

POWER AUDIT - has compromise robbed us of the power of the Cross?

A study about power - of sin, man and the Cross

I have been troubled in recent weeks by the extent that Satan has invaded the institutions and the hearts of minds of people all over the world. It's a breath-taking takeover on a massive scale.

Whilst I have seen this as a massive problem I have been buoyed in my spirit and mind by the massive opportunity for the Gospel.

The state we are in in Australia alone is just like the NT church, which endured great persecution, yet flourished. It is also like the luke-warm church in Nazi Germany in the early 1930's before it mostly prostituted itself before the State and became an agent for ushering in tyranny and destruction on a massive scale.

Those days are here now. Persecution has begun and the year 2016 signals the escalation of the attack on the Church by the marshalled forces of Anti-Christ.

How then should we treat the matter of the Cross every day, but certainly on this day - Good Friday. Let this be the day when your eyes are opened and the fires of zeal for Christ begin to burn brighter than ever before.

Make no mistake. We are in the last days. The drama of it as described vividly in God's word is being played out for us on the big screen of life than ever before.

The passage I want to focus on is 1Cor 17-31:

1Co 1:17 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.

1Co 1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

1Co 1:19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

1Co 1:20 Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

1Co 1:21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

1Co 1:22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

1Co 1:23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

1Co 1:24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

1Co 1:25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

1Co 1:26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*:

1Co 1:27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

1Co 1:28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

1Co 1:29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

1Co 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

1Co 1:31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

The verse I want to focus on and use as the tip on the end of a spear is:

1Co 1:17 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.**

What does "none effect" mean?

- *κενόω, kenoō, ken-o'-o*. From [G2756](#); to *make empty*, that is, (figuratively) to *abase, neutralize, falsify*: - make (of none effect, of no reputation, void), be in vain.
- “emptied” of its power

- **related to 1Co 15:14** And if Christ be not risen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* also vain). **1Co 15:17** And if Christ be not raised, your faith *is* vain; ye are yet in your sins.

How is the message of the cross nullified?

- if it's not preached ie. silence is not an option - silence is consent with the world
- if it's minimised by contamination and compromise with the world (the demand is for holiness - sanctification, separation)
- if it is contaminated with false doctrine
- a focus on manner, not matter. If it is packaged with over-riding philosophy, cleverness and oratorical colour which exalts the speaker at the expense of exalting Christ. It is the Gospel alone, not the Gospel plus man's philosophies.
- distortion - making it identical with the crucifix, as though the Cross of Christ were nothing more than His crucifixion
- superficiality - holding to the Cross without a personal recognition of its claim
- lack of faith in the power of the Cross.
 - the use of the Cross for objects foreign to itself e.g Crusaders murdering Jews.

What happens then?

- It's then made void / none effect to the listener and the speaker
- faith is eroded and the power of God removed.
 - there is no conviction of the Spirit in a listeners heart.
 - people stay in ignorance - of the mystery of the cross is the foundation, for example, of the whole Koran.
 - *He, who rejects the cross, continues in ignorance also of the rest of revealed truth c/f he, who receives it, becomes afterwards acquainted with its power, virtue and glory*

How should the Cross be preached? - Answer, like Paul:

- portrayal of man's guilt to the highest degree
- portrayal of the historical reality of the flesh and blood struggle of our Lord in the Garden and on the Cross with human guilt, wretchedness, and wrong

- portrayal of God's love to the highest degree
- portrayal to the highest degree of the huge cost our Saviour paid on the Cross and the message of love and forgiveness demonstrated in his extended arms, bleeding brow, and pierced side
- portrayal of the need for a deep inward personal experience to the highest degree so we recognise that 'I am crucified with Christ'. 'The life I live in the flesh I live by faith of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me.' 'God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- portrayal of the miracle won for us of union with Christ to the highest degree
- portrayal to the highest degree that the sacred union we have with Jesus Christ is the foundation for the sacred union of traditional marriage and for union in the Body of Christ
- portrayal of the reality that we are nothing except so far as we are in Christ but something powerful in this world as God exchanges His strength and power for our weakness and humility
- portrayal that our testimony is useless if it be not begun, continued, and ended in Christ.
- portrayal to the highest degree that the Cross is the foundation on which our faith is built
- portrayal to the highest degree that the ultimate purpose of man is to be embraced by a loving Heavenly father into His family, in His character, likeness and to share in His glory

Let me now look at some sobering verses of a similar vein

Mar 7:13 Making the word of God of **none effect** through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

Rom 4:14 For if they which are of the law *be* heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of **none effect**:

Mat 15:6 And honour not his father or his mother, *he shall be free*. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of **none effect** by your tradition.

Psa 33:10 The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.

Mar 3:28 Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme:

Pro 26:11 As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.

