

The Unpopular Message of the Cross

October 18, 2009

1. General Questions

- a. What are the key components to the full message of the cross?
- b. Why is this message not taught?
- c. Why are we afraid of being held accountable?

2. Philippians 2:8 *Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

- a. How did Christ humble Himself?
- b. How was Christ obedient?
- c. To whom was Christ obedient to?

3. Soren Kierkegaard *"To become an 'admirer of Jesus' is much easier than to become a follower."*

- a. What is an admirer of Jesus?
- b. What would be the distinction between an admirer and a follower?
- c. What makes being a follower of Christ difficult?

4. Luke 9:23-26 *And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. 24 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. 25 "For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? 26 "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.*

- a. Who is Jesus talking to here?
- b. What must someone who wants to follow Jesus do?
- c. What does it look like to deny one's self?
- d. How does one who loses his life for Christ's sake actually save it?

5. Romans 7:18-15 *For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. 19 For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. 20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. 21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. 22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, 23 but I*

see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

- a. What is Paul describing here?
 - b. Why does Paul practice evil even though he does not want to?
 - c. What is inside of him that causes him to do that which he does not want to do?
 - d. How can this be if Paul is a believer?
 - e. Have you ever been caught up in this struggle where you want to do good but the members of your body do evil?
6. 1 Thessalonians 4:3 *For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality.*
- a. What is the will of God?
 - b. What is sanctification?
 - c. How is sexual immorality connected with sanctification?
 - d. Where and when is God's will for you played out?

7. Colossians 3:5-10 *5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. 6 For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, 7 and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. 8 But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, 10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.*

- a. What are the members referred to here?
- b. Who are sons of disobedience?
- c. Why does the wrath of God come upon them?
- d. What are we to put aside?
- e. How easy is it to find yourself walking in these ways?
- f. What is this new self renewed according to?

8. Colossians 3:12-14 *12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord*

forgave you, so also should you. 14 Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

- a. What are we to put on?
- b. Why is love the ultimate characteristic to put on?
- c. Why is it important to have unity with others?

9. Romans 5:3-5 *3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*

- a. Why should we exult in our tribulations?
- b. Why is perseverance important?
- c. Why is proven character important?
- d. Why is hope important?

10. Personal Questions:

- a. How are you doing when it comes to denying yourself and taking up your cross?
- b. Do you know the areas in which you struggle?
- c. Have you instituted safeguards in order to help you stay away from situations that encourage your struggles?