

January 22, 2023

I Corinthians 1:10-18

¹⁰Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you should be in agreement and that there should be no divisions among you, but that you should be united in the same mind and the same purpose. ¹¹For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. ¹²What I mean is that each of you says, 'I belong to Paul', or 'I belong to Apollos', or 'I belong to Cephas', or 'I belong to Christ.' ¹³Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? ¹⁴I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. ¹⁶(I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) ¹⁷For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power. ¹⁸For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Begins with divisions, ends with focus on the cross

Cross, empty tomb – empty cross, crucifix

Cross pendulant – electric chair, gurney and deadly mix of chemicals, hangman's noose

What do you believe about the cross?

Why is it, for Paul, the gospel, the "good news" of God? Is it for you?

Substitutionary Atonement: Jesus died on the cross to atone for my sins – a doctrine I reject

Jesus did not land on the cross "for my sins"; he was nailed to the cross "because of my sins"

Because of the error of my ways

Rather than face the violence of this world with more violence – he could have called down "a host of angels", "angel armies" – rather he chose to show us the way of life, God's way

Jesus goes to the cross out of love for God AND love for the world

By going to the cross Jesus reveals to us the unconditional love of God

In Jesus it is a sacrificial love, which over the millennia has often been misused, especially in relationship to women and minorities

This has been pointed out to us in recent times by feminist theologians

Still trying to figure out what sacrifice is acceptable and what one is exploitative.

My guess is when we are willing to "take up the cross", to speak or act out against unfair words, actions, and laws, despite the consequences, then that is an acceptable sacrifice

Perhaps it is when we act out of love of God and neighbor, despite the consequences and of our own free will, then that is acceptable

What I have come to see, or struggle to see, is that the cross represents love – God's unconditional love

The cross is love?

Paul warned us: "the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."