

## 09 Sufferings of the Cross before the World Began

By Adrian Ebens at Talking Rock Georgia, 24 June 2018

Father in heaven, we just thank You for the Sabbath. We claim the promise of the double portion of Your Spirit. And by faith, we see Lord Jesus, the Father is breathing upon You and You are being refreshed by His Spirit. And as we are accepted in You, we receive this refreshing by inheritance. And we thank You that You say to us today, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." And we need this because we are poor in spirit. We need a daily refreshing. And on the Sabbath, we claim that double portion. Open our hearts and our minds. And may we know truly that we are Your beloved children and whom You are well-pleased in Christ. And we thank You in His name. Amen.

In my study of the subject of the character of our Father, this text... This is really important, our understanding of the cross and what the cross really means. We're going to spend some more time on this tomorrow. And looking at the calendar and the atonement and how God offered up His Son and what that means. And this is a statement in Great Controversy, page 652. "The mystery of the cross." Now, what does that you? It tells you that the cross is a mystery. And it's not understood by a lot of people as to what it actually is. We spent some time looking at how the cross brings justice and mercy. Justice climbs down from its exalted throne and bows in reverence to the cross and is reconciled with mercy as we read.

"The mystery of the cross explains all other mysteries." That's interesting, isn't it? "In the light that streams from Calvary, the attributes of God which are filled us with fear and horror appear beautiful and attractive." The attributes of God as we're reading the Scriptures that have filled us with fear, when you put the lens of the cross over the front of them, they become beautiful and attractive. Isn't that interesting? There's only one way that that could be. Because if God is demanding the death of His Son, in order to satisfy His wrath, that's not beautiful or attractive. Not to me. I don't know about you.

“Mercy, tenderness, and parental love are seen to blend with...” Are seen to blend. Notice how she words that. “...are seen to blend with holiness, justice and power.” Seem to blend because of our perceptions of justice as we've been talking about in the presentations. “While we behold the majesty of His throne high and lifted up, we see His character in its gracious manifestations and comprehend as never before the significance of the endearing title, our Father.”

This is all in the cross. So what are we seeing in the cross? Well, certainly it cannot be God's wrath was satisfied. That's not the endearing qualities of a Father. That's a relentless judge demanding justice through death. It's like Saul with his son Jonathan when he broke the veil that he didn't even know existed. And he said, "Jonathan, I have a decree, and by that decree, you have to die." That's not a loving father. Not at all.

And so, I want to go a little bit into the mystery of the cross. And one of the elements of this mystery is in Revelation chapter 13:8. And it says, "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life, of the Lamb slain from..." When?

(Congregation: From the foundation.)

From the foundation of the world. Christ is slain from the foundation of the world. Well, how do we understand that? This is the thing that we going to will look at. But before we do that, I want to come more to my own experience. And we're going back to 1985. Many of you are familiar with this story, but it was in 1985 that I'd come to a kind of a crossroads in my experience. My love of the things of this world growing up in a Seventh Day Adventist home was starting to take its toll upon me. The movies, and the music, and the sports, and the things that were pulling me in one direction were being challenged by my... Suddenly you would get these outbursts in your character that even shocked me. And I was becoming alarmed at the person that I was becoming. You listen to hard music, you become hardened in character. You listened to

rebellious music, you become rebellious in character. This is by beholding you. You become changed.

And so, I have related the experience that one time my mother came into my room and told me, as a 17-year-old, that I should clean up my room. And this spirit that I was nurturing and fostering inside of me came out and said to my mother in a very harsh tone, basically to get out of my room, this is my space and do not tell me what to do. And I was just as shocked as she was, that this would come out of me. So then I had a decision to make. What are you going to do? Do you want to insist the way you want to be?

And a number of events had been taking place around this time where the Spirit of God was coming to me and saying, "Is this the person that you want to be? Do you really want to be like this? Do you want to be like this in character?" And I became deeply convicted. I was taught as a child, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter, fear God and keep His commandments for this is the whole duty of man." And of course, one of those commandments is, "Honour your Father and your mother that your days may be long upon the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

And so, I went to my mother and I apologized and I said, "I want to change. Can you give me something to read? Or what do I do?" And she gave me the book Steps to Christ to read. Bless you, Mother. Thank you for giving me that book. I had been given the book when I was 14 and I didn't sense my need when I was 14. I didn't feel the need of a saviour quite like I did when I was 17 when the seeds of rebellion had manifested themselves to a much greater degree. That's when I began to feel my need to change. Because my relationships were important to me and I didn't want to lose those relationships. And I'm thankful that that had been instilled in me.

