

## **The Message of the Cross ...via the Roman Road**

You may already be familiar with the Roman Road, but it is a great way to describe the message of the cross – the message of Jesus Christ – using a few scriptures that are easy to find, easy to memorize and easy to understand. This is just one tool to express the Gospel – the Good News of Jesus and His work on the cross.

### **Romans 3:23**

*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

“All means all and that’s all all means.” All includes me and all includes you. Every single person was born with a sin nature and has failed to meet up to God’s standards. We **all** come up short.

### **Romans 6:23**

*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.*

The consequence of that sin nature is death – eternal separation from God. Since we have all sinned, we are all subject to that consequence, but Praise God there is an alternative! God offers us a gift - the gift of eternal life! We can spend eternity with Him because of Jesus Christ our Lord and the work that He did for us on the cross.

### **Romans 5:8**

*God demonstrated His love of us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

God didn’t just say He loved us. He demonstrated it by sending His only Son, Jesus Christ to take the punishment of sin for us. Even though we had done nothing to earn it – we were still sinners and under the sentence of death – Christ died in our place. Jesus was the only one who was not under the sentence of death and so He was the only one who had the authority to pay that penalty for anyone else. He paid it for all of us. All includes me and all includes you, remember?

### **Romans 10:13**

*Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*

Everyone is another way of saying “all”. There are no qualifications or prerequisites and we couldn’t meet them if there were. The only thing that we can do is call on His name and everyone – all of us who do that will be saved.

### **Romans 10:9-10**

*If you declare with your mouth “Jesus is Lord” and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*

The only thing we have to do – the only thing we can do – to be saved is to believe that Jesus is who He says He is. He paid the death penalty for each of us; He overcame death and returned from the grave. Jesus suffered the humiliation, pain and death of the cross that should have been ours. Our only response back to Him is to acknowledge that He is Lord and that we belong to Him. Saying that out loud and believing it in your heart means that you will be saved.

### **Revelation 3:20**

*Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with them and they with me.*

This verse was actually written to a church in Laodicea that was depending on their wealth instead of on Jesus Christ, but the message applies to everyone. He wants us to make a decision. Get off the fence. Not choosing **is** a decision. Jesus is Lord whether you believe it or not. Have you acknowledged Him as Lord? Have you opened the door to your heart and invited Him in? **Have you accepted the message of the cross and decided to follow Jesus?**

## The Message of the Cross

### Memory Verse: 1 Corinthians 1:18

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to those who are being saved it is the power of God.”

### Read: 1 Corinthians 1:18-21

#### 1. Why did Jesus have to die? Why not just forgive everyone on Earth?

The Bible says that the wages of sin is death. Someone had to die. Someone had to pay the penalty. Our sin nature means that we ruined the relationship between God and ourselves. God cannot tolerate sin. It goes against His very nature. He is Holy. He can't just forgive everyone and ignore the cost of sin and He can't allow anyone with sin to be in His presence. That would make Him less God. It would be contrary to the very essence of God. He made a way for the relationship to be restored – Hallelujah – but it meant that someone had to pay the price. I couldn't pay the price of my own sin so I certainly couldn't pay the price of yours. Only Jesus – who owed no sin debt – had the ability or authority to pay the price. This is the message of the cross! God loved us so very much that He demonstrated that love by sending His only Son to pay the price on our behalf and restore the relationship so we can spend eternity with Him. That's love! Love is the message of the cross! We just have to hear it and accept it and that doesn't make sense to people.

#### 2. What is so significant about the fact that the message of the cross doesn't make sense to those who are perishing? Why destroy the wisdom of the wise and frustrate the intelligence of the intelligent?

God just does things His way. He loves to work upside down and opposite of what we as humans think. I am so glad that it doesn't make sense. I am glad I can't figure it out with wisdom or intelligence. That means that it's God! His power is so far above anything that we can figure out or rationalize. Isn't that encouraging? The farther things are above our reasoning and intellect, the more powerful God must be. If it all made sense, would the power, majesty and sovereignty of God be diminished? Not at all, but it would certainly be less impressive if it was something we could attain on our own. The Bible says that He uses the weak to confound the wise and that His power is made perfect in our weakness. He destroys the wisdom of the wise and frustrates the intelligence of the intelligent to make sure we can't take credit for anything. To God be ALL the Glory for the things He has done – not the things I've done. I don't want Him to be something I can figure out or understand. God is awesome! AWESOME! Hallelujah and Glory to God!

#### 3. How do we move from being intelligent and wise to one of those being saved?

Romans 10:9-10 says “If you declare with your mouth “Jesus is Lord” and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” We need to acknowledge – out loud – that Jesus is Lord. He is above anything that we can figure out. Our intelligence and wisdom is not what we rely on. The only thing that can save us is Jesus Christ. Proverbs 3:5-6 says “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your path.” If we lean on our own understanding – wisdom or intellect - we are in trouble. If we lean on Him then He will direct our path ..... directly towards Him. Are you ready to acknowledge that you don't have it all figured out ..... and never will? Are you ready to acknowledge that only the power of God can save you? Now it all starts to make sense. It's all about God. The message of the cross is **His** love for us and **His** redemptive work.