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# The cross

RML Mark weekend away: 14–16 February 2020

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# At the cross...Jesus took our punishment

Read Genesis 3:1–6

**Penal substitutionary atonement = ‘a penalty swap’**

## 1. The problem...

### **Sin: our unrighteous self-substitution**

(Genesis 3:1–6; Romans 3:10–12)

<sup>15</sup>The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. <sup>16</sup>And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, <sup>17</sup>but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” (Genesis 2:15-17)

<sup>4</sup>But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. <sup>5</sup>For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

<sup>6</sup>So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. (Genesis 3:1–6)

<sup>10</sup>There is no one righteous, not even one;

<sup>11</sup> there is no one who understands;

there is no one who seeks God.

<sup>12</sup>All have turned away (Romans 3:10–12)

### **Wrath: God’s righteous response**

(Habakkuk 1:13, Revelation 21; 1 John 1:5; Deuteronomy 32:4)

<sup>5</sup>God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. (1 John 1:5)

<sup>13</sup>Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrongdoing. (Habakkuk 1:13)

<sup>29</sup>Our God is a consuming fire. (Hebrews 12:29)

A W Tozer:

The holiness of God, the wrath of God & the health of the creation are inseparably united.

God’s wrath is His utter intolerance of whatever degrades & destroys.

He hates iniquity as a mother hates the polio that takes the life of her child

<sup>2</sup>I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband...<sup>27</sup> Nothing impure will ever enter it (Revelation 21:2, 27)

...experienced...

### 1. now—disorder and death

<sup>18</sup>For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth...

<sup>24</sup>Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonouring of their bodies among themselves, <sup>25</sup>because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. (Romans 1:18, 24–25)

<sup>1</sup>And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup>in which you once walked (Ephesians 2:1–2)

### 2. finally—the day of judgement

<sup>12</sup>For the LORD of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up—and it shall be brought low...

<sup>17</sup>And the haughtiness of man shall be humbled, and the lofty pride of men shall be brought low, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.

<sup>18</sup>And the idols shall utterly pass away.

<sup>19</sup>And people shall enter the caves of the rocks and the holes of the ground, from before the terror of the LORD, and from the splendour of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth. (Isaiah 2:12, 17–19)

<sup>5</sup>But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. (Romans 2:5)

## 2. God's gracious solution...

<sup>15</sup>I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel. (Genesis 3:15)

### The law's shadow: animal substitutes

#### The Passover lamb

(Exodus 12:1-13; Ezekiel 20:6-10; John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7)

<sup>12</sup>For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast...

<sup>13</sup>The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt. (Exodus 12:12-13)

#### The sacrificial system

(Leviticus 16)

<sup>21</sup>And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins. And he shall put them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness (Leviticus 16:21)

but...

<sup>4</sup>For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. (Hebrews 10:4)

### The Prophets' promise: a suffering Servant

Isaiah 53:4-6, 10-12

<sup>4</sup> Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;  
yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.  
<sup>5</sup> But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.  
<sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way;  
and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all...  
Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief;  
when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring...  
by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous,  
and he shall bear their iniquities...  
yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors. (Isaiah 53:4–6, 10–12)

### **The New Testament reality: Christ punished for us**

(see also Mark 10:45, 14:36 ; John 1:29; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 5:8-10, 8:1–4;  
Galatians 3:13; Ephesians 2:11–14; Colossians 1:21–22; 1 Timothy 2:5–6; Hebrews 2:17;  
1 Peter 2:24, 3:18; 1 John 2:2, 4:10; Revelation 1:5–6)

### **Romans 3:21–26**

<sup>21</sup> But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law,  
although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—  
<sup>22</sup> the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.  
For there is no distinction:<sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,  
<sup>24</sup> and are **justified** by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,  
<sup>25</sup> whom God put forward as a **propitiation** by his blood, to be received by faith.  
This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.  
<sup>26</sup> It was to show his righteousness at the present time,  
so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (Romans 3:21-26)

“justified” (declared “righteous”)

by “propitiation” (an object that satisfies wrath)

<sup>36</sup> And he said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”  
(Mark 14:36; for ‘the cup of God’s wrath’ see Psalm 75:8, Isaiah 51:17–23, Jeremiah 25:15–29)

