

The Appeal of the Cross

1 Corinthians 1:18; Galatians 6:14

“And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself” (John 12:32).

Why is the cross so appealing to us?

It appeals to our understanding. Christianity came from an event in history. It cannot be reduced to an idea, a philosophy, or a statement. It is a Person (Jesus Christ). It is not only what God said, but also what God did.

By worldly standards the life of Christ was a failure. Rome and Jerusalem were unchanged by it. When Jesus ascended to heaven, He left only 120 devout disciples in Jerusalem (Acts 1:11–15). They were unknowns, penniless and without political power (Acts 4:13). However, when Peter and the other apostles preached on the Day of Pentecost, about three thousand people were baptized. Anyone who thinks about it will conclude that the greatest event of all time is Jesus' dying for us. The God who made us became one of us in the person of His Son. He walked on earth with us and took our sins upon His shoulders to the cross! Amazing grace!

Nothing on earth is as powerful as the cross of Christ. Culture tries to offer Christ without a cross. Humanism offers a cross without a Christ. One is religion without

sacrifice; the other is sacrifice without religion. Both fail!

The cross appeals to our deepest emotions. Jesus' dying on the cross stirs our indignation; it also inflames our admiration. The meaning of it breaks our hearts. Jesus said, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself" (John 12:32). The magnet of the cross draws people to God. The closer you get, the more powerful it is. You tremble; you cry; you rejoice! The cross can only be thought about and received with passion. Salvation is not a business transaction. Empathy, sympathy, anger, and joy are engendered within you! Every day there is something new, different, and poignant that arises from it.

The cross appeals to our human dignity. The all-powerful God could have coerced; instead, He invites. God does not bully. Jesus draws—not drives—people to God (John 6:44–47). The cross does not push, intimidate, or manipulate people. Paul called the earthly life and death of Jesus the "mystery of godliness" (1 Timothy 3:16). No "myth" can change a person. Jesus changes people. His love changes people. He loved us enough to give His life in our stead, so that we might live with Him eternally—but He lets us decide.

The cross appeals to our sense of moral obligation. The cross is God's "plus" sign for all that is "minus" from the world. No one can remain neutral at the foot of it. Scheming Caiaphas, cowardly Pilate, and heartless Herod have all been judged by history. Who won? Jesus Christ! He calls us to share in His victory and to call others to share in it with us. There is no end to the cross. It must be given to others; it is the only thing worth giving. Nothing we can do by ourselves has any worth to it in the long

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run! It is unthinkable that sinners could glory in anything else but the cross.

The story of the cross is the greatest story ever told.
It has the truest, deepest, and purest appeal!

*The cross . . .
there is no other way!*