

The Power and Purpose of the Cross today

The cross stands at the centre of history and at the heart of our faith. It is not merely a symbol on a church wall or a pendant around a neck. It is the decisive act of God in Christ, the moment when heaven invaded earth with redeeming love. Two thousand years on, the power and purpose of the cross remain undiminished. Indeed, in an age of anxiety, confusion and moral uncertainty, its relevance is perhaps more apparent now.

When Jesus went to Calvary, He did not stumble into tragedy. Luke records that “he set his face to go to Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51). The cross was not an accident of politics or a miscalculation of strategy. It was the eternal plan of God. Scripture tells us that Christ is “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8). This means that the cross was always God’s answer to the human condition. Sin had fractured our fellowship with Him, for “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23), and no amount of religious effort or moral striving could bridge the gap. The cross alone could do what we could not.

At the cross, we see both the holiness and the love of God in perfect harmony. God does not sweep sin aside. He does not lower His standards to accommodate our weakness. Paul writes that God presented Christ as “a sacrifice of atonement” to demonstrate His righteousness (Romans 3:25–26). Sin is judged fully and finally in the body of Jesus Christ. Yet in that very act of judgement, love triumphs, for “God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). The prophet Isaiah foresaw it centuries earlier: “He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him” (Isaiah 53:5). This is substitution at its most profound. It is not sentimentality. It is costly grace.

The power of the cross today lies first in its ability to save. The message has not changed. Paul declared, “We preach Christ crucified” (1 Corinthians 1:23), and he resolved to know nothing “except Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2). We are not redeemed by self-improvement, activism, or spiritual experiences detached from truth. We are saved by the blood of Christ. “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins” (Ephesians 1:7). When a person comes in repentance and faith, trusting not in their own righteousness but in His finished work, the transaction is immediate and eternal. “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). The cross still justifies the ungodly.

But the cross does more than bring us into the Kingdom. It shapes how we live within it. Jesus said, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23). This is not a call to introspection. It is an invitation to die to self so that Christ might live through us. Paul could say, “I have been

crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me” (Galatians 2:20). In a culture that prizes self expression and personal autonomy above all else, the cross calls us to surrender. It confronts our pride. It challenges our desire to control outcomes. It invites us to trust the wisdom and sovereignty of God even when obedience is costly.

For us at Runnymede Christian Fellowship, situated within a vibrant and diverse community, the cross defines our witness. We do not proclaim ourselves. As Paul writes, “what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord” (2 Corinthians 4:5). The world around us may be sceptical of institutional religion, but it is still hungry for authentic love and unshakeable hope. Jesus said, “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35). When we embody the humility of the cross, when we forgive as we have been forgiven, when we serve without seeking applause, we make visible the power of Calvary in everyday life.

The purpose of the cross is also reconciliation. “God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:19). This reconciliation is vertical and horizontal. Paul reminds us that Christ “is our peace... and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility... by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands” (Ephesians 2:14–15). In a fractured society marked by polarisation and suspicion, the cross provides the only secure foundation for unity. We stand on level ground at the foot of it. None of us has grounds for boasting. All of us depend on mercy.

The cross speaks to our hidden fears and unspoken regrets. It tells us that we are more sinful than we dared admit, yet more loved than we ever imagined. “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1), and nothing “will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:39). That paradox humbles and lifts us at the same time. It frees us from the exhausting effort of trying to prove ourselves. Our worth is settled at Calvary. Our future is secured by an empty tomb.

The cross anchors our hope. The writer to the Hebrews urges us to fix our eyes on Jesus, “who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame” (Hebrews 12:2). The darkest day in history became the doorway to resurrection. When we face trials, disappointments or losses, we look again to the cross and remember that God is able to bring redemptive purpose out of apparent defeat. The cross was followed by glory. So too will our present struggles give way to eternal joy.

The power and purpose of the cross today are not abstract doctrines but living realities. They call us to faith, to repentance, to humility, to courage, and to love. As we proclaim Christ crucified and risen, we find not only the forgiveness of our past but the pattern for our present and the promise of our future. May we never move on from the cross, for it is here that we find life in all its fullness.

Questions

1. How does knowing that God loved you at your very worst, not your best, reshape your understanding of grace and security in Christ, and what difference should that make to the way you approach Him in prayer and worship? **Romans 5:8**
2. What does the suffering of the Servant teach us about the seriousness of sin and the depth of Christ's substitution, and how should this shape your attitude towards repentance and gratitude? **Isaiah 53:5**
3. In practical, everyday terms, what might denying yourself and taking up your cross look like in your home, workplace, and church life, especially when obedience is costly or misunderstood? **Luke 9:23**
4. If God has reconciled you to Himself in Christ, not counting your sins against you, where might He be calling you to extend that same reconciling grace to others? **2 Corinthians 5:19**
5. When you face disappointment, suffering, or delay, how does fixing your eyes on Jesus who endured the cross for the joy set before Him strengthen your perseverance and renew your hope? **Hebrews 12:2**