Course: The Cross of Christ by Rev Jason Burns



Contents: A 34 week study on what the Bible teaches about the cross for African Pastors and Churches.

Preface: Francis Turretin 1667 said “ the chief part of our salvation, the anchor of faith, the refuge of hope, the rule of charity , the true foundation of the Christian religion and the richest treasure of the Christian church” … He was speaking about the cross of Christ. If the church fails to preach and teach that Christ died for our sins and only by the blood of Christ can you be forgiven she will lose her peace, power and joy. All over the world and in Africa we are seeing the church becoming more and more apostate because she has left her basic foundations. She does not preach the gospel in its purity and simplicity but instead has put in its place the doctrines and commandments of men. The Lord Jesus taught the importance of his death:

“ ….Behold ,we go up to Jerusalem ;and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death and shall deliver him to the gentiles: And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him ,and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him, and then third day he shall rise again.” Mark chapter 10:33,34.

Pastors , Evangelists, church leaders and believers in Africa have to thunder once again the glorious gospel and with the help of the Holy Spirit sweep aside man centered ideas implanting the true word of God in every African nation. We are in a crisis. Africa needs the true gospel urgently.

1:The Centrality of the cross

Crucifixion in the Roman world at the time of our Lord was known as a most cruel death. Even the Romans thought it was disgusting but they still punished their enemies with such cruelty. Yet it was the cross that Jesus made central to his life and teaching. He often spoke about his sacrificial death for his people , Mark 8:31-32, Mark 9:31, Mark 10:32-34, Matthew 20:17-19, Luke 18:31-34 . John 12:20-28.

Jesus new he was going to die as it was prophesied in the Old Testament the Messiah would die for the sins of His people – Luke 24:25 to 47. The book of Isaiah chapter 53 tells us the messiah would die for sins this Prophecy was given at least 700 years before Christ. The Jews in Jesus time were expecting a military General who would raise an army and destroy Roman rule but Jesus taught he would be a suffering Messiah who would die for sinners.

Not only was the Old testament pointing to the death of the Messiah, not only did Jesus teach it and foe fill the Prophecy, the apostles preached Jesus death as the only way to get right with God –Acts 2:14-39, 10:34-43, 13:16-41, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, Galatians 3:13, 1 Peter 2:24.

“ The Cross is the pivot as well as the center of New Testament thought” Samuel Zwemer(1867-1952).

Islam, Hinduism and Atheism reject the cross. But Christians have seen in the cross salvation. Martin Luther the German reformer said “ The Cross is the sign of the Christian faith, of the Christian church, of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. “

Task: Please split up into groups and read all the scriptures above quoted in this chapter. As groups discus and answer the following questions.

A: Does the church need to preach and teach the cross of Christ?

B: What does Isaiah chapter 53 teach about the death of the Messiah?

C: Was the death of Christ an accident or was it in the plan of God?

E: Why did Jesus teach about his death?

F: How important was preaching the cross of Christ to the apostles?

G: Is the cross of Christ central in your life and ministry?

 2: Why did Jesus die?

All four evangelist describe Jesus as being crucified Matthew 27:32-35, Mark 15:21-25, Luke 23:26-33, John 19:17-18. Pilate did the bidding of the people and handed Jesus over to be killed at the request of Caiaphas the High priest and the Sanhedrin , Acts 3:12-15. It was wicked men that crucified Jesus but it was still in the plan of God. Jesus willing layed down his life for his people to save them from the judgment of sin. John10:11,17-18 . In Isaiah 53:12 it tells us the Messiah poured his life unto death for us and the whole chapter of Isaiah 53 tells us he was an offering for our sin. Galatians chapter 2:20 tells us that Christ gave his life for us because he loved us. Why did Jesus die? It was because God had a plan to save his people from their sins by the sacrificial death of his son.

In Romans 5:8 ,1 Peter 3:18, Hebrews 9:28 they teach Jesus gave his life for us so we might be reconciled to God. Jesus is a free gift to us. If we have faith in him we have salvation Romans 6:23. Reject this salvation and we are lost. Jesus gave the Lords supper as a way to remember his death, Matthew 26:26-28, Mark 14:22-24, Luke 22:17-19. The Lords supper helps us to focus on his death, his body and blood given for us. The Lords supper was a sign of the new Covenant that the Messiah had come to save us . This New Covenant was prophesied in the book of Jeremiah 31:31-34 . Jesus death was the fulfillment of the Jeremiah prophecy John 6:53-55 . The Lords supper was given by Jesus so we understand a New Covenant has been made by his body and blood given for us: 1 Corinthians 10:16 . The Lords supper also goes back to Exodus 12 that is the Passover were the people of God remembered their deliverance from Egypt. Jesus is now our deliverer.

