



“St. Andrew’s Cross”

Crosses of Lent (5)

Exodus 3:1-14; Philippians 2:4-11; Mark 8:34-38

Grace, Mercy, Peace and Forgiveness are yours from God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Amen!

St. Paul wrote, **“The message of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”** Can the cross be a symbol that is taken for granted and lose its meaning or importance? You bet it can and it is losing its meaning, importance, and its power. The Lenten season’s purpose is to focus our attention for the need of Jesus to die on the cross. The need is your sins and my sins, but not only our sins, but the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). Two deaths took place on the “Cross of Calvary”: The death of Jesus whose death consequently brought about the death of sin, death, and the devil – ALL ONE and synonymous. With Jesus’ punishment and death no one has to pay for their sins. All who believe in Jesus as their Lord and Savior, His death, victory, and resurrection have been freed from sins’ punishment in hell.

“The Crosses of Lent” draw our attention to specific sins. Let’s review the crosses once more. **“The Latin Cross”** is the most familiar of all crosses. This cross is used to remind us how we strip the cross of its power. The cross over the centuries has been sanitized and has become just another pretty object to many. Often we strip the cross of its power when we take the cross for granted, when we’re not awed with what took place on it for our behalf. Christ died for our thanklessness.

“The Tau Cross” is often associated with Moses in the wilderness when God had Moses place a snake upon a pole. Those who looked to the snake on the pole were healed of their venomous snake bite. The reason God sent snakes to strike the people was because of their constant grumblings, discontent, and lack of trust in God to provide for their needs. It was upon the cross that God paid for your sins of grumblings, discontent with your blessings, and not trusting Him

to provide for your needs. Jesus said, ***“Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that whosoever believes in Him may have eternal life.”***

“The Evangelist’s Cross” is the shape of the “Greek Cross”, but has the additions of the four Gospels as depicted by the beasts of Ezekiel and Revelation. There is but ONE Gospel: Jesus Christ died for our sins and the sins of the world. Because of Jesus’ sacrifice of Himself there is NOTHING anyone has to do in order to be cleansed of their sins. Faith alone in Jesus as their Savior and Redeemer saves them. Too often, though, the Gospel is confused with the law, in that, many believe they must be good or not be bad to earn their salvation or to help with it. That in itself, stripes the cross of the power of God, as it says Christ’s sacrifice was not sufficient, thus making “another gospel”. Christ died to pay for our making another gospel when there is ONLY one Gospel.

After the “Evangelists’ Cross” we have **“The Mission Cross”**. Jesus commissioned the Church to make disciples of all nations. Jesus told His disciples, **“you are to be My witnesses in Jerusalem, all of Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”** The Gospel of the Evangelists is to be taken to the four corners of the world. Thus, we have the four crosses. How are you with spreading the Gospel and making disciples of all nations? The Christian Church is pitiful about evangelizing. This sin, laziness of sharing the Gospel of Christ, has been paid for on Calvary too.

Tonight’s cross is **“The St. Andrew’s Cross.”** It is fitting that this cross follows the “Evangelists” and the “Mission Cross”. The Apostle Andrew epitomizes what the Christian should be like as an evangelist and missionary. St. Andrew is called **“The Protokletos”**. He is the proto-type of the Apostles. **“Protokletos”** is Greek for **“First Called”** (John 1:40). This, however, isn’t why St. Andrew epitomizes what a Christian should be. After all, only one can be the “first called”. What is known of Andrew in Scriptures? Very little is written about him, however, his first act probably speaks volumes of his whole life. The day (John 1:36) after Jesus was baptized Jesus was walking by John

the Baptist. Two of John's disciples were with him. As Jesus walked by John said, "**Behold, the Lamb of God!**" The two disciples heard John say this and they followed Jesus. One of these two disciples was Andrew. The first thing Andrew did when he left Jesus was to find his brother, Simon, and Andrew told him, "**We have found the Messiah**" (John 1:41-42). Andrew then took Simon to Jesus.

Most of you first received the message of the cross at your baptism, so I would assume it would have been hard for you to immediately seek out your family to share the Good News. The questions are: What have you done since? Have you felt an urgency to share the Gospel with other relatives or friends? How many of your have invited someone to Mt. Pisgah?

More about Andrew: Tradition says that Andrew went on four missionary trips. Tradition, secular writings, and events in certain parts of the world commemorate St. Andrew's work in their area. Numerous church fathers, and others, wrote that St. Andrew was martyred in Patras, Greece. This was after doing mission work in areas that are now known as Poland, Russia, Scotland, Asia Minor, China, and Africa. It sounds like St. Andrew went to the four corners of the earth himself. Andrew, like his brother, Peter, did not feel worthy to be crucified in the same way that his Lord Jesus had been crucified. So, Andrew asked for a cross of a different shape like an "X". Further, to express the great difference between himself and his Lord, he was crucified upside down and fastened to the cross with ropes rather than nails. The consequence of this was the prolonging of a painful death over three days. It is said that, while upside down and dying, he continued to share the Gospel of Jesus and many believed, because of his witnessing, in Christ as their Savior.

Whether or not these traditions are true we will only know when we get to heaven. But the type of cross Andrew was presumably crucified on has made itself known. "**St. Andrew's Cross**" is the cross on the Scottish flag. St. Andrew is the "Patron Saint" as they believe he preached the

Gospel there. A spider (*argiope mangal*) in the mangroves of Singapore holds its eight legs in pairs, forming an “X” shape. For this reason this spider is called the “St. Andrew’s Spider”. A small shrub with four yellow petals (*St. John’s-wort* family) forms a cross in the shape of an “X” and is known as, you guessed it, “St. Andrew’s Cross”.

What stands out of the tradition of Andrew’s life? At the cross he humbled himself as he felt he was not worthy to die as Jesus. Andrew took up his cross and followed Jesus to his death (Mark 8:34). He campaigned for Jesus wherever he went. Andrew put Jesus first. Andrew was willing to sacrifice all, even his life, to make disciples of all nations. How about you?

Andrew followed the example of his Lord. St. Paul wrote to the church of Philippi,

“⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”
(Philippians 2:4–8, ESV)

When Christ humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross, He did so because of your sins, my sins, and the world’s sin of selfish, sin of not denying one’s self, and not taking up their cross and following Him. Your sins have been paid for in FULL! Won’t you take up your cross and follow Jesus even to the point, if necessary, to be obedient to death, even death on a cross? Jesus was willing to humble Himself for you! Won’t you for Him? Let it be so!

Amen!