



The Reverend Dr. David V. Silvernail, Jr.  
John 12:32-33

Palm Sunday, April 9, 2017  
English Standard Version

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## *“Lift Jesus Higher!”*

### **John 12:31-34**

*“Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. <sup>32</sup> And I, when I am **lifted up** from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” <sup>33</sup> He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. <sup>34</sup> So the crowd answered Him, “We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?”*

*Heavenly Father, thank You for giving us the Scriptures and making us Your people. You have brought us to this amazing Gospel to learn more about your Son Jesus and His Cross. We ask You this morning to give us the grace to understand Your Word here. We know a lot about the cross, we just don't find it very attractive. And so, we thank You that this **Palm Sunday**, Your Word points us to Your Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and to the **glory** of His Cross. Focus us this day on Your Word and on Your Son and on His Cross. Help us to see Jesus, in His holy and precious name, we pray, Amen.*

### **INTRODUCTION: *Not the Cross?* <sup>1</sup>**

We are told in the Scriptures to “**fix our eyes on Jesus.**” Not a bad idea for **Palm Sunday**. Not a bad idea for any Sunday. And yet it comes with a problem. You see, **we want** to look at Jesus' Incarnation, after all we love Christmas. And **we want** to look at the Jesus' miracles, which reveal His **glory**. And **we want** to look at Jesus' messages, like the Sermon on

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<sup>1</sup> The Introduction is adapted from The Cross by Andrew Sach & Steve Jeffrey, pages 5-7 and Triumph at the Cross by Dr. Harold Senkbeil, pages 59-61.

the Mount, which reveal such great wisdom. And **we want** to look at His resurrection, in which He is revealed as the Lord and Savior. And, of course, **we want** to look at His Second Coming, when we get to see the Return of the King. But what's missing? His death. Why? Because, I think, deep down, **we really don't want** to look at His suffering. **We don't want** to see the nails being driven into His body. **We don't want** to look at His crucifixion. We understand it. We believe it. **We just don't want** to have to **look** at it. **We want to see Jesus ... not the Cross**.

Today the **Cross** is one of the world's most recognizable symbols, the unmistakable sign of the Christian faith. I have one right here – this was my father's **Cross**. He was a lay reader in the Episcopal Church, then later, the Anglican Church, and whenever he was scheduled to read the Scriptures that day, he would wear this **Cross**. And now it's mine.

But if you stop and think about it, the **Cross** is a rather strange symbol for the church to have chosen it as it's representative emblem. I mean, how we would react, when going out with friends, if they wanted to go into the jewelry store in order to buy a little gold electric chair? "Say what? You're going to wear that? There is something seriously wrong with you." And yet, around our necks we're wearing a miniature instrument of execution far more barbaric than that. Crucifixion was one of the most brutal forms of torture ever devised, a **shameful** death reserved for the worst criminals. The condemned man was stripped of his clothes and forced to carry his **Cross** through the streets, taunted by onlookers, ridiculed by bystanders, shamed by his executioners. Theologians don't refer to "*The Humiliation of Christ*" without good reason.

So, as followers of Christ, should we be **ashamed**? The Apostle Paul wasn't. To the sophisticated intellectuals of 1<sup>st</sup> Century Corinth, he wrote, **1 Corinthians 2:2**, "*For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.*" To the legalists and moralist of the Galatian church he said, **Galatians 6:14**, "*But far be it from me to boast except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*" And as we were reminded last week, it's the focus of the Lord's Supper, **1 Corinthians 11:26**, "*For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.*"

Christians don't love the **Cross** because we have a morbid fascination with death. We love the **Cross** because **it means something!** We love the **Cross** because on it, **Christ accomplished something!** On the **Cross**, Christ bore **our** sin, paid **our** penalty, endured **our** punishment, and secured **our** forgiveness.

But we have to back up a little bit ... because the Cross doesn't happen until **Good Friday**, and today is only **Palm Sunday**. So why are we talking about the Cross ... in advance of the Cross? Well, there's a reason, and it's not just because I'm the preacher and I felt like it. To understand why we're talking about the Cross, in advance of the Cross, we first have to stop and ask a question about **Palm Sunday**. And the question about **Palm Sunday** is ...

**BACKGROUND: What's Being Said Here?**

Usually on **Palm Sunday** we look at how people waved palms as Jesus entered Jerusalem. And in **John 12** the Triumphal Entry has just happened. Jesus has entered Jerusalem to the great fanfare of the people. In their minds, God's promised messianic blessing is playing out before their very eyes. Jesus, the Davidic king and miracle worker has entered the royal city, no doubt, to claim the throne of David and to lead the people of Israel to victory over Rome.