Our Lords time in the garden of Gethsemane shows us he was under great stress as he knew he was going to die for sinners Matthew 26:36-46, Mark 14;32-42, Luke 22;39-46. Jesus was a lamb led to the slaughter. He knew he was going to take the cup of God’s wrath for us. John 18:11 Jesus mentions he will drink the cup the father has given him that is to say the Fathers wrath .

When Jesus was on the cross the pain was so much he cried out as forsaken by men and his Father as he endured the wrath for us. Jesus quoted Psalm 22: 1 to show how deep his suffering was so deep that no man could understand it. Jesus was perfect he knew no sin but he was punished for us so we could go free. He gave his life willingly but it cost him . How much it cost Jesus and how much he suffered we will be exploring for all eternity !

Please read the above scripture and answer the following questions in your groups.

A: The Jews were expecting a messiah who was a general why do you think many wanted to kill Jesus?

B: Scripture says Jesus was willing to give his life for the sheep, why do you think he was willing to do this?

C: Jesus was willing to take the punishment for your sin, would you be willing to take the punishment of a bank robber or evil person so they may go free?

D: What is the New Covenant?

F: What is the Passover and how does it relate to Jesus death on the cross?

3: The Problem of forgiveness

Why is it God can only forgive us by the cross? Why can’t he just forgive us anyway ? To ask these questions fails to understand how sinful sin is and how great God is. To commit sin is lawlessness, it is rebellion against God, 1 John3:4 . To sin is being an enemy of God , Romans 8:7. Sin is defiance of God ,it is wanting to be equal with God. Sin is a breaking away from God. But in modern society we have soften sin. We have watered it down. But to God sin stinks in his nostrils and he hates it. Jesus even taught are thoughts are sinful, Mark 7:21-23. He said we are slaves to sin , John 8:34 and the apostle Paul’s in Romans 7 said the same thing. In Romans chapter 1 Paul says humanity is soaked in sin and under God’s wrath. Mankind loves darkness John 3:19. Jesus knows we are sinners and came to save us Mark 2:17. To fully realize are moral responsibility for the things we have done wrong is the start of redemption and change but to water down the concept of sin will lead the church and humanity to moral anarchy.

 Now that we see sins as serious we need to see God is holy and a God of wrath. God is so holy he can’t look upon sin Habakkuk 1:13 , Isaiah 59:1. God’s wrath is his holy reaction to sin. Modern scholars have tried to water down the idea God is a God of wrath. Even evangelicals have tried to make Jesus a buddy Jesus and never mention the wrath of God. This is modern society making a God in their own image. God hates rebellion and he will punish it as he is righteous Romans chapter 1. Now because God is holy and just he must hate evil and punish sin. It is out of his love instead of punishing you for your sin he sent his son to die in your place. But man’s sin is so deep and dark and God is so great wise, holy and just he can’t overlook sin but must punish. God will have nothing to do with evil! To say we can be forgiven without Jesus is to say God is small and sin is not so bad! So let us be thankful for the sacrifice Jesus gave for us John 3:16.

Please read the above Bible verses.

A: Is mankind good or sinful? Read Ephesians chapter 2.

B: What is sin?

C: Why does God hate sin?

D: Why must God punish sin?

E: Why did we need Jesus to die for us?

4: Satisfaction for sin

Satisfying the law: “ Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law..” Galatians 3:13. The Ten Commandments condemn us as we all sin. Christ took the punishment we deserved for breaking Gods law .

A: Can you name the Ten Commandments?

B: Why is it wrong to break the Ten Commandments?

C: What does it mean that Christ became a curse for us?

D: why did Christ become a curse for us?

