

^[1] Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, ^[2] by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. ^[3] For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ^[4] and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures
[1 Corinthians 15:1-4]

For me personally the passage above holds the heart of the *Amazing Grace* of God! That is as John 3:16 says,

For God so LOVED the world that He GAVE His ONLY begotten Son, (to die on The Old Rugged Cross) ¹ that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

If we understand God's *Amazing Grace*, then the words of 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 should ring true in our lives.

^[14] For the LOVE of CHRIST CONTROLS US, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; ^[15] and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

Why should "the LOVE of CHRIST CONTROLS US"? Well for me personally it is because as Romans 5:6-9 says, it was while I was *HELPLESS*, that is unable to atone for my own sins; that Christ died for me. It was at just the right time, while I was still living an *UNGODLY* life that God did this for me. You see when I came to understand that in His *Mercy* and *Amazing Grace* God demonstrated His Own love toward me, in that while I was yet a *SINNER*, CHRIST DIED FOR ME. The result of this LOVE of God and Christ is that I have now been JUSTIFIED by His BLOOD and have been SAVED from God's wrath through Jesus.

I was a *HELPLESS*, *UNGODLY SINNER*, an *ENEMY* of God [Romans 5:10]. Yet, because Jesus hung and died upon *The Old Rugged Cross* FOR ME, I am now RECONCILED to God through the death of His Son [Romans 5:10]! But wait! There is much more, having been RECONCILED, I have been SAVED by His LIFE [Romans 5:10]. And not only this, but I now also exult in God through my Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom I have now received the RECONCILIATION [Romans 5:11]!

What about you? As you consider that question, meditatively read the words of Colossians 1:21-23.

^[21] And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, ^[22] yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach, ^[23] IF INDEED you CONTINUE IN the FAITH FIRMLY ESTABLISHED and STEADFAST, and NOT MOVED AWAY FROM the HOPE of the GOSPEL (good news) that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven....

I hope you are coming to understand how *ESSENTIAL* *The Old Rugged Cross* is to all of this. Consider what Peter said to the rulers and elders of the people in Acts 4:9-10,12 when he and John were on trial for healing a lame man in Acts 3. Peter said,

^[9] "if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well, ^[10] let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that BY THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST the Nazarene, Whom you CRUCIFIED, Whom God RAISED FROM the DEAD, BY THIS NAME this man stands here before you in good health. ... ^[12] And THERE IS

¹ Insert by me.

SALVATION IN NO ONE ELSE; for THERE IS NO OTHER NAME UNDER HEAVEN that HAS BEEN GIVEN AMONG PEOPLE, BY WHICH WE MUST BE SAVED."

Remember, 1 Corinthians 3:11 teaches us that there is only one way anyone can be saved. That is through the *FOUNDATION* of Christ's *REDEEMING* work on *The Old Rugged Cross*! Listen as it says,
For no one can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Listen again as Peter is moved to tell us in 1 Peter 2:24 why Jesus, "*Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross*". It was so "*WE MIGHT DIE to SIN and LIVE to RIGHTEOUSNESS; for by His wounds you were healed*". And again in 1 Peter 3:18 listen as Peter is moved to add,

For Christ also DIED for SINS ONCE for ALL, the JUST for the UNJUST, in order THAT He MIGHT BRING US TO God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;

Again, please understand, according to 2 Corinthians 5:21 God so loved you and me that,
He MADE Him [Jesus] Who KNEW NO SIN TO BE SIN ON OUR BEHALF, THAT WE MIGHT BECOME the RIGHTEOUSNESS of God in Him [Jesus].

I say again, I do not know about you, but every time I sing the *Old Rugged Cross*, I find a renewed *HOPE*! For me the *HOPE* of the *Old Rugged Cross* is found in Hebrews 9:28 where we read,
so, Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, SHALL APPEAR a SECOND TIME for SALVATION WITHOUT REFERENCE to SIN, TO THOSE WHO EAGERLY AWAIT Him.

How about you? Are you eagerly awaiting His return?

Please pray with me in a closing prayer.

Father, I praise You again today and give You thanks that You have provided for us the *Old Rugged Cross*. I now pray for myself and those who are praying this prayer with me today that You would bring us under conviction. The conviction that even though we were helpless, ungodly sinners, being enemies toward You, You sent Jesus to hang and die upon the *Old Rugged Cross* for us! I praise and thank You for reconciling us to Yourself. Remind us daily that You have given us this reconciliation through the death of Your Son on the *Old Rugged Cross*! I cannot thank You enough for saving us by His life. I cannot help but exult You Father through the Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom You have given us the reconciliation. I pray and ask this in the power and authority of the name of Jesus. Amen.

Please meditate and pray on these things!

Louise and I pray this will help to both enlighten and encourage you to **know in a greater way** the **One** promising in His Word to never leave you or forsake you [Hebrews 13:5; Deuteronomy 31:6, 8]!

BECAUSE MY FATHER GOD GAVE THE DEAREST AND BEST FOR A SINNER LIKE ME! – tom!