Mount Carmel Baptist Church

The Power Of The Cross

By Toby Crowder
Mitchell County

1 Cor 1:17-18 *"For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."*

This month Christians everywhere will be celebrating the resurrection of Christ and rejoicing in the hope that we have in Him! While we are celebrating what this means to the believer, sadly there will be many who will never see the true meaning of why we celebrate Easter. They only see another "Christian" holiday or a time to celebrate the arrival of Spring and the Easter Bunny. Even though we recognize and celebrate Jesus's resurrection, I can't help but wonder if we have become so accustomed to the story of the Cross, that we fail to recognize its power and relevancy in our world!

As Christians, we need to remember the simple power of the Cross and its significance in our lives. In this world of chaos and confusion, we desperately need a reminder of something that will make a difference in our lives, both here and in eternity. The Cross of Christ is still relevant and powerful in this day and time, even though our modern culture ignores the sacrifice that Christ made for sinful humanity. Crucifixion was and is the cruelest form of execution that has ever existed. Though Roman citizens were exempt from crucifixion, it was the Romans themselves who had perfected this cruel type of torture and death. This punishment was reserved for the vilest of criminals; slaves, thieves, and other transgressors. It was on this Roman cross, that Jesus Christ, the perfect and spotless Lamb of God spent about six hours (from about 9 am until 3 pm) and the Bible tells us that there was darkness for the space of three hours. This was directly fulfilling the prophecy of Amos 8:9 "*And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord GOD, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day."* Also, the veil of the temple was torn asunder and a great earthquake rent the rocks, opened graves, and (later on) many of the dead came forth and appeared in Jerusalem (Matt 27:51-53). While it is difficult for us to imagine such awesome displays of God's power, there were those near Calvary that day who actually beheld these things firsthand, but still did not believe in the POWER of Calvary.

Whether they accepted or rejected the finished work of Christ on Calvary, any of those in attendance that day were never the same; the Cross made an impact on their life… And so, it is today! We may not have beheld the crucifixion and the events of Calvary firsthand, but we are told these truths in the Word of God and are faced with the POWER of the Cross. The Cross revealed that God did not intend for Satan and sin to have victory over mankind and He provided a solution! Jesus said in John 12: 32, that through His death He would draw all men unto Him and He made a similar statement to Nicodemus in John 3:14-15 "*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."* Jesus is making a twofold statement to Nicodemus, but is focusing on the cross and what must take place at Calvary to pay the debt of sin and claim victory over death and the grave!

As we celebrate Easter, is it still relevant to you? Have you seriously considered the state of your sins that separates you from God? Have you truly repented, and by faith accepted Him as the ransom for your sins? While we see the effects and consequences of sin all over our world, I am reminded that the greatest and most awful effect of sin is that it separates us from God, and if we die lost in our sins we will spend an eternity in Hell and forever separated from God. Truly, there is POWER in the grand old story of the Cross and the reason that we celebrate Resurrection Day!

Toby Crowder serves as Pastor of Mt. Carmel Baptist Church in Spruce Pine. He and his wife Leslie have been married for 28 years and have two daughters, Emilee, and Katy. He can be contacted via the church's website MCfamily-forChrist.org or mtcarmelsprucepine@gmail.com

Mayland Early College

St. Jude Fundraiser

Mitchell County

On Tuesday, January 14th Mayland Early College High School hosted an after-school event for Valentine's Day to raise money for St. Judes Children's Hospital. The students got to enjoy music, some ice cream with a brownie, and a variety of drinks of their choosing.

For the first two weeks of February, MECHS students engaged in a "Penny War" sponsored by the Key Club. 100% of the proceeds will be donated from students to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Students in grade levels 9-13 will have the opportunity to compete against each other by placing pennies and dollars in various buckets marked with their grade level.

St. Jude's is a cancer research center for children. Their mission is to help treat and defeat childhood cancer and other life-threatening diseases. Not only does St. Jude help the children, but they also help out their families by not charging them for their child's medical bills.

This charity holds special meaning to MECHS. Chase Ambrose, a current senior at MECHS, was a patient at St. Jude during his freshman year of high school. He remembers meeting and seeing doctors, nurses, medical assistants, and patients from all over the world. More than anything, he remembers the care and kindness of those affiliated with St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. During his ten months of treatment, he worked with the teaching staff at the hospital to stay on top of his studies, as well as with the staff at MECHS to complete remote work.

Chase says St. Jude works hard to ensure their patient's experience and remember positive elements of their recovery journey, such as teen hangout rooms, barbeque nights, and special events with their families. Chase is thankful for the care he received while at the hospital and is excited to move on to the next chapter of his life where he will be attending Western Carolina University in pursuit of an electrical engineering career. He is currently enjoying working on coding projects in high school and looks forward to continuing this passion in the future.

So far, MECHS has raised $1,037 to be donated to St. Judes children's hospital.

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