

Title: **GLORYING IN THE CROSS**

Text: Galatians 6:14

Subject: *The Glory of the Cross*

Date: Saturday Morning — September 20, 2008

Kingsport Sovereign Grace Ministry

Kingsport, TN

Reading: *Isaiah 25:1-26:4*

“1 ¶O LORD, thou *art* my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful *things*; *thy* counsels of old *are* faithfulness *and* truth.

2 For thou hast made of a city an heap; *of* a defenced city a ruin: a palace of strangers to be no city; it shall never be built.

3 Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee, the city of the terrible nations shall fear thee.

4 For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones *is* as a storm *against* the wall.

5 Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place; *even* the heat with the shadow of a cloud: the branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low.

6 ¶ And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.

7 And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations.

8 He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken *it*.

9 ¶ And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this *is* our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this *is* the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

10 For in this mountain shall the hand of the LORD rest, and Moab shall be trodden down under him, even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill.

¹ Wasilla, Alaska — (TUE 10/30/07)

Danville, Sunday Evening — November 4, 2007

Kingsport Sovereign Grace Ministry, Kingsport, TN — (SAT–09/20/08)

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11 And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth *his hands* to swim: and he shall bring down their pride together with the spoils of their hands.

12 And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls shall he bring down, lay low, *and* bring to the ground, *even* to the dust.

26:1 ¶ In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will *God* appoint *for* walls and bulwarks.

2 Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.

3 Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose* mind *is* stayed *on thee*: because he trusteth in thee.

4 Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH *is* everlasting strength.”

GLORYING IN THE CROSS**INTRODUCTION:**

Turn with me to the Book of Galatians. I want to talk to you about the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Specifically, I want to talk to you about **GLORYING IN THE CROSS**. In this great Epistle, the Apostle Paul, as he was infallibly inspired by God the Holy Spirit, declares that salvation is entirely the work of God's free grace in Christ.

GALATIANS 1

The gospel is defined many times in the Scriptures (Romans 1; 1 Corinthians 15; Ephesians 1; Colossians 1; 2 Timothy 1); and it is always defined as Paul defines it here in Galatians 1. It is always defined as the good news of grace through the accomplished redemption of Christ, giving all praise, honor and glory to God. In Galatians chapter 1 Paul tells us that there is one true gospel and that any other gospel is no gospel at all, but a false gospel. The gospel is the **good news of grace and peace** from God (v. 3).

(Galatians 1:3) "Grace *be* to you and peace from God the Father, and *from* our Lord Jesus Christ."

The gospel is the announcement and proclamation of **redemption accomplished** for sinners by the sacrifice of God's darling Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the will of God (v. 4).

(Galatians 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."

The gospel **gives all glory, honor and praise to God alone** (v. 5).

(Galatians 1:5) "To whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Every other gospel is a false gospel, a sham, a pretense, a damning gospel. Every religious message that men preach mixing grace and works, Christ's work and man's work, God's will and man's will, God's praise and man's praise, is the damning delusion of Satan (vv. 6-9).

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(Galatians 1:6-9) “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: (7) Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. (8) But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. (9) As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”

GALATIANS 2

In chapter 2 the Apostle begins to explain his meaning, telling us how to distinguish the true from the false. Here, in the second chapter he asserts that we are justified by Christ alone, without any work performed by us (2:16-21).

(Galatians 2:16) “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”

(Galatians 2:19-21) “For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. (20) 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. (21) I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness *come* by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.”

GALATIANS 3

In the third chapter the Holy Spirit inspired the Apostle Paul to assert something else. Here he tells us that sanctification (holiness) is also the work of God’s free grace alone. We are redeemed by Christ, justified by Christ, and sanctified by Christ, without our own obedience to the law. The law was our schoolmaster unto Christ. Once Christ has come to us and we have come to him, we are no longer under the law (3:1-3, 10, 19, 23-25). Those who live by faith in Christ do not live under the yoke of the law; and those who pretend to live by the law know nothing about grace and faith in Christ.

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(Galatians 3:1-3) “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? (2) This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? (3) Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?”

(Galatians 3:10) “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”

GALATIANS 4

Then, in chapter 4 Paul was inspired to tell us that the whole history of Sarah and her son Isaac and Sarah’s handmaid, Hagar, and Hagar’s son Ishmael were intended by God to be an allegory, a spiritual picture of the believer’s complete freedom from the law, a picture of the fact that the salvation of God’s elect is altogether the work of God’s grace, according to God’s purpose, promise and covenant.

GALATIANS 5

In chapter 5 the Apostle tells us that we must never allow ourselves to be entangled with the yoke of the law (vv. 1-5).

(Galatians 5:1-5) “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. (2) Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. (3) For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. (4) Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. (5) For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.”

In the rest of chapter 5 he explains that to live by the law, to live in religious legalism, is to live after the flesh and fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Believers “*live in the Spirit*” and “*walk in the Spirit*.”