And so, I read on page 13 of that book, "Behold Him in the wilderness." Because I was raised in an Adventist home, I was familiar somewhat with the stories of Jesus. I'd heard preachers talk about Jesus dying on the cross. And so, then it says, "Behold Him in the garden, the garden of Gethsemane." It was

as if I was being transported to the garden. As I'm reading, I have this sense that I am standing there as a witness to what He is experiencing. It became very to me, all of a sudden.

And I see this great burden that He is under, and He is sweating drops of blood. And then I read the words, "Behold Him on the cross." And the scene comes before me and I see Him upon the cross. And as I looked at His face, and I guess I would preface this by saying that any other time that an authority figure in my life had to do something because of my mess ups and my mistakes, they were typically a little bit annoyed that I was causing them and inconvenience.

And so, I know that this was a massive inconvenience for Jesus to be hanging on the cross because of me. So, the thought would be that He would be saying to me, "Well, I'm willing to do this for you, but I want you to know that this is really annoying that I have to do this because of you and you better be grateful. You better be grateful for this, young man, that I'm doing this for you." I think we understand that type of experience.

But the Spirit of God came into my mind and obviously showed me actually what Jesus was thinking while I was looking at the cross. I saw in His face such love and acceptance. And that pieced me. It went straight through me. How could You love me? How could You love me? But what I saw, I embraced immediately. And I cried out and I said, "Lord, please come into my life. I want You to help me because I want to be a good person. I don't want to say and do things that cause me guilt and frustration and break my relationships with my family and my friends."

And with that look, that look of acceptance, that look of love. There was an instant bond that was formed between myself and my saviour. I know I can trust this person. If He can love me in my completely wicked state, and He could still love me, and still smile at me, I know I can trust Jesus. I know that I can trust Him. And this was a revelation to my heart by my Father in heaven. No one can come to Christ and except the Father draw him, the Father drew me to His Son and He revealed to me in the Spirit, what Christ felt towards me,

it was only love. For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame. Hallelujah.

And as I asked Him to come into my life, I felt this peace come over me. And all of the guilt. Because it says, as we read the other day in Jeremiah 17, that your sins are recorded with a pen of iron and the point of a diamond on the tables of your heart. And all that sin and all of that darkness that was there in my soul is that Spirit came down, and it cleanses the temple, and it drove out those things that were there. And I felt the white go off my shoulders as Christian, that weight, that burden that went into the sepulchre with Christ when He died.

And the joy and the freedom that came caused me to cry uncontrollably, and to weep. That I've chose to believe that I was forgiven. Because I was good? Because I was a Seventh Day Adventist? Because I had been reading the Bible? No. None of those. There was no evidence that I was forgiven, except that the Word of God that says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

I knew enough of these things to be able to claim the righteousness of Christ by faith alone. And what a joy to be able to have that experience at 17 years of age. Saved me a lot of heartache. But I had plenty of headache up to that age, being a rebellious teenager and child. But the joy that I experienced, and the transformation. The things that I once loved, I now hated. The things that I hated and were distasteful to me, I couldn't get enough of.

And as I began to read the Scriptures with great earnestness, I remember reading the book of Philippians and each verse was bursting with meaning. The Spirit was teaching me and I was just saying, "Wow, wow, I never saw this before. And this is amazing." And He was teaching me how to read the Scriptures. And some of my friends, because I was attending an Adventist high school, rang me up on this particular Sabbath afternoon and said, "We're going to a movie tonight. Would you like to come with us to the movies?" I said, "Oh, I'm busy tonight. I don't want to come."

Now as a young person, at least in... I think it's for most people in the world. There's a thing called Saturday night fever. Have you heard of Saturday night fever? Like to be home on a Saturday night. I mean, what kind of a person are you to be home on a Saturday night? Nobody's home on a Saturday night, except old people and invalids. You must go out on a Saturday night and enjoy yourself to the full. And if they say, "What is wrong with you?" "No, I'm going to stay home tonight." "Well, we're going to come around and we're going to... You're coming. We can take you. You're coming with us."