5: The Self Substitution of God

At the cross we see the love and justice of God. God is just he must punish sin. God is love he came to deal with our guilt by sending Jesus to take our punishment. God’s love and justice working together: God is holy he can’t ignore the sin we do. He must punish and be seen to be just. But in his love he came to save us. In the 2nd world war The Polish Priest Father Kolbe was put in the concentration camp of Auschwitz. The Nazi soldiers said they were going to kill a young man who had a wife and children. The Priest stepped forward and asked if they would take his life and let the young man go. The soldiers agreed and killed the Priest. He gave his life for the young man. Jesus gave his life so we could be free. The Old Testament taught the need for sacrifice to save us from sin Leviticus 17:11. In the Old Testament the sacrifices showed life was given for life. Hebrews chapter 9:22 says we can’t be saved unless we have the shedding of blood. The book also says these Old Testament sacrifices were not permanent they pointed to Jesus Hebrews 10:4. “ No forgiveness without blood meant no atonement without substitution.” John Stott : The Cross of Christ ,page138 IVP. The Passover in Exodus 12 is a festival that Jews have remembered for generations. In The New Testament it sees Jesus as fulfilling the Passover John 1:29,36 and 1 Corinthians 5:7-8. In the Passover God revealed himself as judge . In the Passover he revealed himself as the redeemer of his people as they had to sacrifice a lamb and use the blood on the door post to be free from judgment. Finally God revealed himself in the Passover as the covenant God to his people. Christ is now our Passover. He has taken the wrath on himself, he is our redeemer and God has showed at the cross he is a covenant God who keeps his promise and saves us. As Christ died on the cross he took our sin upon himself. What this means he was perfect he had no sin. But the punishment you deserved that was put on him that is what it means he took our sin upon himself. He was perfect but punished for us, 1 Peter 2:24, Hebrews 9:28. Isaiah 53 is an important chapter to read on this subject. Other scripture of importance, 2 Corinthians 5:15,Romans 5:8, Mark 10:45. 1 Timothy 2:6, 1 John 2:2. God paid the price to set us free with his own blood Acts 20:28. God was in Christ . There is a mystery about the death of Christ. The Trinity God the Father , God the Son and God the Holy Spirit these three are one was involved in the mystery of the sacrificial death of Christ. Let us approach the cross with humility. It is not a topic to debate or to ask questions that try to fathom the mystery. This is a subject to stand in awe and worship that God would provide a salvation for you.

“ Nothing in my hand I bring

Simply to the cross I cling

Naked, come to thee for dress;

Helpless look to you for grace,

Foul, I to the fountain fly,

Wash me savior or I die.

A: What does the Bible teach about the Passover?

B: What has the Passover got to do with Jesus dying on the cross for us?

C: Why did Jesus blood have to be shed for us?

D: Why don’t we sacrifice animals today for God like in the Old Testament?

6: The salvation of sinners

“ Moved by the perfection of his holy love, God in Christ substituted himself for us sinners. That is the heart of the cross of Christ,” John stott p167. This is salvation 2 Corinthians 6:2 and Hebrews 2:3.

Key word: **Propitiation**. The scripture teach this word in Romans 3:24-25, and 1 John 2:1-2 also chapter 4:10. The word propitiation has the idea that God’s wrath hates evil and his justice must be fulfilled. This means when Christ died on the cross he took the wrath of the father upon himself. Propitiation means the appeasement of God’s wrath. Jesus shedding his blood for you stopped the wrath of God going on you. It was Gods holy love that he provided the sacrifice to take away our guilt. He is righteous and must judge. But instead of God punishing you Jesus took your place.

Key word: **Redemption**: Ransom means the payment of a price. Imagine a slave in the market. You pay the price so the slave can go free. Jesus paid the price so we could go free. He paid with his blood! Mark 10:45 and 1 Peter 1:18-19, also good text is revelation 5:9.

Key word: **Justification:** Romans 3:20-26, Romans 5:18, Romans 8:34. Justification is a legal term that says before God you are declared to be right before him on account of Christ life, death and resurrection. You receive this justification by faith in Christ. Faith is the hand that receives the pardon of forgiveness. Christ is the justification. Faith in Christ justifies us before God not on anything we have done but on account of all Jesus has done for us. This doctrine is the heart of the Bible. It beats down the pride of man. It is the rock and foundation of true religion. You by your good works can’t save yourself, you are guilty, but Christ has done it all by living a perfect life, by dying on the cross for you , by resurrecting from the dead, Christ has done it all for you ,now you have to put your faith in him and confess your sin then God will justify you or declare you right before him not because of your faith but because of Jesus Christ.

Key word : **Reconciliation**: Romans 5:9-11. Reconciliation is a personal matter. It means God and man have been reconciled by Christ. Mankind is guilty before God but Christ’s death takes that guilt away so God does not look on us as deserving wrath but sees us as his friends and children. Reconciliation means we now have access to the Father. There is no barrier between us and God as the blood of Christ has opened the door to the Holy of Holies. Colossians 1:15-23 is shows us we have the blessing of reconciliation to the Father. Read also 2 Corinthians 5:18-21. On Gods side he has given a finished work in Christ. This is what reconciles us to God. On our side we must repent, that is turn from sin, we must confess our sin and we must put our faith in Christ to receive the reconciliation.

A: What does Justification mean?

B: Are we saved by works or by Christ?

C: What does propitiation mean?

E: What does redemption mean?

F: Why are the words Propitiation, redemption and reconciliation important to understand how we get saved?

G: What would happen to the church if she stopped teaching these truths?

H: Does the church need to reform and come back to these truths?

7:The Revelation of God

**The Glory of God** The death of Christ was showing the glory of God, John 1:14, John 12:20,13:30-32, 17:1.

**The Justice of God** The Death of Christ showed the justice of God, Romans 3:21-26. If God did not punish sin he would be unjust to himself. God is just so he must punish sin. God is righteous he must uphold righteousness. In the cross we see God is just and righteous by providing his son as our sacrifice. Jesus took the judgment on himself for us and he is now our righteousness.