### **3. The result**

## God's righteousness upheld

'He who justifies the wicked...is an abomination to the LORD' (Proverbs 17:15)

<sup>26</sup> It was to show his righteousness at the present time,  
so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (Romans 3:25)

## God's love known

God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us (Romans 5:8)

The love of God does not find, but creates, that which is pleasing to it.  
The love of man comes into being through that which is pleasing to it. (Martin Luther, 1518)

## Penal substitutionary atonement = the heart of the cross

At the cross of Jesus  
Pardon is complete  
Love and justice mingle  
Truth and mercy meet  
Though my sins condemn me  
Jesus died instead  
There is full forgiveness  
In the blood he shed  
(John Eddison)

### Discussion questions:

Was there anything which especially struck or surprised you from this talk?

After this talk how would you answer a friend who says God's wrath at human sin isn't a big issue?  
How big an issue is their misunderstanding? Why?

How does the reality of the penalty swap God has provided in Jesus grow our personal appreciation of God's

i) righteousness ii) love? (Why not look again at Romans 3:21–26?)

# At the cross...Jesus' death was our death

Our past, present and future

**Our identity = 'in Christ'** (216 times in the New Testament!)

(Romans 8:1–2, 9-10; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 1:3, 1:7, 1:11; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:1–4)

once 'in Adam'

...**corrupt** 'in Adam'

<sup>17</sup>And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." (Mark 2:17)

<sup>21</sup>...for from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery,

<sup>22</sup>coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness.

<sup>23</sup>All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person. (Mark 7:21–23)

## Heidelberg Catechism (1563)

6

**Q Did God create people so wicked and perverse?**

**A** No.

God created them good<sup>1</sup> and in his own image,<sup>2</sup>  
that is, in true righteousness and holiness,<sup>3</sup>  
so that they might truly know God their creator,<sup>4</sup>  
love him with all their heart,  
and live with God in eternal happiness,  
to praise and glorify him.<sup>5</sup>

1—Genesis 1:31

2—Genesis 1:26–27

3—Ephesians 4:24

4—Colossians 3:10

5—Psalm 8

7

**Q Then where does this corrupt human nature come from?**

**A** The fall and disobedience of our first parents,  
Adam and Eve, in Paradise.<sup>1</sup>

This fall has so poisoned our nature<sup>2</sup>  
that we are all conceived and born in a sinful condition.<sup>3</sup>

1—Genesis 3

2—Romans 5:12, 18–19

3—Psalm 51:5

<sup>5</sup>Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. (Psalm 51:5)

<sup>12</sup>Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man [Adam], and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned. (Romans 5:12)

...**dead** 'in Adam'

<sup>21</sup>For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.

<sup>22</sup>For as **in Adam all die**, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. (1 Corinthians 15:21–22)

**But** now 'in Christ'!

<sup>1</sup>There is therefore now no condemnation for **those who are in Christ Jesus**.

<sup>2</sup>For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free **in Christ Jesus** from the law of sin and death. (Romans 8:1–2)

...united to Christ **by the Spirit**

<sup>9</sup>You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you.

Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

<sup>10</sup>But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. (Romans 8:9–10)

John Calvin

As long as Christ remains outside of us and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race is useless and of no value to us

And so because we have been united to Christ...

### **1. Jesus' death is our death**

Romans 6:1–12 (Galatians 2:20; Colossians 2:12, 3:3)

#### **penalty for sin paid**

<sup>3</sup>Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

<sup>4</sup>We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

<sup>5</sup>For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. (Romans 6:3–5)

<sup>20</sup>I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. (Galatians 2:20)

#### **power of sin lifted**

<sup>6</sup>We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

<sup>7</sup>For one who has died has been set free [literally 'justified'] from sin. (Romans 6:6–7)

<sup>11</sup>So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

<sup>12</sup> Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. (Romans 6:11–12)

## **2. Jesus' life is our life**

### **sharing Jesus' status**

#### **'righteous!' (justification)**

Romans 5:18–19 (2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:8–9)

<sup>18</sup> Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.