So, they came round and I said, "Come on, I don't want to go." I said, I don't want to go. I didn't tell him I didn't want to go because I was really enjoying my study of the book of Philippians. And I didn't want to tell him. But I was enjoying what I was reading. But they wouldn't leave me alone. So I thought, all right, I'll pull out the big guns. "Look, I want to stay home and read my Bible." They left. And it's with a tinge of sadness that I say this. This was my fellow Seventh Day Adventist young people that were having this experience.

And one of my friends, because I love to indulge, ingesting, and joking, and as we say in Australia, ripping people off in verbal ways. And my friend came to me a week later and he said, "Adrian, How do you do this religious nut-job thing? You've got everybody convinced that you're a religious nut. How can you not laugh when you're saying these things?" And I remember looking him straight in the eye and said, "It's no joke." "Whoa."

Jesus has come into my heart. He's cleansed the temple. The things... What's it? "He that is in Christ is a new creation. All things have passed away. All things have become new." And so I was noised abroad throughout the school that Adrian has become religious. In a Christian school! Isn't that amazing? Huh? Imagine that. Getting religious. Getting religion. In a Christian school. That's bizarre.

So that was my experience. And another experience that I want to share, do you remember the... Some of you that were here last night? I talked about my friend who lives in North Carolina, who I'm hoping will come down. But on this

night, and it was just before I had this experience, all of us is final year students in high school, we were taken to Avondale College. This is a place where all Adventist, young people go like Andrews University or Southern. And they wanted us to sign up to go to Avondale College to get our... What was it? PhD. Permanent head damage? Is that... It's not all bad. It's just mostly bad.

But there we were: a group of young people. You put a group of 16, 17-year-old boys in one room, all go to bed down and sleep for the night. How long is that going to stay calm and peaceful? I mean, seriously. Who thought of that? You know, one guy elbows another guy. And then someone throws something and hit someone in the head. And then next thing it's on. And we're all up, and pillows flying, and punches of flying, and objects and projectiles are going everywhere. And then the air becomes blue with the language, the foul language that is coming out the mouths of these young people.

And just before this do a Bible test. And I had to memorize the third angels message. First time I really encountered the third angel. And I passed the test. So I'd memorized them and I'd pass the test. That was Old Covenant. I was forced to encounter the third Angel's message because I had a test on it. And I didn't want to fail, so I memorized it.

And while all this language is going on, and all this activity activities going on, I heard in my mind a voice, "And this is the next generation to take the third angel's message to the world." And inside, I went, "We're in big trouble." And right then, everything went into slow motion. And the door, the main door, swung open, and I looked outside and I could see three young ladies sitting on a porch area to the building where they were and something beckoned me to go in that direction. So I walked straight through all these projectiles flying and everything going around. Nothing hit me. It was a very dumb thing to do, to stop looking what was going on. I just looked straight and I just walked straight out of that building. And I walked over, and there were these three young ladies studying their Bible.

Imagine that. Adventist young people studying their Bible. And I was attracted to sit down and begin to engage them. That was like my calling. This is the next generation to preach the third angel's message to the world. That was my calling, to preach the third Angel's message. Called out of a room blue with the air. The air was blue with foul language, rebellion, and defiance against God. And out of that snake pit, I was called to preach the third angel's message. Amazing.

And it was just after that, that I had that experience. One of those three young ladies was my friend in North Carolina. And she encouraged me. And so, she's a very special friend. That helped me in that journey. But the point that I want to make is the reality of coming to the cross, where I first saw the light. But the cross happened 2000 years ago. How can you come to the cross when it happened 2000 years ago? For me, in the Spirit. It was if I was standing right there in front of the cross and there was this reality of that Christ was suffering on that cross because of me.

But when you read the Scriptures, you will find something very significant. Come to Galatians 3:1, "Oh, foolish, Galatians who have bewitched you that you should not obey the truth before whose eyes Jesus Christ have been evidently set forth, crucified among you." And EJ Wagner asked the question, "How did Paul set forth Christ crucified among the Galatians?" He was crucified among the Galatians. Well, there's a little clue in the previous chapter, the Galatians 2:20. "I am crucified with Christ."

