

# *Why is the cross offensive to you?*

March 27, 2016

Have you ever seen the Mojave Memorial Cross which stands on Sunrise Rock about 12 miles south of I-15, and 6 miles north of Cima, California. The original cross was erected in honor of fallen U.S. war veterans in 1934.

It had its shares of problems. It was boarded up after lower court rulings declared it illegal because of separation of church and state constitutional concerns. Then, on the night of May 9-10, 2010, the cross was cut down and stolen from its place by someone. It was held in legal limbo for years until a private group bought the two acres of public land surrounding the cross so that it could remain. Dozens of other cases like this around our nation could be cited.

Generally, the atheists and ACLU lawyers don't mind about other religions' symbols. They don't destroy or go after buddha statues, Hindu goddess statues, etc. in court-rooms. Certainly not Islam's crescent moon and star. Because they know that muslims will come after them for their lives. But to these people, the cross of Christ is an open season. Why? Why is the cross offensive to people?

It is not just the atheists and ACLU lawyers who take offense of the cross. The message of the cross – with all of its blood soaked meaning – often brings staunch resistance from so-called “liberal Christians.” In 2012, the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. which is a very, very liberal denomination wanted the song writers of the popular modern hymn “In Christ Alone” to change a portion of its lyrics from “Till on that cross as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied” to “Till on that cross as Jesus died, the love of God was magnified” to make it less bloody and less offensive. The song writers refused.

I am going to ask my original question again: Why is the cross offensive to people? How about you? Is it offensive to you?

## **A. OFFENSIVE TO UNBELIEVERS**

*1 Corinthians 1:22-23 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness*

Think about it, ladies and gentlemen. The cross during the time of Jesus was a place to execute criminals. It was a place where the vilest and worst criminals died. And Christianity considers the cross as one of the focal points of its faith. It doesn't make one bit of sense to unbelievers. But there is more than that. The real reason for the unbelievers' dislike or hatred for the cross of Jesus goes deeper than that. I find at least four of them:

### **1) The cross of Jesus offends unbelievers because it disapproves secular humanism.**

*Romans 3:10-13 As it is written: “There is none righteous, no, not one; 11 There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. 12 They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.” 13 “Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit”*

The cross of Jesus is contrary to the main liberal wish of the deification of humanity, as well as the supposedly “goodness of the human heart.” Contrary to their ideology, the Bible clearly says that there is no one righteous and good.

## **2) The cross of Jesus offends unbelievers because it cuts straight against the grain of worldly wisdom.**

*1 Corinthians 1:27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty*

The intellects and social elites cannot fathom why God would choose the people from the bottom rung of the social ladder. To them, they were nothing and they are nothing. But God stooped to paint them and made them into His masterpieces. How dare God does such a thing, right?

Out of His grace, God stoops down and saves the people of nobody, the nothings, the discarded. He has chosen the foolish things, the weak things, the base, and the despised. The words "has chosen" is with a meaning of decisive intention from God's part, but it has nothing to do with humans.

Why has He bothered to make any of us valuable? God will not tolerate the proud. So, He steps on the egos of the intellects and social elites by lifting up the dregs of society as honored citizens of His kingdom.

Listen up, pride is self-deification. It is that competitive drive within to be richer, cleverer, better-looking, or more powerful than someone else. We like the feeling and recognition that come from standing above the rest. And we seek these pleasures in everything we do, including our pursuit of God, unfortunately.

Before I got saved by Jesus, I used to think that God needs me on His side to get the things done, because I considered myself very capable and innovative. What a joker I was! Yes, the joke was on me. God didn't need me, I needed Him desperately.

## **3) The cross of Jesus offends unbelievers because it says to the world, "You're a sinner."**

*Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*

The cross of Jesus speaks to people about their sins – their sins of disobedience and immorality to God. We are living in the world of immorality, aren't we? In California, if a man wakes up in the morning and thinks that he is a woman on that day, he is allowed to walk into a women's public restroom, including elementary, junior, and senior high schools. Also the Educational Dept. of California State is considering starting sex education to the kindergarten students, sponsored by Planned Parenthood. Tell me that is not perversion and immorality.