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GALATIANS 6

Now, let's look at the 6th chapter. Here, Paul shows us that grace teaches us to be gracious. The love of God teaches people to love one another. Mercy experienced teaches people to be merciful. The kindness of God our Savior teaches saved sinners to be kind one to another.

(v. 1) "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; **considering thyself**, lest thou also be tempted."

(v. 2) "**Bear ye one another's burdens**, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

(v. 3) "For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself."

(v. 4) "But let every man **prove his own work**, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another."

(v. 5) "For every man shall bear his own burden."

(vv. 6-9) "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

(v. 10) "**As we have therefore opportunity**, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

(vv. 11-13) "Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand. As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh."

(v. 14-18) "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."

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(15) For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. (16) And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. (17) From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. (18) Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen. *To the Galatians written from Rome.*”

Go back to verse 14. If God the Holy Spirit will enable me, I want to try to tell you something about what Paul meant when he said, “*God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

THE CROSS

What does Paul mean by the cross? He is not talking about **the historic fact** that Christ died upon the cross. The knowledge of that fact, though it is necessary to salvation, is not salvation. Neither is Paul referring to **the literal, wooden cross** upon which Christ died. He was not an idolater, a worshipper of religious relics. He knew that there was no superstitious, spiritual value in that piece of wood. And he certainly is not suggesting that we glory in **some sign**, symbol, representation, or form of the cross.

When Paul speaks of the cross, **he is talking about the glorious, soul saving doctrine of the cross**, the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is talking about **blood atonement** (Rom. 5:6-11),

(Romans 5:6-11) “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. (7) For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. (8) But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (9) Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. (10) For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. (11) And not only *so*, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.”

- **legal propitiation** (Rom. 3:24-26),

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(Romans 3:24-26) “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: (25) Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; (26) To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”

- **substitutionary redemption** (2 Cor. 5:18-21),

(2 Corinthians 5:17-21) “Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (18) And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; (19) To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (20) Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. (21) For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

- **and free justification** (Rom. 5:19).

(Romans 5:19) “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”

As it is used here, in Galatians 6:14, and as it is commonly used in the Epistles of the New Testament, **the word “cross” refers to the gospel of Christ**. Pagans glory in religious relics. Idolaters glory in religious images, signs, and symbols. Ignorant people glory in religious feelings, emotions and experiences. **God’s people glory in the gospel of Christ**, not in the “old rugged cross” the sentimentalists sing about, but the old, old story of redeeming blood. **We glory in that which is the revelation of the glory of God**.

HOW?

How did Paul glory in the cross? **The word “glory” means to exalt, to boast of, and to rejoice in**. Paul exalted, boasted of and rejoiced in the sin-

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atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cursed tree. He exalted **the doctrine of the cross as the only theme of Holy Scripture** and the singular subject of his preaching (1 Cor. 2:2; 9:16). He saw “*Christ crucified*” as the whole counsel of God, the message of all the types, promises and prophecies of the Old Testament, the basis of hope for sinners, the motive of all godliness and the message he was sent to proclaim.

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

(1 Corinthians 9:16) “For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!”

This man rejoiced in the cross, the gospel of Christ, as **the only ground of his confident hope before God**. He trusted Christ alone as his Savior (Phil. 3:3; 1 Cor. 1:30). He counted all his religious works, knowledge and experiences to be nothing but dung, that he might be found in Christ, robed in his righteousness and washed in his blood.

And he preached the cross, boasting of Christ’s death as the only means of reconciliation to and acceptance with God, the only means of salvation for guilty sinners (Gal. 2:21). If righteousness cannot be gained by man’s obedience to the law of God (And it cannot!), then no man can be saved by anything else he might do. Nothing can save a man’s soul, nothing can bring a sinner to God, nothing can make a sinner acceptable in the sight of God but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is “*the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*” that makes it possible for the holy Lord God to be both “*a just God and a Savior*.” It is the cross of Christ that makes it possible for God to be both “*just and Justifier*.” Sinners have hope before God only because of “*the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*.” Therefore saved sinners rejoice to say with the Apostle, “*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*.”

Everything about the doctrine of the cross is glorious. It was a **glorious Savior** who died. He died for a **glorious purpose**, to redeem God’s elect from the fall. His death **reveals the glory of God**. And by his death the

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Lord Jesus Christ **raises ruined sinners up to a glorious inheritance**. No wonder Paul exclaimed, “*God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!*” **Why did Paul glory in the cross?** Let me give you five answers to that question.

1. **It is a compassion revealed.**

Would you know the love of God? Then look into the death of Christ upon the cursed tree. Only there can it be truly realized that “*God is love*” (Rom.5:8; John 3:16; 1 John 3:16; 4:9-10).

(John 3:16) “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

(Romans 5:8) “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

(1 John 3:16) “Hereby perceive we the love *of God*, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.”

(1 John 4:9-10) “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. (10) Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.”

2. **It is a covenant respected.**

Long before the world began God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, entered into a covenant of grace by which the salvation of God’s elect was infallibly secured (2 Sam. 23:5; Jer. 31:31-34; 32:37-40).