Now, didn't Paul make a mistake he shouldn't? He has said "I'm crucified like Christ." Why does he say "I'm crucified with Christ"? Would this not suggest that Christ is still being crucified? That's the implication, isn't it? That Christ is still being crucified. And how is Christ being crucified? Hebrews 6:6 tells us in what capacity. Hebrews 6:6. "If they shall fall away to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put Him to an open shame."



The reality is... In the principles we talk about within the divine pattern, one of the principles of the divine pattern is Invisible-Visible. There is a fleshly cross. There is a cross of flesh. There is a cross of wood. But the visible is always pointing to invisible. The visible is a magnification and an expression of the invisible. And we see that Christ has not ceased to be crucified in the Spirit. In His heart, in His Spirit, He is pierced by our words, by our actions, and our deeds.

He is pierced because every person who comes into this world, comes in through the life of Christ. "He is the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." "In Him, we live, and move, and have our being." "Low, I am with you even under the end of the world." "In Him, all things hold together," Galatians 1:17. So Christ is connected to every individual. He's connected to them. He dwells in those who have accepted Christ, but He is bound to every person. And those who do not allow Him entrance, He must experience continual pain and suffering of being kept out.

How does it feel when someone you love intently, and you have given everything for, holds you out? How does that feel? Does that pierce you? And this is what Christ feels billions of times over through the souls that hold Him out while He is holding them. For He is their life support system. He is the one that is making the heart pump and the kidneys work. He is keeping all the organs alive. And He has every single individual in His embrace. And in that embrace, can you imagine the person who is on this life support system that they are saying to the one that is giving them life support, "Get out of my life, I don't want you." Can you imagine how hurtful that would be? And this is happening to Christ right now, billions of times, over.

"The cross is a mystery." The reason it is a mystery is because it is too bright for us to look upon. I'm telling you, you cannot look upon the cross in all of its glory. If you did, it would crush you instantly. If you took the full relational impact of the sufferings of Christ over the last 6,000 years, and you tried to take in and comprehend that, you would collapse and die instantly. You cannot

look upon the cross in all of its glory without being sustained. And we're going to look at some verses on that.

Isaiah 63:8. "For He said, surely they're My people, children, that will not lie." So, He was their saviour. This is speaking of Christ. "In all their affliction, He was afflicted. And the angel of His presence saved them. In His loving and His pity, He redeemed them and He bear them. And carried them..." How long? "All the days of old." In all your affliction, Christ is afflicted. Why? Because His heart is for you. You are His child. He loves you. And everything that wounds you, wounds Him.

We know this as parents. If you are a true parent, you are wounded when your children are wounded. And Christ is wounded when we are wounded. When we cry, He is affected by our sorrow. And this is an understanding of the cross that is so hard to grasp, and yet this is part of the 1888 message. I want you to look at the book Education, page 263, "Those who think of the result of hastening or hindering the gospel, think of it in relation to themselves and the world. Few think of it in relation to God. Few give thought to the suffering that sin has caused our Creator. All heaven suffered in Christ agony, but the suffering did not begin or end with His manifestation in humanity. The cross is a revelation to our dull senses of the pain that, from its very inception, sin has brought to the heart God." Can you get a glimpse of the cross? When was the inception of sin?

(Congregation: Before the foundation of the world.)

Before the foundation of the world. Sin began in heaven with Satan and his angels. And that's when the pain... Can you imagine the pain that our heavenly Father experienced when His beloved Son Lucifer was sprouting lies and saying things about his Father that they both knew false. The pain that would have come to the heart of God in bearing long with Lucifer. And then to see a third of the angels. How many? Hundreds of thousands, millions of His children choosing to believe that their heavenly Father was a tyrant who desired only to control, dominate, and withhold from them that which is good.

Can we begin to grasp the suffering and the pain of our Father, which has been manifested in the life of Jesus Christ? The Father is the one that... That's where the cross really exists. The cross exists in the heart of the Father. And it is manifested by His Son. We just take for a moment to think about how much suffering the Father has been through. I want to read you a statement and this is... I'm trying to think of the words. How did it go?

