

*THE SECRET OF THE*  
**CROSS**

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*The Secret of the Cross*

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## Introduction

THE question often arises: How is it, with so much churchgoing, Bible reading, and prayer, that a Christian can fail to live a life of complete victory over sin and will lack the love and joy of the Lord? One of the most important answers, undoubtedly, is that he does not know what it is to die to himself and to the world. Yet without this, God's love and holiness cannot have their dwelling place in his heart. He has repented of some sins, but knows not what it is to turn, not only from sin, but from his old nature and self-will.

Yet this is what the Lord Jesus taught. He said to the disciples that if any man would come after Him, he must hate and lose his own life. He taught them to take up the cross. That meant they were to consider their life as sinful and under sentence of death. They must give up themselves, their own will and power, and any goodness of their own. When their Lord had died on the cross, they would then learn what it was to die to themselves and the world, and to live their life in the fullness of God.

Our Lord used the apostle Paul to put this still more clearly. Paul never knew Christ after the flesh. Through the Holy Spirit, however, Christ was revealed in his

heart, and he could testify: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). In more than one of his epistles the truth is made clear that we are dead to sin, with Christ, and receive and experience the power of a new life through the continual working of God's Spirit in us each day.

As the season of Lent approaches each year, our thoughts become occupied with the sufferings and death of our Lord. Emphasis will be laid, in the preaching, on Christ dying for us on the cross as the foundation of our salvation. Less is said about our death *with* Christ. The subject is a deep and difficult one, yet every Christian needs to consider it. It is my earnest desire to help those Christians who are considering this great truth: that death to self and to the world is necessary for a life in the love and joy of Christ.

I have sought to explain the chief words of our Lord and of His disciples on this subject. May I point out two things to my reader. First, take time to read over what you do not understand at once. Spiritual truth is not easy to grasp. But experience has taught me that God's words, taken into the heart and meditated on with prayer, help the soul by degrees to understand the truth. And second, be assured that only through the continual teaching of the Holy Spirit in your heart will you be able to appropriate spiritual truths. The great work of the Holy Spirit is to reveal Christ in our hearts and lives as the Crucified One who dwells within us. Let this be

the chief aim of all your devotion: complete dependence on God, and an expectation of continually receiving all goodness and salvation from Him alone. Thus will you learn to die to yourself and to the world, and be kept through the continual working of the Holy Spirit.

Let us pray fervently for each other that God may teach us what it is to die with Christ—a death to ourselves and to the world; a life in Christ Jesus.

Your servant in the Lord  
*ANDREW MURRAY*

## Prayer

*Heavenly Father, how can I adequately thank You for the unspeakable gift of Your Son on the cross! How can I thank You for eternal salvation, wrought out by that death on the cross! Jesus died for me that I might live eternally. Through His death on the cross I am dead to sin and live in the power of His life.*

*Father in heaven, teach me, I humbly entreat You, what it means that I am dead with Christ and can live my life in Him. Teach me to realize that my sinful flesh is wholly corrupt and nailed to the cross to be destroyed, that the life of Christ may be manifest in me.*

*Teach me, above all, to believe that I cannot either understand or experience this except through the continual working of the Holy Spirit dwelling within me. Father, for Christ's sake I ask it.*

AMEN.

“Jesus hath now many lovers of His heavenly kingdom, but few bearers of His cross. He hath many desirous of consolation, but few of tribulation. He findeth many companions of His table, but few of His abstinence. All desire to rejoice with Him, few are willing to endure anything for Him, or with Him. Many follow Jesus unto the breaking of bread, but few to the drinking of the cup of His passion. Many reverence His miracles, few follow the ignominy of His cross.”

*THOMAS A KEMPIS*

## The Redemption of the Cross

*Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us.*

Galatians 3:13

SCRIPTURE teaches us that there are two points of view from which we may regard Christ's death upon the cross. The one is the *redemption of the cross*: Christ dying for us as our complete deliverance from the curse of sin. The other, the *fellowship of the cross*: Christ taking us up to die with Him and making us partakers of the fellowship of His death in our own experience.

In our text we have three great, unsearchable thoughts. The law of God has pronounced a curse on all sin and on all that is sinful. Christ took our curse upon Him—yea, became a curse—and so destroyed its power, and in that cross we now have everlasting redemption from sin and all its power. The cross reveals to us man's sin as *under* the curse, Christ *becoming* a curse and so *overcoming* it, and our full and everlasting deliverance *from* the curse.

In these thoughts the lost and most hopeless sinner finds a sure ground for confidence and hope. God had indeed in Paradise pronounced a curse upon this earth and all that belongs to it. On Mount Ebal, in connection with the public reading of the law, half of the people of Israel were twelve times over



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to pronounce a curse on all sin (see Deut. 27:13–26). In addition, there would be in their midst a continual reminder of it: “He who is hanged is accursed of God” (21:23). And yet who could ever have thought that the Son of God Himself would die upon the accursed tree, and become a curse for us? But such is in very deed the gospel of God’s love, and the penitent sinner can now rejoice in the confident assurance that the curse is forever put away from all who believe in Christ Jesus.

The preaching of the redemption of the cross is the foundation and center of the salvation the gospel brings us. To those who believe its full truth it is a cause of unceasing thanksgiving. It gives us boldness to rejoice in God. There is nothing which will keep the heart more tender toward God, enabling us to live in His love and to make Him known to those who have never yet found Him. God be praised for the redemption of the cross!

## The Fellowship of the Cross

*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.*

Philippians 2:5

PAUL here tells us what that mind was in Christ: He emptied Himself; He took the form of a servant; He humbled Himself, even to the death of the cross. It is this mind that was in *Christ*—the deep humility in which He gave up His life to the very death—that is to be the spirit that animates *us*. It is thus that we shall prove and enjoy the blessed fellowship of His cross.

Paul had said (2:1), “If there is any *consolation* in Christ,”—the Comforter was come to reveal His real presence in them—“if any *fellowship* of the Spirit,”—it was in this power of the Spirit that they were to breathe the spirit of the crucified Christ and manifest His disposition in the fellowship of the cross in their lives. Consolation and fellowship are two of the blessings God desires for all His children.

As Paul’s hearers strove to enter into this, they would feel the need of a deeper insight into their real oneness with Christ. They thereupon would learn to appreciate the truth that they had been crucified with Christ, that their “old man” had been crucified, and that they had died to sin in Christ’s death and were living to God in His life. They would learn to know what it meant that the crucified Christ lived

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in them, and that they had crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts. It was because the crucified Jesus lived in them that they could live crucified to the world.

And so they would gradually enter more deeply into the meaning and the power of their high calling to live as those who were dead to sin and the world and self. Each in his own measure would bear about in his life the marks of the cross, with its sentence of death on the flesh, with its hating of the self-life and its entire denial of self. There would be growing conformity in them to their crucified Redeemer in His deep humility and entire surrender of His will to the life of God.

It is no easy school and no hurried learning—this school of the cross. But it will lead to a deeper understanding and a higher appreciation of the redemption of the cross, through the personal experience of the *fellowship* of the cross.