(2 Samuel 23:5) “Although my house *be* not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all *things*, and sure: for *this is* all my salvation, and all *my* desire, although he make *it* not to grow.”

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(Jeremiah 31:31-34) “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: (32) Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: (33) But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. (34) And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

(Jeremiah 32:37-40) “Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: (38) And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: (39) And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: (40) And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.”

Our Lord Jesus, by his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, as our Substitute, fulfilled and ratified that everlasting covenant (John 10:16-18; Heb. 9:16-22; 13:20).

(John 10:15-18) “As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. (16) And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd. (17) Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. (18) No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”

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(Hebrews 9:16-22) “For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. (17) For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. (18) Whereupon neither the first *testament* was dedicated without blood. (19) For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, (20) Saying, This *is* the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. (21) Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. (22) And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”

(Hebrews 13:20) “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,”

3. **It is a conquest realized** (John 12:31-33).

(John 12:31-33) “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. (32) And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me. (33) This he said, signifying what death he should die.”

Upon the cross Christ justified his elect, conquered Satan and procured the Spirit’s effectual call of his elect, guaranteeing the salvation of every sinner for whom he died.

4. **It is a curse removed.**

The blood of Christ cannot fail to save every soul for whom that blood was shed, because the blood of Christ poured out unto death upon the cross has fully removed the curse of the law from God’s elect (Rom. 8:1; Gal. 3:13). The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ shall never be discovered a miscarriage! “*He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.*”

(Galatians 3:13-14) “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree: (14) That the blessing of Abraham might

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come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

(Romans 8:1-4) “*There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (2) For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. (3) For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: (4) That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

(Romans 8:32-39) “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? (33) **Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect?** *It is* God that justifieth. (34) **Who is he that condemneth?** *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. (35) **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (36) As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. (37) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. (38) For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, (39) Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

5. **It is a comfortable rule.**

In Galatians 5:16 Paul is still talking about the glory of the cross. He says, “*As many as walk according to this rule.*” What rule? The rule of the cross. “*Peace (shall) be on them!*” All who live under the rule and dominion of the cross find peace (Matt. 11: 28-30). Believers are not under the rule of the Mosaic law (Rom. 6:14; 7:4; 10:4). And we are not under the rule of religious traditions (Col. 2:16-22). But we do gladly live under the blessed, comfortable rule of the cross.

- We are motivated by Christ’s death upon the cross (1 Cor. 6:19-20).
- We are constrained by the love of Christ (2 Cor. 5:14).

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- And we seek in all things to be conformed to the example of our crucified Savior (Phil. 3:10).

True faith brings needy sinners to Christ, puts on Christ and walks in Christ. Faith brings sinners to the cross and glories only in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto us and we unto the world.

FAITH'S CONNECTION

Though faith is not righteousness, it is the believer's connection to righteousness. Faith finds in Christ and enjoys in Christ the assurance of perfect, indestructible righteousness before God through the merits of God's own Son. Faith in Christ assures the believing sinner of eternal life and everlasting righteousness in the ages to come, depending upon the perpetuity of that righteousness which can never change. Blessed be God, we shall never put off that Christ whom we put on when we believed (Rom 12:14; Gal 3:27). The garments of salvation shall never wear thin! The robe of righteousness in which the Lord God has clothed us shall never wax old! The beauty our Savior has put upon us (his own beauty) is a beauty that fadeth not away!

FAITH'S PLACE

Faith abides ever at the cross. It never takes us away from the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, to which at first it led us. Many seem to think that believers quickly get beyond the cross and leave it behind. Many vainly imagine that the cross has done all it can for us once we believe the gospel. Many tell us we must abandon the cross and go forward, that to remain always at the cross is to be babes, not men of faith. Nonsense!

I remind you, the cross spoken of in our text is not the mere wooden pole, or some imitation of it, such as papists use. The sooner we abandon such idolatrous things as that, the better. When the Word of God speaks of the cross in which faith glories, it is talking about that great gospel of God's free grace in Christ, the crucified Substitute, which the cross embodies. We can no more part with that than we can part with life eternal. In this sense, to turn our back upon the cross would be turning our back upon Christ crucified. It would be giving up our connection with the Lamb of God slain upon the cursed tree! This we cannot, must not, and shall not do!

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All that Christ did and suffered, from the manger to his resurrection glory, forms one glorious whole. No part of our Redeemer's work shall ever become needless or obsolete. To forsake any part of his work is to forsake him. I always rejoice in the incarnation of Christ. Yet, I know that the incarnation cannot save. I always delight to follow my Master into Gethsemane. Yet, I know that his agony there was not the finished work. I always glory in the cross. My face is always toward it. My eye is ever on the crucified One. Yet, I am convinced that the sacrifice there was completed once for all. I never cease to look into the empty tomb with delight. Yet, I rejoice to know that it is the risen, ascended, exalted, reigning Christ who gives eternal life to this needy sinner. Leaving nothing behind, I trust the whole Christ and the whole of his work for all my righteousness, justification, forgiveness, acceptance, and everlasting salvation.

Amen.