Listen to this. This is General Conference bulletin, December 1, 1895. "Remember that Christ risked all, tempted like as we are, He staked even His own eternal existence." In Christ, in the Father being willing to give up His Son, there was a risk, as it says in *Desire of Ages*, page 49, there was a risk of eternal loss. There was a risk that Christ may fail in His mission to save the human race. And the Father, before time began, was willing to take that risk. He was willing to lose His Son forever to save you and me.

If everything had failed and we all had perished, the pain of the Father would have gone on forever in the loss of all things. Because in Christ, all things consist. Everything would have gone down. But He was willing to take that risk. Because despite what Augustine tells us, despite what he says about omniscience, there is no re there is no love in calculation. There is only love in risk. The love that someone has is measured by the risk that they are willing to take. Otherwise it's not love. It's just calculation. It's just chess. It's just where the moves are going to go, we'll do this move, we'll do this move. That's not love. That's just robotic calculation.

But love is measured by risk. And God risked all. He was willing to yield up His only begotten Son. He delivered up. He did spare, not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. And when the council of peace was had in the very beginning, and They were commuting in the council of peace. It says in *Earlier Writings* page 127. The angel said to Ellen White, "Do you not think that that God's struggled? Do you not think it was a struggle for our Father to yield up His only begotten Son?" Why would you struggle if it was only a chess game and you knew the outcome? You struggle because there's a risk. There's a risk that I could lose my Son forever on this.

But my beloved children, this isn't nonsense to us. It is the nonsense of the cross that God would give up someone infinitely more valuable than you and I for us. But that's agape. And Jesus was willing to give up His life. The infinite Son of God, the infinite Son of God was willing to lay down His life for dirt and clay like us. That's a mystery. That's the mystery of the cross that is so hard to comprehend. And if you would try to comprehend it in its fullness, it would crush you.

And that's why we have Zechariah chapter 12. In order to behold the cost because we're all going to behold it. We're all going to look upon the cross one day at the end of the thousand years, as it says in Great Controversy, that the cross will appear above the throne and everyone will see the whole story like a movie. Not like Hollywood portrays it. In its reality. All laid out. And we will all see, in human history, the cross. And we will all behold it.

But here, Zachariah chapter 12. Before that time, it says in verse 10, "And I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplications." You're going to need grace for what's coming next. "And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced. And they shall mourn for him as one mourner for His only Son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one is in bitterness for his firstborn."

When we are strengthened to behold the cross as it really is, because you will have to be strengthened to endure it, then we will begin to comprehend the love of God. That's when we will begin to comprehend it. And you will need supernatural strength in order to look upon the cross in all of its reality. Now we see the cross through a glass darkly. But we can get an inkling. We can get a comprehension. It's difficult for us, and when we begin to speak in these terms, the mind just starts shut down. Because right now... How many children are starving to death on this planet right now? Many. Does Christ feel it? Does He feel the suffering of those children?

I do know, at least from statistics. Do you know how many women and children are being trafficked for sex on this planet right now? 800,000. That's what we

know about. 800,000 people in terror, in fear. Christ feels all of that. All of it. How many people are shooting up? How many people are overdosing? How many people are being murdered? How many people are being raped? How many people are being abused? How many people right now, where there's a woman cowering in the corner with her drunk husband smashing furniture and swearing at the top of his lungs? How much of that is going on right now? And how much of that does Jesus feel? All of it. Every last bit of it.

And when you start to talk like this, I can see it in your faces. As I experienced myself, I have to stop thinking about. I can't think about this. Because this is the cross. This is what Jesus is willing to bear. And why is He willing to bear this? So that you and I might have another breath to choose, to reflect the character of Christ, and to know Him. He's willing to endure all this suffering, to endure all the planning and the scheming of the new world order, and all those who are planning the domination of this world and all the death camps. He's willing because He's in all those council meetings and he sees all those things that are happening, and all of the stuff, let alone all the issues. The child, pedophilia, pizza gate, whatever you want to call it, He knows all about it. He sees all of it.

And He not only sees it, He experiences it. He experiences what that little child feels when he or she is being violated. He experiences the terror that they experience. This is the cross. This is what the cross is about. And this is what we were beginning to be taught in 1888. And why is it that we haven't heard these things? It's evidence that we have rejected the 1888 message. It's evidence, isn't it?

