

The Cross
John 19.16b-42
Bethany Assembly of God
5.26.2024

Central Proposition: You should trust God because of the cross.

Introduction: Description of Crucifixion

Crucifixion was a brutal form of execution typically reserved for insurrectionists of whom Rome wanted to make an example. In Jesus' case, He was likely beaten twice before being crucified. Victims of crucifixion were made to bear their own cross. Only the horizontal beam was carried and it was placed on the victim's shoulders like a yoke and his arms were draped over it. At about the city limits, Jesus was no longer able to carry the cross beam and a civilian, Simon of Cyrene, was forced to carry it for Him the rest of the way to Golgotha or Calvary. Once there, the cross beam was laid on the ground and the prisoner attached to it, then the cross beam with the prisoner attached was hoisted up on the vertical post that had already been placed in the ground. Those who were crucified often did not die quickly. It could take hours, and in some cases, days for a prisoner to die like this. The Romans were trying to extend the agony and the example set by it. In this way, Jesus died for you. The One John described as the Eternal Word of God, the Light of the World, the Bread of Life, the Living Water, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, died like this for you. What exactly should you believe about the cross? John provides details that highlight the importance of the cross. The first relates to God's purposes and sovereignty.

1. You should trust God's purposes: God's sovereignty displayed through the cross. See John 2:19-22; John 6:51; John 11:50; 1 Corinthians 1:19; Psalm 22:16-18; Zechariah 12:10.

God's purpose was highlighted by the title on the cross. Pilate placed a title on Jesus' cross as if to say, "This is the most powerful Jew—the king of the Jews—and look what Rome has done to him." It was a mockery. He may have posted it ironically, but the joke was on him and on those who wanted him to change it because this truly was the moment of Jesus' exaltation. Jesus had been predicting this moment throughout His ministry.

2. You should trust God for cleansing: God's love is displayed through the cross. See Exodus 12:22; John 1:29; John 13:1-5; John 13:10; John 19:34; 1 John 1:7.

It is through the cross that we are cleansed of our sins. John expects us to see Jesus as a sacrifice for sin, specifically, as the Passover Lamb. His blood cleanses us from sin. God provided the Lamb, the sacrifice for our sin. We should not doubt God's love for us because it was demonstrated on the cross and His love allows us to be forgiven and cleansed.

Conclusion: What does trusting the cross look like in practical terms? See John 19:26-42.

You're brought into a new community with new relational ties. You identify with Jesus in spite of the world. You don't just "believe" in Jesus, you follow Jesus; you become a disciple. The cross is the personal way of God in the midst of the impersonal. Jesus looks like a cog in the Roman wheel, just another victim of godless men playing political games to protect their interests and power, but Jesus was anything but a victim of the sovereignty of this world; He was obedient to the sovereign will of God. The circumstances of His death displayed God's sovereignty and His love. His manner of death shows us that there is cleansing that is available to us, but also power. This is a power not available by the ways of this world; it is power to overcome the world, and it comes by faith and the Holy Spirit.

This is why you should trust in the cross of Jesus. Believe Him with the kind of faith that calls you to follow in obedience. Believe Him with the faith that wraps you in the security of God's love.