<sup>19</sup> For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. (Romans 5:18–19)

<sup>10</sup> I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall exult in my God,  
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness (Isaiah 61:10)

The rich and divine bridegroom Christ redeems her from all her evil and adorns her with all his goodness. All her sin and shame becomes his and all his wealth and honour, righteousness and status immediately belongs to her. (Martin Luther)

#### **'my son!' (adoption)**

Romans 8:14–16 (John 1:12; Galatians 3:26, 4:6–7, Ephesians 1:5)

<sup>14</sup> For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

<sup>15</sup> For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"

<sup>16</sup> The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God (Romans 8:14–16)

### **sharing Jesus' sufferings**

Romans 8:16–18, 28–29 (Mark 8:34–38; Philippians 3:10; 1 Peter 4:12–14)

<sup>17</sup> and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.



### 3. Jesus' resurrection is our resurrection

#### raised with Jesus now

(Ephesians 2:4–6; 1 Peter 1:3; Romans 6:4, 11; 2 Corinthians 5:17)

<sup>4</sup>But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,  
<sup>5</sup>even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—  
<sup>6</sup>and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:4–6)

#### glorified with Jesus soon

Romans 8:9–30 (1 Corinthians 15; 2 Corinthians 4:17; Philippians 3:10, 20–21; Colossians 3:4; 1 John 3:1–3)

<sup>18</sup>For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with **the glory that is to be revealed to us...**

<sup>23</sup>... we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, **the redemption of our bodies...**

<sup>29</sup>For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be **conformed to the image of his Son**, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

### Knowing we are 'in Christ' transforms...

Our past

Our present

Our future

#### Discussion questions:

How would really grasping that Christians are 'in Christ' transform:

- how you would help a fellow RMLer struggling with guilt for past sins?
- how you would help a friend struggling to be assured of God's view of them in the present?
- your personal hopes and ambitions for the future?

# At the cross...Jesus defeated our enemy

Read Colossians 2:8–15

## The devil: a real enemy...but defeated

The greatest trick the devil ever pulled was convincing the world he didn't exist. (Roger Kint, *The Usual Suspects*)

<sup>1</sup>And you were dead in the trespasses and sins

<sup>2</sup>in which you once walked, following the course of this world,

following **the prince of the power of the air**, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—

<sup>3</sup>among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh,

carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

<sup>22</sup>And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying,

“He is possessed by Beelzebul,” and “by the prince of demons he casts out the demons.”

<sup>23</sup>And he called them to him and said to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan?

<sup>24</sup>If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

<sup>25</sup>And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand.

<sup>26</sup>And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end.

<sup>27</sup>But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man.

Then indeed he may plunder his house. (Mark 3:22–27)

And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had had the legion, sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. (Mark 5:15)

## Heidelberg catechism (1563)

1

**Q What is your only comfort in life and in death?**

**A** That I am not my own,<sup>1</sup>

but belong—

body and soul,

in life and in death—<sup>2</sup>

to my faithful Saviour, Jesus Christ.<sup>3</sup>

He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood,<sup>4</sup>

**and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil.**<sup>5</sup>

1—1 Corinthians 6:19–20

2—Romans 14:7–9

3—1 Corinthians 3:23; Titus 2:14

4—1 Peter 1:18–19; 1 John 1:7–9; 2:2

5—John 8:34–36; Hebrews 2:14–15; 1 John 3:1–11

## Jesus has won by his resurrection

the promised serpent crusher

<sup>15</sup> And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; **he will crush your head**, and you will strike his heel. (Genesis 3:15)

Jesus now raised victorious over Satan

<sup>32</sup> God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.<sup>33</sup> Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. <sup>34</sup> For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,

“The Lord said to my Lord:

“Sit at my right hand

<sup>35</sup> **until I make your enemies**

**a footstool for your feet.”** (Psalm 110:1)

<sup>36</sup> “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.” (Acts 2:32–36)

<sup>20</sup> [God] raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, <sup>21</sup> far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

<sup>22</sup> **And God placed all things under his feet** and appointed him to be head over everything for the church. (Ephesians 1:20–22)

...and we are now raised victorious ‘with him’

<sup>6</sup> And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:6)

...but **how** does Jesus’ resurrection defeat the devil?

## Jesus has won by his death

### The cross defeats the devil

John 12:31,33; Ephesians 2:1–3

<sup>31</sup> Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out...