How can you live with keeping this conception of the cross in your mind every day? Isn't it going to spoil your day, to be thinking about all this misery every day? That's going to spoil my day. I don't want to think about things like this. And yet there is a morning and evening sacrifice. Twice a day, we are called upon to remember the sufferings of Christ. And to remember with joy that we have been given life, living bread. Every time there is a sacrifice, there is living bread that comes to us in order that we may live.

Christ is willing to endure all this suffering in order that we might take another breath. How much is your breath worth? Just think about that. The cross, the goodness of God leads us to repentance. I try to keep these things in my mind, but I find it difficult.

There are two directions I want to go now from this point and I don't know which way to go because I've only got 10 minutes.

If Christ is experiencing all of these things, then we need to think about the judgments of God. Remember we said the mystery of the cross explains all other mysteries. And those attributes of God which make us afraid, they become beautiful and attractive. This is what it says Great Controversy 652. So I want you to think for a minute. Think of the mother in Egypt after the destroying angel has gone through and slaughtered all the first born of Egypt. And there's the mother bending over the form of her dead child. Did Christ feel that? Yeah. He felt it. He felt it.

When the antediluvians knew that the ended had come and they're about to die, did Christ feel that? Did He feel the terror? Did He feel the terror that they felt? Yes. He felt it. These people felt, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" That's what they felt, wasn't it? And they felt that their sins, the guilt of their sins upon them, they felt that those sins were separating them from God and that they were worthy of death, that they who not only do the same know that they are worthy of death. Oh, I better read it. I lost it. Romans chapter 1 last verse. "Who knowing the judgment of God that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same but have pleasure in them that do them."

They knew that they were worthy of death. And now that the sentence was coming, they were experiencing that cutting off, that separation, because the Spirit of God has been withdrawn and they are experiencing the cross. Not an attorning in cross, but a destructive cross. And because Christ was there with them, because He is the one that gives them breath, He is the one that is afflicted in all their affliction, Christ is going through the cross with the

antediluvian, with Sodom and Gomorrah, with the plagues Egypt. Christ is experiencing the cross in the dead, the terror, the agony, of all these people. Are you making a connection?

But what do we see in Isaiah 53? Isaiah 53. I didn't read for you the quote. You can look at it in in the Spirit of Prophecy that says, "Daily, Christ suffers the agonies of crucifixion." Crucifixion of Spirit, crucifixion of heart, not flesh. If I speak to you of earthly things, we speak of the cross 2000 years ago, but I'm speaking to you of Spiritual things. And that is, every day, Christ is pierced by our words, deeds and actions.

And so... Isaiah 53:3, "He is despised and rejected." Notice how we read this in the present tense. As we read it, it's written in a way that we would understand the present tense. Because He is today despised and rejected, isn't it?

(Congregation: Yes.)

"A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, we hide as it were our faces from him." He was despised. Now, Isaiah wrote this in 700 BC, and he's saying in 700 BC, he was all ready despised. How was Christ despised? The rejection at the Spirit level where the Spirit of Christ is pleading with the hearts of men, and men are pushing away from Christ. He is despised and rejected of men, the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

And then it says, "Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." There it is again. He has carried... How do you carry someone's sorrow? You experience it with them. This is what it means. But notice what it says. "Yet we did esteem him what? Stricken smitten of God and afflicted." It was God that destroyed them in the flood. It was God that destroyed them in Sodom and Gomorrah. You see? We esteem smitten of God. And that enables us to disconnect ourselves from the reality of the cross.

You're making the connection? The mystery of the cross explains all other mysteries. It makes the attributes of God, which has caused us to fear, to become beautiful and attractive. And so it will be at the very end of time when

the wicked are right before God. And in the brightness of the Father's glory and they see this cross, they comprehend this cross of God's love. It is a fire. The glory of God is a devouring fire to the wicked. When they see the beauty of His character, the crushing weight that comes down upon them.

But even in that experience, where they know that they are carrying the weight of their guilt, and they feel cut off from the Father, and they feel alone and destitute, in that moment, Christ experiences it with them. So, to the very end, Christ experiences the cross. Can you see it? Can you glimpse it? Just a little bit of what the cross really is. And in all that, Jesus defines for us what the cross is. Matthew 16:24.

