

Introduction

- Last time we saw:
 - how central the Cross was in our Christian faith;
 - how we have a fundamental problem with forgiveness - we need it because of sin!
 - and how God has a problem with forgiveness - he can't just let us off, sin is too serious!
 - *and that the Cross is central because it is there that this problem with forgiveness is sorted out, as Jesus takes our place of punishment, so we can receive forgiveness from God, and so God can give it*
- That is the heart of the gospel that we share, but it is in so many ways just the beginning
 - *for instance, one huge question we only began to touch on last time was what exactly does the Cross achieve?*
 - its got something to do with forgiveness, what is that it? what does that forgiveness achieve?
- Its that that we will be exploring this morning
- Let me suggest that if you look to the Bible, at least three major strands are picked out in what the Cross achieves:
 - and all three are part and parcel of the passage from Colossians that we read earlier
- Look at each in turn now:

The Salvation of Sinners

- The first is that the Cross achieves **the Salvation of Sinners**
- Images are powerful - the capture our attention and our imagination, we latch onto them and remember them
- The advertising industry knows that only too well - witness the money it pours into creating images that will, they hope, help us part with our cash!
- Describe adverts to you, even from a while back, and most of us would instantly have a mental picture of the advert running through our heads:
 - the Vauxhall Astra advert, with all the babies;
 - the Smirnoff Vodka advert, "If Smirnoff made Christmas Crackers...";
- The Bible writers used the same tactic in communicating with us what the Cross achieved:
 - in this passage there are images of circumcision (v.11) and of death (v.12,13);
 - most of these folk were Gentiles, so unlikely to have been literally circumcised, and they certainly weren't dead - so Paul uses the terms here by way of image:
 - *its as if you'd been circumcised, its as if you'd died...*
- In both these cases, and in all the other images the NT uses to describe the results of Christ's death on the Cross, there is a fundamental change:
 - *from dead to alive, from slave to free, from guilty to justified, from uncircumcised (outside God's family) to circumcised, from object of wrath to object of love, from enemy to friend...*
- However we try and describe it, we end up falling back on these kinds of images!
 - but fundamentally, there has been a change of status, *from... to...*
- As we accept Jesus as Saviour & Lord, as we trust him for salvation, that "great transaction" is made, and he swaps our sin for his righteousness, so we can enjoy all the benefits:
 - heaven, friendship with God, Spirit in us....
- **That's the first thing the Cross achieves**

The Revelation of God

- The second thing that the Cross achieves is that it reveals God:
 - this is what we were thinking about with the children;
 - what we **do** even more than what we say;

Colossians 2:6-19 The Achievement of the Cross Fintry, 24/1/2010, pm

- The whole point of the Bible is to reveal God, to show us who he is:
 - not as an end in itself, but so that we might know him
- What kind of a God does it reveal?
 - a creative God - for he made the world;
 - a God who wants to relate to us - see intention of Garden of Eden, on-going desire to build relationship with patriarchs and Israel;
 - a God who is concerned with sin - see prophets denunciations!
- All of that is true, but God is most clearly, most fully, most wonderfully revealed in the Cross:
 - the passage we read earlier says that: "in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form
 - so it is God Himself who goes to the Cross, who dies there, who accomplishes our salvation there
- Often said that who folk are in times of trouble, that is who they most truly are - no pretense:
 - on the Cross we see God pushed to the limit, so to speak; this is who he most truly is!

So what is the God who goes to the Cross like?

- A number of things can be picked out:
 - **holiness** - who treats sin so seriously, who is pure to die in our place;
 - **justice** - demonstrates that in fact he won't just let us off, but needs to satisfy his own justice;
 - **self-giving, humble love** - giving up all that was his in heaven to die in our place, not just talking love but acting it, and not in an empty gesture but in an action that benefited the loved one (us!) hugely;
 - **wisdom & power** - contrast with human wisdom; all our human striving and ingenuity and effort and wisdom over hundreds and thousands of years has not and cannot win salvation, yet the folly of God's path, one broken life for all our lives achieves that which we cannot - God is the one who is wise and powerful!
- **God is: holy, just, loving, wise, powerful**
 - and all of those demonstrated in a way not otherwise possible through the Cross

The Conquest of Evil

- What does the Cross achieve: **salvation of sinners, revelation of God, and ... the conquest of evil**
- Devil/God, slaves of sin = slaves of Devil
 - the Cross as defeat of Satan's power to keep people from God - sin;
 - captives released (freedom language in salvation of sinners);
- In Roman times parade following victory, with spoils of war:
 - booty, slaves taken, but also soldiers from campaign and released prisoners;
 - (v. 15) *"And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross"*
 - we are freed prisoners of war, but Satan and his cohorts are disarmed and made spectacle of!
- Evil is overcome, the war is won though rear-guard actions may rage around us!

Conclusion

- Can see a bit more of WHY the Cross is so central to our faith: **saves, reveals, conquers**
- Paul here encourages believers to (v.6) **"continue to live in him"**, and (v.19) not **"lose connection with the Head"**
 - keep in touch with the Lord who has done all this for us!