<sup>33</sup> He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die. (John 12:31, 33)

The devil

<sup>1</sup> And you were dead in the trespasses and sins

<sup>2</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world,

following **the prince of the power of the air**, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—

AND our sinful desires

<sup>3</sup> **among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh,**

carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Not merely ‘Christus Victor’ but ‘Agnus (the Lamb) Victor’ (Henri Blocher)

## The devil's weapons: second-hand but legitimate

(Zechariah 3:1, 3)

<sup>1</sup>Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him...

<sup>3</sup>Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. (Zechariah 3:1,3)

## But Jesus has disarmed the devil decisively

(Zechariah 3:4, 8–9; Colossians 2:13–15)

<sup>4</sup>The angel said to those who were standing before him, "Take off his filthy clothes."

Then he said to Joshua, "See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put fine garments on you"...(Zechariah 3:4)

<sup>8</sup>"Listen, High Priest Joshua, you and your associates seated before you, who are men symbolic of things to come: I am going to bring my servant, the Branch.

<sup>9</sup>See, the stone I have set in front of Joshua!

There are seven eyes on that one stone, and I will engrave an inscription on it,' says the Lord Almighty,

**'and I will remove the sin of this land in a single day.'**" (Zechariah 3:8–9)

Colossians 2:13–15

<sup>13</sup>And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh,

God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses,

<sup>14</sup>by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.

This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

<sup>15</sup>He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in the cross.

<sup>30</sup>When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. (John 19:30)

Greek: tetelestai = it is **paid!**

My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought  
My sin, not in part but the whole,  
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul  
(Horatio Spafford 1873, It is well with my soul)

## The present brief battle

## Victory assured

Revelation 12:10–12

<sup>10</sup>And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, **for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down**, who accuses them day and night before our God.

<sup>11</sup>And they **have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb** and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.

<sup>12</sup>Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them!

But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because **he knows that his time is short!**” (Revelation 12:10-12)

## Equipped with the gospel

Ephesians 6:10–20

<sup>10</sup>Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.

<sup>11</sup>Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil...

<sup>13</sup>Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

<sup>14</sup>Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

<sup>15</sup>and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

<sup>16</sup>In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;

<sup>17</sup>and take the helmet of salvation,

and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,

<sup>18</sup>praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.

To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,

<sup>19</sup>and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel

### Discussion questions:

How aware are you (as a group) of our present spiritual battle? In what ways should knowledge of Jesus’ decisive defeat of the devil impact our view of that present spiritual battle?

Spend some time considering Ephesians 6:10–20: brainstorm what ‘taking up the whole armour of God’ (the gospel!) might look like as individuals/a RML group?

# At the cross...Jesus shows God's wisdom and power

Read 1 Corinthians 1:17–2:5

<sup>17</sup>For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

Christ Crucified Is God's Power and Wisdom

<sup>18</sup>For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

<sup>19</sup>For it is written:

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise;  
the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.”

<sup>20</sup>Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

<sup>21</sup>For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

<sup>22</sup>Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom,

<sup>23</sup>but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

<sup>24</sup>but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks,

Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

<sup>25</sup>For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

<sup>26</sup>Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called.

Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.

<sup>27</sup>But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise;

God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.

<sup>28</sup>God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are,

<sup>29</sup>so that no one may boast before him.

<sup>30</sup>It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

<sup>31</sup>Therefore, as it is written: “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.”

2:<sup>1</sup>And so it was with me, brothers and sisters.

When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God.

<sup>2</sup>For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

<sup>3</sup>I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling.

<sup>4</sup>My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power,

<sup>5</sup>so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.

1. The word of the cross...**appears** weak and foolish to man

2. But the word of the cross...**is actually** wise and powerful

3. The word of the cross...appears weak and foolish to man **deliberately**

4. Through the word of the cross...God's Spirit is at work with **great** power

So...

**1. Don't wait to speak** (until you've made the gospel look good)

2. Do trust God to work with **great power by his word**

Discussion questions:

How does 1 Corinthians 1:17-2:5 fit with our view of how God has chosen to work in this world? What (if anything) has surprised you? Or challenged you?

Think about how we as Christians share the gospel (chatting to a friend, in an RML discussion event, or in a workplace Christian group). In what sorts of ways are we tempted to change the message of the cross (and thereby empty it of its power)?



