



SESSION #1 SHARING THE CROSS

Jesus said, “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to myself” (John 12:32). How can this be true in light of the many people of various world religions or no religion that are not presently attracted by Christianity? Surely we need to explore more deeply the beauty of the cross of Christ until like Paul it is the only thing we boast in and the only thing we want to witness about (Galatians 6:14; 1 Corinthians 2:2).

Explore the Cross in Light of the Human Condition

The death of Jesus is filled and overflowing with meaning for humans of every belief and situation. Study the cross in light of your own needs and the world around you.

1. Incredible grief, brokenness, and suffering (Matthew 26:36-44; John 19:28; Isaiah 53; 1 Peter 2:24; Hebrews 4:14-16).
2. Anger, bitterness, and unforgiveness (Luke 23:34; Ephesians 2:12-19; 4:32).
3. Distorted views of God (Matthew 27:46; Luke 23:46; Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20).
4. Sense of justice and morality (John 19:26-27; Romans 2:14-15; Romans 2:4).
5. Fearful of evil spirits (John 19:29; Revelation 12: 11; Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14)
6. Selfish and incapable of true compassion and purity (Luke 23:47; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 17; Galatians 2:20).
7. Doomed to death because of sin and guilt (Luke 23:39-43; Romans 3:21-26; John 3:16; 1 John 1:9).

Explore the Cross in Light of World Religions

The story of Christ on the cross is filled with horrific details of suffering and beautiful portrayals of Jesus’ love. Meditate on the various aspects that will attract people of various backgrounds.

1. Consider Jews who have suffered incredibly through the centuries at the hands of Christians, Muslims, and others. What aspects of Jesus’ experience at the cross might be especially appealing to them?
2. Consider Baha’is who have founded a religion that focuses on the oneness of the human race and the goal of universal peace. What aspects of the cross might especially interest them?
3. Consider Muslims with their passionate focus on one true God who alone is Creator, Judge, and Merciful One. A careful study of Islam’s picture of God appears to show the missing elements of an intimate Father who loves even those who are evil. What aspects of Jesus experience at the cross might especially appeal to them?
4. Consider the secular and the atheist who live either ignoring or disbelieving in God but have still a basic understanding of morality, a sense of justice, and an attraction towards compassion. What aspects of Jesus’ death might be especially of interest to them?
5. Consider Animists and Pagans who focus their attention on unseen spirits, seeking ways to use or appease such powers. What aspects of the great controversy between good and evil at the cross might be especially appealing to them?
6. Consider Buddhists who devote themselves to denying bad and good desires, seek to live compassionately and strive for purity of thought, speech, motive, and action. What depth of the cross’ meaning might be especially attractive to them?
7. Consider Hindus who are devoutly religious, living with conscious thought of karma and reincarnation. They are aware that every action will have an exact reaction, every sin punished and every good deed rewarded perfectly. What parts of Jesus’ death might especially draw them?

Satan with his fierce temptations wrung the heart of Jesus. The Saviour could not see through the portals of the tomb. Hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a conqueror, or tell Him of the Father’s acceptance of the sacrifice. He feared that sin was so offensive to God that Their separation was to be eternal. Christ felt the anguish which the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for the guilty race. It was the sense of sin, bringing the Father’s wrath upon Him as man’s substitute, that made the cup He drank so bitter, and broke the heart of the Son of God” (The Desire of Ages 753).

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