



Homes of H.O.P.E. Prayer and Study Guide #5  
Based on sermon: "The Cross Doesn't Make Sense"  
Preached Jan. 17, 2009

### Introduction

1. Share a time when the cross didn't make sense to you. What was your understanding of how Jesus' death saved you?
  2. How has your understanding changed?
  3. Imagine that you're among people who have never heard about Jesus, the cross, or the empty tomb. Imagine yourself attempting to explain the unexplainable. How would you do it? Have you done it before? What was that like?
  4. Read and explain Romans 5:12.
  5. Read Eph. 2:8, 9 and Titus 3:5. Why does salvation *have* to be a gift? If good works don't count, why do them?
  6. Consider Phillip Yancy's statement: "God's character did not permit the option of simply declaring about this defective planet, 'It doesn't matter.' God's Son had to encounter evil personally in a way that perfect deity had never before encountered evil. **He had to forgive sin by taking on our sin. He had to defeat death by dying. He had to learn sympathy for human beings by becoming one."**
- Is this statement biblical? Why did it have to be this way?
7. Why couldn't an angel redeem humans? Why did Jesus have to die?
  8. What do we miss if we only focus on Jesus' physical suffering on the cross? (2 Cor. 5:21)
  9. "He saved others, but He can't save Himself!" (Mt. 27:42) This was said of Jesus by the jeering crowd as He hung on the cross. Explain why this statement was true.
  10. How do we access personally what Jesus accomplished for us on the cross? (Read John 1:12; Romans 10:9, 10; 1 John 5:11-13)
  11. What does the cross tell us about how God feels about us?
  12. Discuss this statement: "Thanks to Christ, this earth can be the nearest we ever come to hell. But apart from Christ, this earth is the nearest you'll come to heaven."
  13. Consider the outpouring of praise for Captain Sullenberger, and the passion and excitement for President Obama. Why do so many Christians seem bored with Christ?

## A TYPICAL PRESENTATION OF THE GOSPEL

### The Gospel

#### Grace

Eternal life is a gift (Eph. 2:8, 9; Rom. 5:15-18)  
We can't earn or deserve it. (Tit. 3:5; Rom. 6:23; 4:4, 5; 9:30-32)

#### Man

We are sinners (Rom. 7:21-23; Rom. 3:10, 23; Isa. 64:6; 53:6)  
We cannot save ourselves (Rom. 6:23)

#### God

Is merciful—does not want to punish us. (John 3:16; Ezek. 33:11)  
Is just, therefore must punish sin.

#### Christ

The infinite God-Man (John 1:1; Isa. 9:6)  
God's punishment for sin was placed on Him (Isa. 53:4, 6; 2 Cor. 5:21)

#### Faith

By faith that trusts Christ alone (Jn. 3:36; Phil. 3:8, 9; Acts 4:12)  
Distinguish from intellectual, temporal faith. (James 2:19)

#### Acceptance

Receiving the gift of Eternal Life. (1 John 5:12)  
Our Covenant/agreement with God (John 1:12)

### The New Life

Sins forgiven (1 John 1:9)  
New Creation (2 Cor. 5:17)  
Sons and daughters of God (John 1:12; Eph. 2:19)  
Winning Life (Rom. 6:6-14)  
Eternal Life (1 John 5:11)

### The Commitment

Qualifying question: "Do you see what Christ wants to do for you?"  
Commitment question: "Do you want to receive the gift of eternal life that Christ left heaven and died on the cross to give you?"

#### Clarification of commitment

Transferring trust from self to Christ  
Christ must be Lord as well as Savior. (John 20:28)

Prayer of Commitment – If this is really what you want, we can go to the Lord in prayer. I can lead us in prayer and we will tell Him what you have told me just now. Pray for, pray with, pray for again. (Rev. 3:20)

#### Assurance

(John 6:47)  
Fix in the mind the texts of assurance (John 1:12; 2 Pet. 3:18)

### Welcome to the family of God!

Pray together about what the Holy Spirit has revealed to your group. Remind members to pray for the Community Conversations Live meetings and encourage them to invite someone. God bless you!