People think of the cross like Mel Gibson. It's all about the flesh, and the beating, and the whipping, and the laceration, and the destruction of the flesh. But it is much more than that.

“Then Jesus said unto His disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross.” What is the cross? It is self denial. And this is the great test for all of us. When Christ is whipped and beaten by our words and our actions, does He come out and begin to accuse us and attack us and say, “Why are you doing these things and get aggressive, and how dare you do this to Me? I am suffering under the weight of this cross, and why are you doing this to Me?” Does He do this? No, He doesn't. He suffers patiently. He endures, He denies Himself, and He carries this cross every day without complaining. This is the cross.

But what does it say? “If any man will come after me, let him...” What? Deny himself. How does a man deny himself? You must be born again. You have to be born again to have a spirit like this, to love your enemies, to do good to them that persecute you. When they slap you in the one side that you would turn the cheek and let them do the other. Oh Lord, I am poor in spirit. I feel the intensity of the investigative judgment. When I look upon the character of God and I see His love and His compassion and these self denial as manifested in



the cross, I feel myself a sinner. I feel condemned. Not because He's condemning, but His character makes me look terrible.

I feel guilty when I compare myself to Him, that I'm so unwilling to deny myself. But should God deny Himself? Should He deny Himself in order that I don't have to deny myself? Well, He is denying Himself, but eventually God must be God. He must simply stand up and be who He is in all of His loving, selfless, mercy, and grace. And when that day comes, a fire will come forth from Lucifer. It will come from his heart. A fire will come forth from the midst of him. And it will consume him. It will crush him.

And because he is such a hardened individual that has killed billions, upon billions, upon billions of people, it will take a number of days for him to finally yield and die under the weight of the guilt of his transgression. Because what is it that kills Lucifer? Go to the Typology. What does the priests do? Where does he place his hand on the goat? Where does he place it? On the forehead. A transfer as the hand goes on to Satan's forehead and he is caused to remember all the things that he has done. That is what will kill him. It is simply a hand on the head saying, "Do you remember all the things that you have done? Let me show you." So that is how God kills Satan. Simply showing him his character in contrast to His own. And cross to show the cross.

I will share that other part with you. I want to suggest to you that as we are sitting here and the Spirit of God is speaking to you, and you're under conviction, and you are marvelling at the power of the cross, there is a marvel even greater than this. Because probably by tomorrow, most of us will have completely forgotten what we've just talked about today.

And it's important for us that we do forget. Because if we don't forget, we have to change. We have to change who we are and become completely different people if we keep remembering and thinking about this. So you have to forget it if you want to keep doing what you're doing. Otherwise, you have to change. There's no option. And this is the secret of the parable, in Matthew 25, of the 10 virgins.

It's amazing when we read the parable of the 10 virgins, we focus on the sleep of the foolish virgins, but who else is sleeping? The wise virgins are sleeping as well. And why're they sleeping? Well, it tells you. Because Matthew... Well, if you draw the implications and you go to Matthew 26, it tells you what the sleep represents. Because when Jesus is going into His suffering and agony, in Matthew chapter 26, what happens to the disciples? They fall asleep. Why do they fall asleep? Because their Messiah, their beloved Messiah, who is going to overthrow the Romans, and they are going to sit on His left hand and His right hand, He is now suffering and in agony. And this is not part of the program. Time to go to sleep. Wake up tomorrow. Everything will be fine. We'll be back on the program.

So, we have to go to sleep. Because if we don't sleep, we have to enter into His sufferings. Which means we'll have to deny ourselves. So it's better to sleep. You see why the wise virgins sleep. It's asleep to the sufferings of Christ. But they will come a cry at midnight. "Behold the bridegroom cometh. Go you out to meet him." We have to go out to meet Him. And the only way we can meet Him is at the foot of the cross. If we want to meet Him, we will have to meet Him at the most glorious point where He stands. And that is at the cross. And we will have to behold Him, and we will have to mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and being bitterness as one is in business for his first born.