**The Love of God** The Death of Christ shows the love of God. key texts are 1 John 3:16 , John 3:16 and Romans 5:8. God showed that he cares for us by his self-giving at the cross.

**The wisdom of God** The wisdom of God is seen in the cross. This is deeper than reason or religion, 1 Corinthians chapter 1:17- chapter 2:5.

A: Can you think of any scripture that tells us Jesus dying on the cross out of love for us?

B: Why could God not just forgive us without the cross?

C: Why is Gods wisdom seen in the cross?

8: The conquest of evil

**The Victory of Christ** Jesus won a victory over Satan. In Genesis 3:15 it was Prophecy that Christ would defeat Satan. When Jesus came demons had to flee because of his power, Mark 1:24. But at the cross Satan was defeated John12:31, 14:30,16:11, Colossians 2:13-15.

**Enetering Into The Victory of Christ .** Christ has given us the victory so we must walk in the victory. We now can advance against the demonic powers by the blood of Jesus,1 John 2:13 and Ephesians chapter 6.We have been set free from the law, the flesh and the world and we can now take the land, 1 John 2:15-17,1 Corinthians 15:55-57. Jesus has conquered death and so we have the victory over death one day being with Christ. Hebrews 2:14 ,2 Timothy 1:10.

**The Book Of Revelation** In this amazing book we have a declaration of Christ victorious over history. Jesus is ruler of the earth, Revelation 1:5, Jesus is the first and the last, Revelation 1:17-18, the book says Christ has triumphed ,Revelation 5:5.

A: What should be Christian’s attitude to Satan in the light of the cross?

B: How can we as Christians deal with demonic activity in the community in the light of the cross?

9: The Community of celebration

Now that we have been saved the cross means we are forgiven, we are accepted we are now children of God. God desires his people to minister to each other and the world in love, joy and peace. We are a new community who share the good news of Christ. We live a life of worship daily and with sacrifice. The church is to celebrate the Lords supper and remember his death feeding by faith on Christ,1 Corinthians chapter 11:26. The church is to use the gifts she has to serve one another .1 Corinthians chapter 12 and 15. The church is to walk in love 1 Corinthians chapter 13. The church is to preach the gospel and make disciples 1 Corinthians chapter 4:1-6 and Matthew 28:19,20. Once you realize Christ shed his blood so you might be forgiven and have a relationship with God you become part of the people of God.

A: Do you serve God for money or because you love God?

B: Why is it important to celebrate the Lords supper?

C: Why should the church preach the gospel?

D: Why did Jesus say the church should make disciples?

E: What talents and gifts has God given you to serve him?

10: Self Understanding and Self Giving

**Self Denial :** You need to realize you are loved by God but he expects you to live a life of sacrifice for him, Mark 8:34. In Galatians 5:24 self-denial means we do not pander or gratify the fleshly desires of pride , lust and greed but live a life of love.

**Your New Identity: Ephesians 4:24.**  You are now a new person. You must not go back to your old life. Live the Spirit filled life. The blood as redeemed you now live as a child of God reflecting your heavenly Fathers character in the world .

A: Has your life changed since you trusted in Christ?

B: What things need to change in your life so you live for Christ?

C: Knowing your heavenly Father loves you and you have been restored how does this affect you when you face problems?

11: Loving Our Enemies

Ephesians 5:1-2, as Christians we have seen how God loved us on the cross ,but now we must love others with the same unconditional love -even people who are against us. We are to be peace makers and pursue peace, Matthew 5:9, 1 Peter 3:11. Special chapters Romans 12 and 13, the states job is to uphold justice and suppress evil. Christians must respect the state. If the state does evil and tries to force the Christian to do evil then the Christian as a last resort can revolt against the government. But Christians must as much as they can work for peace in the country they live in and respect the government.

12: Suffering and Glory

The world is full of suffering. Suffering is a problem that great philosophers have thought about. The book of Job is a whole book in the Bible about suffering. There is a story of a Pastor who was a great preacher. But one day his wife died and he lost his faith because he could not understand why he had to see such suffering for his wife and himself. Christ suffered on the cross 1 Peter 2:18-23, Hebrews 12:1-3. Christ endured the suffering. We to will suffer in this world. I read the other day of a Pastor and his wife living on a farm in Nigeria some men came and killed them. All over the world Christians are being killed. Last year a Pastor and his wife were stripped naked and beaten just for holding bible classes in the house. Christ suffered on the cross. Do not think you will not suffer as you live for him the world will hate you. Be patient and be strong. Scriptures that show we will suffer persecution:Acts 5:41, Acts 8:1-4, Luke 6:26,40, Matthew 5:10, 2 Corinthians 12:10, 2 Timothy 3:12, John 15;18, Matthew 5:44, Mark 10:29-30.

