

CRUCIFORMITY — THE LIFE JESUS CREATED TO BE US

Romans 8:28-30

We know that God is working in everything for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. Those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Now those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified [made righteous]; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

This verse is a clear declaration of God's ultimate intention from eternity past to conform us to the being/nature of the Son, our Lord Jesus the Messiah - the Christ. Jesus' nature in the New Testament is that which he revealed in his incarnation - **the crucified Lord**. This is not an afterthought or 'just happened' in creation, nor is it a principle read into things by loving hearts. It is inherent in God. **This Cross-principle which is woven into the very bosom of the Father** and demonstrated and communicated to us by the Messiah as interpreted through the Spirit. It has ever been the principle of action by which the God would surely bring to pass the divine intention. [Isaiah 40:21 Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? 1 Peter 1:18 You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was destined before the foundation of the world but was made manifest at the end of the times for your sake.

We see then that **the Cross** is far more than an act in history. **It expresses the very qualities and manner of life of the triune God**. It is the life-giving, light-sharing, and love-bestowing principle by which God has communicated to mankind from the beginning . . . In thinking of the Cross only as a redemptive measure, we have missed God's larger intention. Yet the whole inference of Scripture is that from the beginning the Father longed for a family of sons who would embrace the same selfless principle that has ever governed his own heart. **It was his intention that the Cross might be so internalized in these sons as to become their manner and essence of life.**

We realize as long as man is still interpreting the Cross as it benefits him - himself, as it works for his own safety, security, and victory, enrichment, he is not truly seeing God or his will for his people. As the believer begins to interpret the Cross as an eternal principle which God intends to be operative in him, then he sees the Cross in a new light . . . We may speak of entering **The Way**: - *the way of the crucified Lord*. 2 Corinthians 4:10 We are always carrying around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our body. For we who are alive are constantly being handed over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our mortal body. Philippians 3:9-11 O that I may be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on legalism, but that which is through trust in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith; that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming conformed to his death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

We see then that **all things that happen to us are more than happenings** - in them God works by God with the specific purpose to conform us to the very nature and being of Christ - this is cruciformity. Knowing this, we thank God in all things, however difficult or painful; and we can believe that he, our Master, will work it to good and to his ultimate will - our transformation - that we become cruciform in all our attitudes, motives, and desires. So, 1 Corinthians 2:2 I decided to know

nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. Galatians 5:24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Ephesians 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ. The vast majority of the time the 'in Christ' refers to existence in Christ, a real existence within the sphere of the life of Christ. "In Christ" means to be under the influence of Christ's reign, in order to be conformed to him and his cross, by participation in the life of his community that acknowledges his lordship.' It is important to note that in this definition spirituality for Paul is not solely a private affair but rather a thoroughly communal one.

This 'in Christ' spirituality is evolved in the elements of the life and self-giving love exemplified in the crucified Christ. Thus **Cruciform spirituality** is a life-style of love and humility, in fact the narrative of the crucified and exalted Christ (the Gospel) is the normative life-narrative within which the community's own life-narrative takes place and by which it is shaped. 2 Timothy 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life which is in Christ Jesus, When we share in God's self-giving, we share in the life of God- "theosis." And this takes the form of self-giving love.

All of this is the glory of God that we are to comprehend. John 1:14, 16, 18 The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. Of his fulness have we all received, grace upon grace. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is in the bosom of the Father, who has made him known. Luke 24:26 "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" John 17:22-24 The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me. Father, my desire is that they also, whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, to behold my glory which thou hast given me in thy love for me before the foundation of the world. Romans 1:22-24 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves. Romans 3:23 All have sinned and are falling short of the glory of God. 1 Thessalonians 2:10-12 You are witnesses, and so is God, as to how holy and righteous and blameless our conduct was toward you who believe. As you know, we treated each one of you as a father treats his own children, exhorting and encouraging you and insisting that you live in a manner worthy of God who is calling you to his own kingdom and his glory.

The atoning death of Jesus:

- 1. Reveals the unseen God to men**
- 2. Reveals the truth of man to man**
- 3. Makes atonement for sin and conquers death**
- 4. Opens the life and faith of Jesus for the participation of his saints**
- 5. It the standard and spirit of true discipleship**
- 6. The only true of God for us is revealed in Jesus of Nazareth, that is Jesus crucified**