

Message Six

**The Cross of Christ—
the Unique Way in God's Economy and
the Center of God's Government**

Scripture Reading: Col. 1:20-22; 2:11-15; 3:5a

- I. In His economy God gives us one person and one way; the one person is the all-inclusive, extensive, preeminent Christ, and the one way is the cross—1 Cor. 2:2; Phil. 2:5-11; Gal. 6:14:**
- A. We not only have Christ, the unique person, who is versus all things; we also have the cross, the unique way, which is versus all ways—Col. 1:20.
 - B. The way God has ordained, uplifted, and honored is the cross of Christ—Gal. 6:14.
 - C. The one person—Christ—is the center of the universe, and the one way—the cross—is the center of God's government—1 Cor. 2:2; 1:17-18, 23; Gal. 6:14:
 - 1. God governs everything by the cross and deals with everything by the cross—Col. 1:20; 2:14-15.
 - 2. By the cross God has dealt with all the negative things in the universe, and He is still governing everything through the cross—Eph. 2:14-16.
 - 3. In order to progress spiritually, we need to pass through the cross; until we come to the New Jerusalem, we need to pass through the cross day by day in our walk with the Lord—Matt. 10:38; 16:24; Luke 14:27.
 - 4. In order to have the proper church life, we need to experience the cross; if we have a daily life of passing through the cross, there will be oneness and harmony both in the church life and in the family life—Col. 3:12-15.
- II. If we have a clear understanding of the fact that the enemy of God, in a subtle way, utilizes culture to replace Christ, we will realize that the only way for us to take is the way of the cross—Gal. 6:14; 1 Cor. 2:2:**
- A. The book of Colossians teaches us that in the church life Christ must be all and in all; everything that is not Christ must go to the cross—1:18; 3:10-11.
 - B. Through the cross we need to become nothing, to have

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nothing, and to be able to do nothing; otherwise, what we are, what we have, and what we can do will become a substitute for Christ—1 Cor. 1:17-18, 23.

- C. For those who are willing to take the cross, the cross is not a narrow way but a highway—Luke 9:23.

III. In the book of Colossians we see a clear vision of the cross as God's way in His administration—1:20-22; 2:11-15:

- A. "Through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross—through Him, whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens"—1:20:
1. *Through Him* means through Christ as the active instrument through which the reconciliation was accomplished—v. 20a.
 2. *All things* refers not only to human beings but also to all creatures, which were created in Christ and now subsist, cohere, in Him (vv. 16-17) and are reconciled to God through Him.
 3. To reconcile all things to Himself is to make peace with Himself for all things; this was accomplished through the blood of the cross of Christ.
 4. Because of the rebellion of Satan, the archangel, and the angels who followed him, the heavens were contaminated; therefore, not only things on the earth but also things in the heavens needed to be reconciled to God—v. 20b.
 5. Because we were sinners, we needed redemption, and because we were also enemies of God, we needed reconciliation—vv. 14, 21-22.
- B. "Wiping out the handwriting in ordinances, which was against us, which was contrary to us; and He has taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross"—2:14:
1. *Ordinances* refers to the ordinances of the ceremonial law with its rituals, which are the forms or ways of living and worship—Eph. 2:15.
 2. *Nailing it to the cross* means to abolish the law of the commandments in ordinances.

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- C. “Stripping off the rulers and the authorities, He made a display of them openly, triumphing over them in it”—Col. 2:15:
1. This verse portrays the fighting that took place at the time of Christ’s crucifixion.
 2. Activities involving Christ, God, and the evil angelic rulers and authorities were brought to a focus on the cross; thus, the cross became God’s eternal, central, and unique way—vv. 14-15.
 3. By His crucifixion Christ labored to accomplish redemption, and God the Father was working to judge sin and nail the law to the cross—v. 14.
 4. At the same time, the evil rulers and authorities were busy in their attempt to frustrate the work of God and Christ, pressing in close to God and Christ; thus, a warfare was raging at the cross.
 5. God openly made a display of the evil angelic rulers and authorities on the cross and triumphed over them in it, putting them to shame—v. 15.
- D. “In Him also you were circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ”—v. 11:
1. This is spiritual circumcision, the circumcision of Christ, referring to the proper baptism, which puts off the body of the flesh by the effectual virtue of the death of Christ—Phil. 3:3.
 2. The circumcision that is the putting off of the body of the flesh was not made with hands; it was accomplished by the death of Christ, and it is applied, executed, and carried out by the powerful Spirit—Rom. 8:13.
- E. “Put to death therefore your members which are on the earth”—Col. 3:5a:
1. This is based on the fact that we have been crucified with Christ and baptized into His death—Gal. 2:20; Rom. 6:3, 6.
 2. Christ accomplished the all-inclusive crucifixion; now we apply it to our lustful flesh.

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3. We execute Christ's death upon our sinful members by crucifying them, by faith, through the power of the Spirit (Rom. 8:13); this corresponds with Galatians 5:24.