A: Read Mark 10:29-30 this week and ask yourself what can you learn from this scripture?

B: If a fellow Christian is suffering what can you say to encourage them?

13: The Gospels and The cross

We shall now study the four gospels and see what the Lord Jesus taught about his death for mankind.

 **Please study the following verses and ask your slef what do they teach about the cross?**

**The Gospel of Mark:**

Mark 9:12, Mark 10 :33,Mark 14:24, Mark 10:45.

**The Gospel of Matthew:**

Matthew 16:21, Matthew 26:28, Matthew 20:28

**The Gospel of Luke :**

Luke 22:37, Luke 22:20, Luke 24:13-27

**The Gospel of John:**

John 15:13,John 10:17,18. John 10:15, John 3:14-16. John 2:19.

A: Why did Jesus teach he was going to die?

B: Why do the gospels spend a number of chapters at the end describing the death of the Lord Jesus?

C: What does John 10:15 mean?

14: The Book of Acts and The Cross

We are now going to study the book of Acts. This is an important book as it is the early history of the church.

**What do the scriptures in book of acts teach about the cross?**

Peters sermon : Acts 2:14-41. Stephens sermon: Acts 7:1-53. Paul’s sermon: Acts 17:22-34.

A: What was Peter’s message?

B: Why did Stephen talk about the history of the prophets before he came to Jesus and the salvation he gives?

C: What was Paul’s message?

D: having read the three sermons what do they teach about the death of Christ?

15: Paul’s letters and The Cross

**What does Paul teach about the cross?**

1 Corinthians chapter 1:1-18. Ephesians 2:15, Philippians 2:8, Philippians 3:18, Colossians 1:20, 2:14, Galatians 6:14.

 Romans chapter 3 teaches we are all sinners. Justification by faith means we are saved by what Christ has done for us in his life , death and resurrection. Justification is a legal term that tells us we are declared right with God on account of Christ life and work. Faith receives the salvation it is Christ who is our salvation. No one can get into heaven by good deeds but only by faith in Christ .

A: Why is religion not able to save us?

B: Why is philosophy not able to save us?

C: what does Paul mean about justification by faith in Romans chapter 3:

16: The Epistle to the Hebrews and The cross

The book of Hebrews has a lot of teaching on the cross. In chapters 10 and 11 we have much information about the importance of the death of Christ. We shall just look at chapter 9 but in your own time read this book after the course.

What does the book of Hebrews teach about the cross?

Please read Hebrews chapter 9:

In Hebrews 9:11-14 Jesus is the great high Priest who sacrificed his blood for us. That’s why we do not need to sacrifice animals today. There is a story of some Bible college students in Africa who sacrificed a cow for an evangelistic crusade . A western Pastor saw this and asked them what they are doing. They said it was to make the crusade better. He said it was witch craft. We do not need to sacrifice animals as the blood of Jesus was sacrificed for us at the cross.

A: Christ is the New Covenant what does this mean read Hebrews 9:15-26

B: What does Jesus achieve by shedding his blood for us ? Hebrews 9:27.

17: The Apostle Johns Writings and The Cross

Revelation 5:6-14, Revelation 12:11, Revelation13:8, Revelation 21:27. 1 John 1:7,1 John 3:5, 1 John 2:2.

A: How can we get victory in life over the devil from reading the revelation passages?

B: Have you confessed your sins?

C: Do you know your sins are forgiven?

18: The Apostle Peter’s writings on the cross

 1 Peter 1:17-19, 1 Peter chapter 2:4-12

A: How precious is the blood of Jesus to a believer?

B: If someone rejects the salvation of the cross what will happen to them?

C: Has your life changed since believing in the gospel?

19: The Law and The Cross

 The law of God cannot save us. The ten commandments and the Mosaic laws can’t save us. The law does point us to Christ and are need of him.

Romans 3;20,Galatians 2:15-16. Acts 13:39,Romans 4:13-15, Romans 5;20, 1 Timothy 1:9-10. Galatians 3;24 , Galatians 3:11, Romans 3:28,1 Timothy 1:8,Romans 8:3-4.

The law can’t save us only Christ. The law points us to our need of Christ. The Ten Commandments are good and we obey them not to be saved but out of love in the power of the holy spirit.

A: Please read Galatians chapter 3 : What does Paul teach about the Law in this chapter?

B Please read Galatians chapter 5: How does Paul give us freedom from the law?