And then this earth will be lightened with the glory of the Lord when the cross is truly presented in all of its glory. And when you understand this, then you will begin to realize that this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness and to nations. And then the end shall come. And people everywhere are saying, "Oh, the third angel's message. And we're preaching the third angel's message. And it's going to all the world." That's not the gospel. The gospel has not been preached yet. It's not preached from any poll, but anywhere on this planet at the present time. It was amazing when Robert Wieland in the 1930s said... And I'd love to know who this person was. The audacity of this Australian lecturer there in Takoma Park, Washington when he

said, "There is none available evangelist to help preaching the gospel." What? Well, who is that preaching the gospel.

You need to go and find a little book it's called Glad Tidings by E.J. Waggoner. In there, you will find the gospel. And in that book, you will find the ever-present cross. It's on Galatians chapter three. You'll find there the present cross. It's also, we have no excuse because it's in the book Education page two 63. And it's written in other places that the sufferings of Christ have not ceased, that they continue on every day.

And it is in this truth that I discovered the meaning of the judgments of God in the Old Testament. But we need to esteem them smitten of God and afflicted because we need to esteem them smitten of God and afflicted. Because if we don't, then we have to come into the reality of the cross. But the cross is an offense to us. And we must put up walls and barriers to resist. To resist the cross lest we should have to deny ourselves and give ourselves fully to Christ.

This is why the gospel and the subject of the character of God must intersect. If you want to understand what the cross really is and what the character of our Father is really like. If you don't, you will not understand the cross, which means you can't come to the foot of the cross, which means you will be lost. And that is something that we don't want to happen to anyone. So, I'm asking you, as we're in the double portion of the Spirit and your mind has the opportunity to be enlightened, to respond. Now is the day of salvation. Now is the appointed time to respond to the cross of Christ.

Are you going to you go out from here and forget what you heard, what does it say? "Be not hearers of the word, but doers. For the hearer of the word reads, and beholds his own natural face in the word, and straight life forgets what manner of man he was and goes back into his vomit." This is what it says. But we have an opportunity. A message is rising in which you have the opportunity to fully embrace the cross. To receive a Spirit that is willing to deny itself. That's what I long for. I long for a Spirit that is willing to fully deny itself. For I find within myself no good thing. For the things that I want to do, I do not.

But hallelujah, there is therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. Why? Because my Father does not judge me. Why? Because the Son of God does not judge me. What is it that judges me? It is His beautiful self sacrificing-character as revealed in the first four books of the New Testament. That's what judges me. That's what is going through me. That is what's going through me like Epsom salts ripping through, showing me all the filth, and rubbish, and selfishness that exists within my character.

No words are ever really going to describe what God has done. And I'm just so thankful that right back there in 1991, there was this understanding of the separation of the Father and His Son. And so I just think it would be good for us to kneel. And maybe some of you would like to pray as well. I don't want to stop anyone if you want to respond. And I will close. So, let's kneel and just talk to our Father.

Father in heaven, I know I speak on behalf of all my brothers and sisters here and those that are watching online. There's no words that we can really give to you, but we thank you that Your Spirit is speaking to our hearts and minds. Please help us not to go from this place, the same way that we came in. Help us to be able to behold the cross. 6,000 years, and it's still going on, and it will go on till the end of the thousand years. We cannot comprehend Your self denial.

And in the midst of all that turbulence, in the midst of all of that agony, on the Sabbath, we sense the deep calm assurance of your love. It's beyond our comprehension, but we worship You. We thank You, Father. What can we say, but we thank you that You're willing to give up your Son. We don't comprehend its full meaning. We won't comprehend this throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. We'll never fully understand what you sacrificed in order that we might have eternal life. We dare not throw it away. It's been given to us at such an immense cost.

And I pray for each one of my friends here. For I know that for some here, that Satan is telling them, "You're not going to be there. You're not going to make

it. Your sins are too great. And your wicked life is going to prevent you from being in the Kingdom." Father, I pray that they would not believe this. There is no sin or blasphemy that cannot be forgiven except the sin that says, you can't forgive me. That's the blaspheme of the Holy Spirit.

I pray Lord that we would take hold of this opportunity while heaven is open, while the Spirit is being poured out. And that we would yield our lives to you that this controversy can finish, and that You can finally come down from the cross, and that You can be at rest. And we thank You in Jesus name. Amen.