I asked you to underline the word "all". Do you see any additional words like "with the exception of you"? All means ALL, without an exception. Every single human being, from the first couple Adam and Eve, and everyone in this room are sinners. We all deserved the judgment of the holy and righteous God; We all deserved death on the cross, not Jesus; and we all deserved hell as punishment.

## **4) The cross of Jesus offends unbelievers because it opposes human effort to achieve their own salvation.**

*John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

People, in general, would like to think that they are going to go to heaven after they die. First of all, the majority of them are scared to death of dying anyway. But the idea of not going to heaven, but going to hell where there is an eternal fire doesn't

sit well with them. So they do anything to make their way to heaven instead of submitting to the way of Jesus.

You see, only one thing separates us from God and keeps us out of heaven – and that is our sin. This is why our greatest need is to have our sins forgiven and cleansed, for only then can we be reconciled to God and go to be with Him throughout eternity. Jesus did that on the cross.

But how is this possible? No matter how good we are, we can never erase our own sins. Only God can do this – and that is what He did by sending Jesus Christ into the world for us. Without the cross, there is no salvation, there is no forgiveness.

## **B. OFFENSIVE TO SELF-APPOINTED CHRISTIANS AND BACKSLIDERS**

I tell ya, I don't care if you were a Sunday school teacher or attended a Sunday school when you were a kid, or a deacon or an elder or even a pastor. Unless there has been a personal encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ, it means nothing to God the Father. We have a lot of religiosity in this country. We have a great deal of worship in America that is not true worship. As a matter of fact, I read an article from a Christian magazine that reported one of the well-known worship leaders once said, "We sing about the cross too much." Seriously???

*Matthew 7:21-23 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"*

The Pharisees fasted twice a week. They paid tithes. They were orthodox. They were fundamentalists. They believed the Scriptures from cover to cover. And yet Jesus, in the most severe language, denounced them and indicated that they were not saved.

There is no pride in the world as horrible as religious pride and it gives a false sense of eternal security.

You might have been a dedicated Christian in the past. For whatever the reason, this world and your compromises to its influences got you to backslide from the Lord. You might say, "I am not a backslider. I still believe in God." If that is the case, compare where you are now spiritually to where you were when you were following the Lord wholeheartedly. All of a sudden, you might realize that you are a backslider. It is no wonder you've been taking offense from the cross of Jesus.

Do you need more examples? Here is a list of some typical symptoms of a backslidden person, though it is not comprehensive. See if your mindset is matching with this:

**1) You come up with many excuses why you can not read the Bible and have a daily devotion every day.**

**2) You'd rather hang around with worldly and carnal people than godly people, because it appeals to your flesh.**

**3) You start to find faults with other Christians and blame them for not wanting to be with them.**

4) Going to church becomes burdensome and you feel that it is not necessary to go to church services and Bible studies that once you could not have enough.

5) You start to lower your high godly standards to accommodate your compromise with the world.

6) You are mad at me for what I've been speaking about. You feel like I've singled you out. No, I am not, I don't know where you are spiritually. Being mad at me is a proof of your backsliding.

Jesus still loves you very much, but your love for Him got cold and your heart became hard. Losing your first love for Jesus is at the root of all compromise and sin. If you have fallen, repent and return to the passion for the Lord you once had.

### **C. APPLICATIONS**

1) We gain nothing but God's displeasure if we seek to remove the offense of the cross.

2) Yet the cross offers the only solution for the debt of man's sin to God. We cannot make our way to heaven without Jesus.

3) Christians must be on guard all the time, grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus through the Word of God. This requires diligence.

It demands discipline and priorities. Oh, how we all need these desperately! Please remember this: nobody automatically drifts into spiritual growth and stability, but anybody can drift out of dedication and growth.

By the way, do you know what the most hilarious line in the Bible is? Pilate told the Pharisees about the security of Jesus' tomb: *"You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how."* Oh, yeah! How did it go?