20: Evangelism and The Cross

Today many in the church do not see evangelism as important. In the preaching and evangelism the cross is not preached in many ministries. This is shocking. It is not only shocking it is heretical. If you read Galatians chapter 1:6-10 Paul says there is a curse on any preacher that changes the gospel to a false gospel. Salvation by the cross has to be preached in Africa every week or the church is guilty of heresy. Jesus died for us John 19:18, Paul only wanted to preach the cross 1 Corinthians 1:18 and Galatians chapter 6:14. But today many want to make up their own message. Many will talk about dreams and prophecies but few are preaching the cross. So we have in place a false Christianity that is man centered not Christ centered. The apostles preached the cross and so should we it has to be at the heart and center of our evangelism, Acts 5:30, 2:23, 1 Peter 2:24,Colossians 2:14. If people do not come to salvation they will go to hell so we must preach the gospel.

A: Is your church doing evangelism?

B: What is the message of evangelism ? John 3:16.

C: Has Prophecies and dreams pushed out the preaching of the cross and if so how dangerous is that?

21: The Church and The Cross

Today many are looking for power signs and wonders. But in 1 Corinthians chapter 1 ( Please read) Paul points out the church had lost the main thing the gospel the preaching of the crucifixion of Christ. In this chapter Paul warns about glorifying man. Today many churches are glorifying the pastor or the man of God and not glorifying Christ. So what we see is little or no preaching of Christ and his death and resurrection.

A: Has the leader of your church taken glory for themselves?

B: Will you make sure the gospel is preached in your church and not man?

22: Modern Society and The Cross

Again please read 1 Corinthians chapter 1 again. The city of Corinth was known as a place of sin. There was hundreds if not thousands of prostitutes in the city. The city was full of pride in education. But Paul saw the need of the city was Jesus Christ and the forgiveness that comes with the gospel. In every age and culture humanity needs to be reconciled with God and it comes by Jesus Christ, 2 Corinthians chapter 5:11-21. The world needs to hear the gospel. Billy Graham was an evangelist who preached all over the world it was a simple message he preached about the need to be forgiven at the cross. This is what we need today the simple message of the cross in Africa.

A: Your community needs are important but how much do you value the people’s souls in the community?

B: It does not matter if your community is educated, poor or very wicked the gospel can change any person. When was the last time you shared the gospel and saw someone saved?

23: Religion and The Cross

Islam teaches that Jesus did not die on a cross. It preaches salvation by works. All religions teach you get to heaven by your good deeds. The Bible teaches you get to heaven by the cross of Christ John 3:16.

A: Have you been trying to earn your way to heaven by good deeds?

B: Going to Mecca or church does not save you: do you agree?

24: Apologetics and The cross

If you read 1 Corinthians chapter 1 Paul challenges the Philosophers by saying the wisdom they have is nothing to the cross. If we preach a simple gospel we will see results. It’s good to defend the faith but only the gospel can change lives. There was a clever atheist who was chatting with a Christian woman. She kept pointing to the cross. He was getting angry because he wanted clever arguments from her. But she just kept pointing to the blood of Jesus. In the end he became a Christian. The best defense of Christianity is to share the gospel .

A: If someone asked you what is the gospel and how has it changed your life what would you say as a testimony?

B: Share your testimony with someone today.

C: Don’t get into clever arguments: Share the gospel and let the holy Spirit do His work. Try doing this today. Share the gospel to someone then pray the holy Spirit will convict them.

25: The Holy Spirit and The cross

The Holy Spirit will give power and results to the person who preaches the cross. If you lift up Christ and not yourself the Holy spirit will work. 1 Corinthians chapter 2:1-5. Today Pastors are becoming clowns trying to make people laugh or they are becoming managers trying to run the church as a business. But if you are to have real power in ministry preach the gospel.

26: Being a Disciple and The cross

The Christian life is not easy : The Christian life demands sacrifice and dedication. To many Christians have become worldly minded. Christianity is not just coming to church it’s about living a Godly life every day. Are you a Godly wife a Godly Husband? Are you Godly at work? Are you Godly at school at home with your parents? But many want to be called Christian but they are found in the night clubs and having sex outside marriage. You must follow Christ and live for him. Matthew 28:16-20,Matthew 4:19-20,2 Timothy 2:2.,Luke 6:40,Luke 9:23,Luke 14:25-26,Matthew 10:37,Matthew 10:38,Luke 14:33.John 3:3,Romans 12:1-2. 2 Corinthians 5:17, John 13:34-55, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Luke 9:24-25,Ephesians 5:1-2, Matthew 9:9,2 Corinthians 13:5.

A: Are you worldly minded?

B: Have you had sex outside marriage?

C: Will you dedicate your life to Christ?

Let your life be real. When the genocide took place in Rwanda some years ago there was Christians on each side. Christians killing Christians why was this? Because they were not true disciples of Christ ! Just because you say you’re a Christian does not mean you have been saved and your life has changed. So make sure you are a real Christian.

