

WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

CLASS NINE – THE CROSS

I. Introduction

This is Class Nine. We only have 2 to go. Today and next week. Today's topic is the Cross. Next week, the Resurrection. I know what you're thinking. You wondering why no movie scene. You're addicted. We'll get to that. I thought today I would talk first and show movie scenes last. Turn to 1 Cor 1. We have all heard many sermons about the cross. We have all heard many communion messages. We all had some version of the cross study before we were baptized. Most of us have probably heard the medical account of the cross. I'm not sure what more I can say about what the cross means to us as disciples. So I thought instead we would talk a little bit about how the world views the cross. What do people in our society think about the cross?

II. Foolishness

Read :18-25. Most people in our society think the cross is foolishness. It doesn't really make sense to them. Our society, American society, Western civilization, our culture, is predominantly Greek in the way Paul uses the word here. The Greeks weren't religious like the Jews. The Greeks were devoted to knowledge/truth. To using the human mind to figure out the world without any supernatural explanation. Theirs was the first humanistic society. Contemporary American culture is very similar to this. Our culture has moved away from Christianity and the Bible as the primary source of authority and truth. We have replaced it with science. Don't get me wrong. I am not opposed to science. Science is awesome. I am not saying science is opposed to Christianity. I am just saying our society thinks that way. US News, p. 43. Science will discover how life started. This will prove God wasn't involved. P. 50 Biology (life) is not a miracle. Science will prove it. The unspoken message is anyone with a brain doesn't believe the Bible anymore. Our society is hoping that science has all the answers and somehow proves the Bible is not true. I personally don't think science can do that. Science looks at the physical world and not the spiritual. Even if evolution is true as a physical process, it doesn't prove whether there is a Creator behind it all. Gen 2:7 doesn't say how long God took to form man from the dust of the earth.

But my point is when you think like the world does, the cross is foolishness. It doesn't make sense. Now, obviously many people in our society were raised Christian and have heard the story of the cross and have faith to some degree. But on some gut level, it doesn't make sense to them. Why did God have to do that? Why couldn't He just wave his hand and forgive sins. People reacted to the movie the *Passion* that way. Why is it so bloody? Why couldn't Mel Gibson tone it down a little. Why did Jesus have to die so horribly? It is foolishness to people. It doesn't make sense to them.

Verse :21 tells us that God was pleased to save the people who believe the foolish message of the cross. It's really very simple. As Paul says here, you don't have to be a scholar, a philosopher, wise, smart, educated, an expert. God is making a fool out of anyone who puts their trust in those things. I've tried to bring in some scholarly stuff to

this class; stretch our brains a little. But none of that is essential to your faith. You don't have to be a rocket scientist. All you have to do is believe that Jesus died for you on a cross. Believe it is true no matter what the world thinks. And God is pleased with you.

III. That's What It's All About

I have a deep theological question. How many people here have done the Hokey Pokey? Anyone here who has never done the Hokey Pokey? Let's do it!. Last verse really loud for the folks at home. "You put your right hand in; you put your right hand out. You put your right hand in and you shake it all about. You do the Hokey Pokey and you turn yourself about." (Hands behind ears): "That's what it's all about!" Why did we do the Hokey Pokey today? Bumper sticker: What if the Hokey Pokey really is what it's all about? What if there is nothing more to life than having fun. That's how the world thinks sometimes. Like beer commercials: it's all about the beer. Nothing else is important. The Apostle Paul disagreed. 2:1-5. What life is all about is Jesus and him crucified. Being forgiven of sin. Going to heaven. Being close to God. That's what it's all about. It's not just about having fun (although God wants us to enjoy life). It's not about brilliant speech or wisdom. How smart you are. It's about Jesus and him crucified. That's what it's all about.

IV. Message of the cross is powerful.

I Cor 2:5 Paul says our faith rests on God's power. Back in 1:18 he says the message of the cross is the power of God. The message of the cross has great power. For 2,000 years, the message of the cross has made a tremendous impact on the hearts of men. It changed my life. It changed your life. It changed our hearts; the message of the cross is why we decided to follow Jesus. It can change other people too. Our friends. Our loved ones. Our children. The message of the cross is powerful. Let's watch some scenes from the *Passion of the Christ*. I think it will remind us of what we believe; remind us of the power of the cross.

Scene 8 (trial before Caiaphas)

Scene (Pilate)

Scene 29 (death and tear from heaven).