2Pe 2:22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

THE POWER OF SIN

- is there much sin in the world today? Do we see evil abounding? Do we see corruption on a massive scale? Are you surprised and amazed at the rapid acceleration of sin and Satanic rule in our lifetime
 - Rev 12:12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.
 - surely these are the last days - and a time to trust and obey God rather than to trust man and obey his unrighteous decrees birthed in the pit of hell
- the Cross doesn't make any sense without a clear understanding of the reality and power of sin, traced from it's origins in the garden of Eden, right throughout history, in our present time and for the remaining years until the Lord comes again
- what was lost in the Garden through disobedience - relationship with God and access to all His blessings, the ability to form authentic relationships with others, authority, dominion and power.
- man lost his innocence, his glory, his destiny, his capacity to think straight
- he developed strategies, ways, laws and kingdoms to live without God and establish man's kingdom on earth.
- how futile, what fantasy, what insanity
- we only have to look at the evidence - all mans works get swept away
- and in the garden man took on a new master, Satan, and became his servants, his slaves. Satan became man's ruler

- Joh 8:44 Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.
- Joh 12:31 Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the **prince** of this world be cast out.
- Joh 14:30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the **prince** of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.
- Eph 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the **prince** of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:
- Rev 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the **prince** of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,
- Rom 1:21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not **as God**, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.
- Rom 1:22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became **fools**,
- Gen 3:5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be **as gods**, knowing good and evil.
- 2Th 2:4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he **as God** sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.
- before we get to scriptures about the Cross and the Crucifixion let's let Paul paint a picture for us about the reality, drama and significance of sin throughout human history

Rom 5:19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the **obedience** of one shall many be made righteous.

Rom 5:20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. **But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:**

Rom 5:21 That **as sin hath reigned unto death**, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Rom 6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

Rom 6:2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Rom 6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were **baptized into his death?**

Rom 6:4 Therefore we are **buried with him by baptism into death**: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Rom 6:5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness of his* resurrection:

Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that **our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.**

Rom 6:7 For **he that is dead is freed from sin.**

Rom 6:8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

Rom 6:9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; **death hath no more dominion** over him.

Rom 6:10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

Rom 6:11 **Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Rom 6:12 Let not sin therefore **reign** in your mortal body, that ye should **obey it** in the lusts thereof.

Rom 6:13 Neither yield ye your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God.

Rom 6:14 For **sin shall not have dominion over you**: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

Rom 6:15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

Rom 6:16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

Rom 6:17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

Rom 6:18 **Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.**

Rom 6:19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity

unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

Rom 6:20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

Rom 6:21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things *is* death.

Rom 6:22 But now being **made free from sin**, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

Rom 6:23 **For the wages of sin *is* death**; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE POWER OF MAN

Joh 19:10 Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have **power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee**?

Joh 19:11 Jesus answered, **Thou couldest have no power *at all* against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.**

Let's look at what AUTHORITY & POWER is all about

- legal power
- government - a right to command or act
- power derived from opinion , respect and custom
- weight of character, respectability, dignity
- the ability to make things happen (by God and by man)

Let's illustrate this with the drama of todays events

Rev 17:13 These have **one mind**, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

COMMENT

- how, how much, law, law to legitimise and popularise sin
- who loses - first individual Christians and the Church, then the people.

Pro 29:2 When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.

Joh 10:10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.

Luk 4:18 The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

1Jn 3:8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

1Pe 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

Act 5:29 Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, **We ought to obey God rather than men.**

Act 5:30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.

Act 5:31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

Act 5:32 And **we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost,** whom God hath given to them that obey him.

Act 5:33 When they heard *that*, they were **cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.**

It was war then and it is war now. Our situation is the same as theirs (explain).

Competing kingdoms.

Good vs evil

the word of God vs the word of man

THE POWER OF THE CROSS

Joh 19:30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, **It is finished:** and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

Rom 5:17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

Rom 5:18 Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life.

Heb 2:14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and **blood**, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that **through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;**

Heb 2:15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

- *Jesus had to* take on **flesh and blood**
- He had to enter into the prison to free the captives.
- **Through death destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil:**
 - the devil did not *take* Jesus' life; He laid it down of His own accord, and no one took it from Him (Joh 10:17-18).
 - Satan had no "right" to try to take the life of Jesus because Jesus had never sinned nor was born a sinner
 - the devil's "attempted unlawful" murder was according to his nature (Joh 8:44).
 - Satan had no rights over Jesus
 - Satan's "right" to rule over man was given to him in the garden of Eden through Adam's rebellion.
 - Jesus took away Satan's "right" to rule by allowing Satan to "unlawfully" take his life on the cross
 - by Satan's "unlawful" action against Jesus, he forfeited his right to rule over man.
 - thus the end result is that the devil has no right over those who come to God through Jesus' work on the cross.

- Why? - death only has dominion over those who are born sinners or who have sinned (Rom 5:12),
- Jesus allowed the devil to *bruise His heel* so that He could *bruise his head* (Gen 3:15).
- The fear of death rules as a tyrant over humanity.
- Now whilst some Christians may have a fear of dying they should have no fear of death because it is a defeated enemy

Heb 2:17-18 Therefore, in all things **He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest** in things *pertaining* to God, **to make propitiation for the sins of the people**. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted

WOW! there is a God in Heaven who by experience knows what I am going through, and can aid me, not just feel bad for me!

For every repentant, believing Christian this is:

- the most powerful preservative against despair
- the firmest ground of hope and comfort we could ever desire or have.

Heb 9:12 Neither by the **blood** of goats and calves, but by his own **blood** he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*.

Heb 9:13 For if the **blood** of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

Heb 9:14 How much more shall the **blood** of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Heb 10:19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the **blood** of Jesus,

1Jn 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the **blood** of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

1Jn 5:8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the **blood**: and these three agree in one.

Rev 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

Rev 5:9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

Rev 12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.