27: Spiritual Warfare and The cross

A great preacher martin Luther was at his study. There is a story about him. The story is the devil came to him and rolled a big scroll down that went from his head to feet. On the scroll was all the sins Martin Luther had done. The devil smiled and tried to condemn him. Martin Luther turned to the devil and said “ The Blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin”. The blood defeats the devil and the demons all the time. You do not have to go to a prophet to pay money and drink chickens blood to deal with the devil. The way to deal with the devil is to know the word of God and resist the devil by trusting in the blood of Jesus. Read Ephesians chapter 6:10-18 gives you all you need to know about spiritual warfare. You put on the amour of God. You need righteousness to live a Godly life. You need to the gospel the blood of Jesus to clean you and protect you. You need faith. Faith in God’s word and faith in Jesus is what you need. You need to understand salvation and you need the word of God. When the devil came to attack Jesus , Jesus used the word of God, Matthew 4:1-11.

A: If a prophet Pastor said pay him some money and then he said drink some soap and the devil will flee from you what would you say to such a pastor? ( Such teaching is foolishness)

B: Reading Ephesians chapter 610-18 do you put on Gods amour every day?

28: Assurance of salvation and The cross

The way to know you are saved is to keep trusting in Jesus. As you trust and obey the Lord the Holy Spirit will witness in your heart you are a child of God. So assurance is like three gold chains rapped together as one. The first gold chain is Christ and what he did for you on the cross. Look and trust in him and he saves you. Then you obey the Lord this is the second gold chain and then the Spirit will witness to your heart this is the third gold chain and this makes Christian assurance one gold chaoin. Romans chapter 5:1-2, 1 John 2:3, Hebrews 6:11,12,17,18, 19,20 :2 Peter 1:4 : 1 John 3:14, Ephesians 1:14.

If you believe in religion and not Jesus you are not saved. If you are looking to the Prophet Pastor but not Jesus you are not saved. If you go to the witch doctor for help you are not saved. If you live a sinful life you are not saved. There are many millions of false believers who are carnal and worldly. You can even do signs and wonders but it does not mean you are saved. You are saved by faith in Christ then you walk as a child of God and the Holy Spirit will assure you that you are saved.

A: If a friend asked you how do I get assurance of salvation what would you teach them?

B: Are you a false believer or a true believer?

29 The cross and the False Prosperity gospel

The Prosperity gospel is a false gospel and a lie. It is very dangerous teaching. It has been propagated by Kenneth Hagin and has flooded Africa. This teaching says God is your Father and he wants the best for his children. This sounds good. Then this teaching goes onto say if God is your Father he wants you to have Health and wealth. It is true God is our Father and true God wants the best for us. But the blessings God has for us is spiritual. Jesus dying on the cross has given access to the Father and all spiritual Blessings Ephesians chapter 1:3. This health and wealth gospel makes all blessings material and it takes are eyes of Christ and what he has done for us to bring us to the Father Ephesians chapter 1:1-14. It makes people worldly minded and childish. With this teaching people just want a nice car or nice house they don’t really want God. It makes people want to be happy in this world but they don’t want to be with Jesus in heaven. It makes people childish in that if they don’t get what they want from God they leave the faith. But Paul prayed for Spiritual understanding as the most important thing Ephesians chapter 1:15-22. God will meet are needs but sometimes things happen to us and life can become hard. Joseph was put in Prison. David was chased by King Saul. Stephen was killed for Preaching. Christians sometimes don’t have it easy but God is with us and faithful.

A: Can poor person be Godly? Read the book of James.

B: Do believers suffer? Read Job chapter 1 and 2.

30: The Cross and Being a Pastor

So many Pastors today have stopped preaching the gospel. They want big congregations and they want money. These Pastors have calculated that if they preach signs and wonders and do Prophecy they will get what they want so they have stopped preaching Jesus. They want the fame, the power and the money. The apostle Paul cursed any person who preaches not the gospel Galatians chapter 1:6-9. If you are a Pastor you are an ambassador of Jesus. You are to preach about him and the message of the gospel. You are not to invent your own words or say your own message you are to preach the truth the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. You are a foolish and wicked Pastor if you do not preach the gospel 2 Corinthians chapter 5:11-21.

A: What have you been preaching as a Pastor the last few years have you been gospel centered?

B: How will you help to reform Pastors in your community so they preach a sound gospel?

31: Reading your Bible and The cross

What is the Bible about? How do we study the Bible? Just as a baby lies in a cradle so the Bible is the cradle were Jesus is laid. The 66 books of the Bible are all about Jesus Christ. The Old Testament gives Prophecy about Jesus. The New Testament is about what Jesus has done! The Ethiopian man was reading the Book of Isaiah and the evangelist told him it was about Jesus: Acts chapter 8:26-40. When Jesus had died and rose again from the dead he taught the Bible was about him: Luke24:13-35.

