Israelites who obeyed God's instructions.

Know No One after the Flesh

“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

“And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

“Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more” (2 Corinthians 5:14-16).

Warfare by the kingdom of darkness against the Kingdom of light was settled at the cross. Furthermore, personal struggles, conflicts, and poor relationships are settled at the cross. We now live unto God who raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Therefore, we are to know no one after the flesh, not even Jesus, though His life in the flesh was a perfect expression of the will of God. The cross is behind us. The battle is over, and now Christ is resurrected and glorified. That is how we know Him now.

As we sup with Jesus Christ, enjoying fellowship with Him, we need to remember that “taking up our cross” does not mean suffering.

To take up our cross means to take up liberation and freedom. It means that we glory in the newness of life, walking in the newness of the Spirit.

Chapter Four

THE CROSS: THE KEY
TO FREEDOM

When I really want to be broken before God, I go into a room alone and let the Spirit glorify the Son on the subject of the Cross. What a picture this brings to mind! It is a glorious way to fellowship with Jesus Christ.

Once, when I was going through a trial, my wife and I drove to a remote area just to be alone with God. There, we closed our eyes, and the Holy Spirit came in to say, "I want you to picture Jesus Christ on the cross. I want you to hear the nails as they are driven through His hands and feet. See His eyes as He cries out, 'Father, forgive them....'" That time was so precious. We wept and wept, as we simply had fellowship around the Cross.

To glory in the Cross means that we reflect on it, exalt it, and magnify it in our lives. In doing this, think of how we have been made free

forever and ever. No matter what comes, we are free and clean through the Cross. We are in Christ. We are seated in heavenly places with Him (Ephesians 2:6). We are joined to Him. At the precious cross of Christ, we exchanged our identity for His: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

Thank God for the resurrection power of the Lord Jesus Christ that is within each of us today. Thank God and glory in the Cross for this. The battle is over. My sins have been paid for, and now I have Christ living inside my heart. Is it any wonder 2 Corinthians 5:16 says we are to know no man after the flesh? He says that we are new creatures in Christ. Old things have passed away and everything is new (see 2 Corinthians 5:17).

Should temptation come to you, whatever it might be, glory in the Cross. The Spirit will fill us when we glory in the Cross. And when we live in the power of the Resurrection, we overcome temptation.

Give the New Man Dominion

Taking up His Cross means that the old sin nature no longer has dominion. The new man rules now. In Luke 9:23, the Greek word for deny is *aparneomai*, which means to lose any connection or rights to yourself and your own interests. Don't use your volition to preserve your own life.

In other words, "taking up the Cross" means that the Cross puts away who we are in our old sin nature, and we glory in the Cross of Christ and what He has done for us. We cannot crucify ourselves. So, taking up the Cross is simply to accept what Christ did for us two thousand years ago. Retroactively, we were crucified and buried with Him. And with Him, we are now risen (Ephesians 2:5-6).

Ascetics attempt to deny themselves by an austere lifestyle. In reality, their soulish efforts only serve to strengthen the self-life within. It is such a struggle—and *they glory in the struggle, not in the Cross*. Paul tried it, as we read in Romans 7. The problem he found was that every time he tried it, evil was present with him.

The glory of the cross, however, is this: The world cannot touch me. Satan cannot touch me,

though he may come against me with lies, projections, and people. The wicked one touches us not (1 John 5:18).

By Jesus Christ, the world is crucified to me and I am crucified unto the world. Because of the Cross, the world has no dominion over me. That should bring a wonderful, far-reaching manifestation of joy and hope to our hearts. It should cause us to thank our Lord Jesus Christ with every cell that is in us.

Oh, glory in the Cross.

CONCLUSION

“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death” (Philippians 3:7-10).

Many people are quick to confess that certain difficulties are their “cross.” That is not what the Scriptures reveal. We take up *His* Cross. We glory in *His* Cross. That is how we get to know Him and receive the power of His res-

urrection. Remember, the power of His resurrection comes first, because there is no fellowship with His sufferings unless it is done in the power of His resurrection.

“Being made conformable unto his death” isn’t a reference to suffering we must go through. It isn’t talking about present sufferings at all. Rather, it speaks of experiencing the retroactive truth that we were crucified with Him. When we are conformed to His death, we are not suffering at all. Instead, we are realizing His resurrection power moment by moment. We are glorying in His Cross.