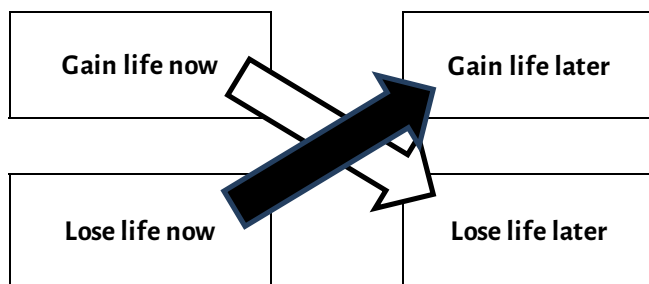
# At the cross... Jesus showed me how to live

<sup>31</sup> And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup> And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. <sup>33</sup> But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

<sup>34</sup> And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, **"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. <sup>35</sup> For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. <sup>36</sup> For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? <sup>37</sup> For what can a man give in return for his soul? <sup>38</sup> For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."** (Mark 8:31–38)

## 1- The cross shaped life we are saved for

Mark 8:35 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.



<sup>46</sup> And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. <sup>47</sup> And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" <sup>48</sup> And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" <sup>49</sup> And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart. Get up; he is calling you." <sup>50</sup> And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. <sup>51</sup> And Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" And the blind man said to him, "Rabbi, let me recover my sight." <sup>52</sup> And Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way. (Mark 10:46–52)

## 2- Losing life now

8:34 “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. “

### **Purposeful—for Jesus and his gospel**

8:35 “For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life **for my sake and the gospel's** will save it.”

### **...By serving others**

Mark 9:35 And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, “If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and **servant of all.**”

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

### **...By sticking to Jesus and his words**

Mark 8:38 For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

## 3- The cost of not following Jesus

<sup>43</sup> And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. <sup>45</sup> And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. <sup>47</sup> And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, <sup>48</sup> ‘where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.’ (Mark 9:43–48)

<sup>34</sup> And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. <sup>35</sup> For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. <sup>36</sup> For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? <sup>37</sup> For what can a man give in return for his soul? <sup>38</sup> For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.” (Mark 8:34–38)

Think through:

How does the pattern of following Jesus challenge us personally?

- What do find challenging about the pattern?
- What areas of our lives do we find difficult to lose for the sake of Jesus?

Think of different ways this section of Mark help us to follow this pattern.

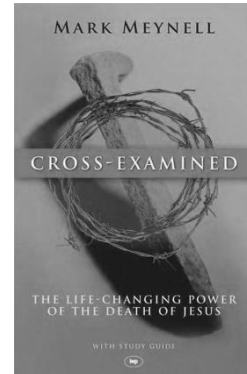
How does the cross help/motivate/enable us to serve Jesus and his gospel?

# Weekend away books:

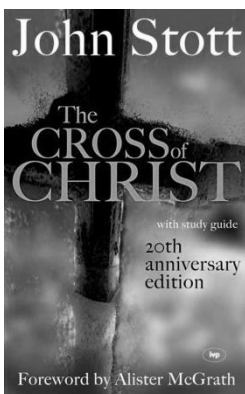
## Books on the cross

### 'The Cross Examined' by Mark Meynell

This is the book we should all read after this weekend away (or bring back to friends who missed out!) Covering similar material, looking at the death of Jesus from different angles, it will help you keep thinking and meditating on the truths of the cross. Mark helps us find our way into the gospel story making it an easy ready for all!



We are recommending two meatier books on this weekend away, why not buy them and read them chapter by chapter with an RML friend?

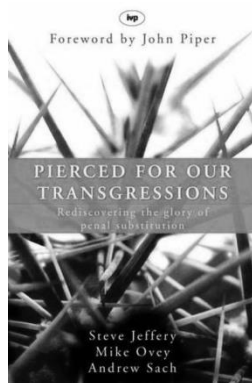


### 'The Cross of Christ' by John Stott

This a classic Christian book well worth tackling. It's meaty, taking the reader through the cross in it's different facets with clarity, showing us the significance of our understanding of the cross for our Christian lives. One to read with a friend or over a few years!

### 'Pierced for our

This more  
It robustly  
should fight for  
thing, but this



### transgressions' by Steve Jeffery, Mike Ovey and Andrew Sach

recent book zooms in on penal substitution defending it's glory. defends penal substitution from scripture, showing why we this doctrine in our age. You might not agree with every last is a significant and immensely helpful book.