A: Please read Isaiah chapter 53: Who is this talking about?

B: Read the book of Colossians what does the book teach about Jesus?

C: Read the book of Philippians what does the book teach about Jesus?

D: Read 1 Peter what does the book teach about Jesus?

32: Jesus the Son of God and The cross.

When Jesus died on a cross he was more than a Prophet, he was more than a man, he was a king and a Priest but above all he was God in the flesh. It is a great mystery but Jesus was God the Son. Jesus is the most important person in history. Kings, Prime Ministers and Presidents will bow before Jesus. He is above all prophets. Scripture that teach Jesus is God: God said he is called I Am in Exodus 3:14 Jesus used the name of God for himself John 8:58. God is called Rock in the Bible Psalm 18:2, Jesus says he is the rock Matthew 16:18. God is the Shepard in Psalm 23:1 Jesus says he is the Shepherd in John 10:11.

A: Who do you think Jesus is?

B: How precious was Jesus blood if he died as the God man?

33: The Sovereignty of God and The cross

Not one grain of sand falls without Gods says. God is in control. God is sovereign. When Jesus died on the cross it was in the will of God as God said it would happen 1000 years before it took place. In Psalm 22 God using David Prophesied that Jesus hands and feet would be pierced and that people would cast lots for Jesus garments as he was to died. When wicked men put Jesus on the cross they did not out flank God they were doing God’s plan for the world. Even the evil of men God defeats by his control of history.

A: God has a plan for your life and no one can defeat that plan please read Ephesians chapter 1:4 and reply to the question what is God’s plan for you?

B: If God controls history then nothing can take you away from him. Read Romans chapter 1:28-39. Can death take you away from God?

34: The Trinity and The cross.

Christianity believes there is one God Deuteronomy 6:4. As there is one God there are three Persons in the God head Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Father is God Galatians 1:1, the Son is God John chapter 1:1-14, the Holy Spirit is God John 15:26. God the Father planed salvation Ephesians 1:4,5,11, The Son came to accomplish salvation Ephesians 1:3,7,8, The Holy Spirit makes real salvation in the heart Ephesians chapter 1:13,14. The Father , Son and The Holy Spirit are one, Matthew 28:19.

The Mormons, The Jehovah Witnesses, Islam all deny the Trinity. They are false and to be rejected. The Trinity is above human reason and is a great mystery. Can three be one? 1x1x1 = 1 . You have three ones but they are one! Reality is made up of one and many parts. There is no one pure essence. Every part of reality is one and has parts. Take a cup it is one but has parts, take a car it is one but has parts ,take a human it has one but parts. The Muslims say there God is one and we are irrational but they have 99 names of Allah so that is One and 99 parts of God. We are saying God is three in one. Without the Trinity the Bible and the work of Christ will not make sense.

A: Why does the Lord say baptize in the Name of Father ,Son and Holy Spirit in Matthew 28:19

B: If an Atheist or Muslim said the Trinity is irrational how would you reply?

C: Read Genesis chapter 1:26: What does this teach about God?

Conclusion:

This has been a basic course on the Christian faith looking at the cross and how you can be saved and walk in the blessing of salvation. I have only tried to teach you what is in the Bible. If after this course you live trusting Jesus and lifting him up in your life and church then this course has been blessed and used of God. John the Baptist said, John 1:29. “Behold The Lamb of God “, this course has been written to strike a blow at the false Prophet Pastors who only proclaim themselves who take money of people and make people into slaves of their ministry. I pray this course has been used to set you free and put you on a solid foundation of the truth of God’s word. But now it is for you to proclaim Christ to your family and people. You need to preach and teach the cross. Africa needs to true gospel and now it’s up to you to believe it, preach it and live it. Let your life and ministry be all about Jesus and not yourself. Make saving souls a priority and make discipline people in the truth a basic fundamental work you do in your church.

Bibliography: Books I used for this course:

The Cross of Christ John Stott, IVP

The Death of Christ James Denney , Tyndale Press.

Know the Truth ,Bruce Milne, IVP

The Confession of Faith , A A Hodge Banner of Truth.

Books I recommend for Believers: ( You can down load these books pdf on google to your phone or computer)

Pilgrim’s Progress by John Bunyan.

The Letters of John Newton.

The Gospel of Mark by J C Ryle.

The sermons of Charles Spurgeon.

The Sermons of John Wesley .

The Sermons of George Whitfield.

Books recommended for Pastors: These books can be downloaded from google also:

Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem.

Institutes of the Christian Religion by John Calvin.

Systematic Theology by Charles Hodge.

Christianity and Liberalism by J G Machen.