The sad reality is that **Palm Sunday** is every bit a tragedy as much as it is a triumph. Although the people of Israel cheer and shout messianic anthems, the reality is that Jesus is not the king they want, and so the very moment when Jesus is arrested and stands helpless before the

Jewish High Priest Caiaphas and then the Roman Governor Pilate, the people turn on Him and began calling for His death. On **Palm Sunday**, the people see Jesus as the successor to King David and they're thrilled. By **Good Friday**, they see Jesus as a mere messianic pretender who should be put to death for causing so much trouble.

As I said, usually we look at **what Jesus did** on this day, however, we don't usually look at **what Jesus said** on this day. And that's what we're going to do today. Jesus proclaimed that His hour had come. Surely, Jesus was referring to His entrance into the city and the beginning of His reign. But those who listened carefully to Jesus knew that He was not about to meet the crowd's expectations. In fact, Jesus said His hour referred to something soon to come, that He would be **glorified**, that a time of judgment would come when He is "**lifted up**" in order to draw people to Himself. At the end of **John 12**, we learn that time of judgment mentioned by Jesus begins when His public ministry comes to a close, and Jesus withdraws from the public eye. Having ended His public ministry, Jesus begins to prepare His disciples for His departure. What the people of Israel thought to be a time of God's blessing was, in reality, the beginning of God's judgment upon Israel, when the messianic light departs, and the darkness of spiritual judgment falls upon the people who cheer for a Messiah in whom **they do not believe**, and who's mission **they do not understand**.

Previously in John, Jesus had only spoken of His hour – when He will be **glorified** – as a future event. Remarkably, He tells a group of Gentiles that His hour has come. When Jesus spoke these words about His hour having arrived, people assumed that He was referring to His triumphal entrance into the city. But for the people standing around Jerusalem listening to Him, Jesus sure didn't sound like a man about to lead Israel to victory over Rome.

He wasn't talking about **Palm Sunday**. Instead, Jesus was speaking of events soon to come – His death and resurrection. Using the analogy of a grain of wheat which falls into the ground and then germinates, Jesus is speaking of how He must die, and then be raised from the dead. He speaks of how those who follow Him must lose their lives in order to receive His (eternal life).

The Apostle John uses this expression **lifted up** four times in His gospel, and each time, it's talking about Jesus being **lifted up** in crucifixion. He's not stoned to death. He's not decapitated. He is **lifted up**, the provision that God has made. God has sent His Son to be **lifted up** on a wretched **Cross** outside the city of Jerusalem on a disgusting hill called Golgotha, the place of the skull. And when you realize that, it forces us to acknowledge ...

#### **v.31-32: THE REALITY OF THE CROSS** <sup>2</sup>

*"Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. <sup>32</sup> And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."*

Did you notice in **verse 31** the repetition of the word **now**? "**Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out.**" And Jesus is saying, "There is something

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**2 The Background and Exposition of the text is adapted from the books, The Most Misused Verses in the Bible, by Dr. Eric Bargerhuff, pages 155-159. **My sermon**, "Responding to the Work of Christ," preached here at Potomac Hills, 8/5/07. **And the Sermons**, "The Glory in the Cross" 0/22/91 and "Fall into the Ground" 3/25/01, both by Dr. Timothy Keller, Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York, NY, *The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive*, Logos Bible Software 7.5; "I want to Be in that Thunder" by Dr. Russell Moore, President of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, preached at First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, MS, 1/30/11, [www.fpcjackson.org](http://www.fpcjackson.org); "When I Am Lifted Up" 10/13/13 and "Whoever Believes in Me" 10/20/13, both by Dr. Kim Riddlebarger, Christ Reformed Church, Anaheim, CA, <http://kimriddlebarger.squarespace.com>.**

decisive happening **right now**, as I enter Jerusalem, something is going to happen that is going to change the world. It was for this event that He'd come. That's why it's not the incarnation that's the pivotal point of Jesus' life and ministry. **It's the Cross.** It's the **Cross** and the events that followed — the burial, the resurrection, the ascension, and session at God's right hand. There is something about those events for which He had come.

Now, I know I said we're taking a break this week and next from our series on *The Most Misused & Misunderstood Verses of the Bible*, but this one could easily fit. Because this verse is a case of another misused Scripture often cited in the context of leading worship in the church. It is **verse 32**, "*And I, when I am **lifted up** from the earth, will draw all people to Myself.*" The words come from the lips of Jesus, and on the surface, they would seem to fit the agenda of an overzealous worship leader who is seeking to "*lift up the name of Jesus*" in song as God's people gather and engage in worship.

Now, to be fair, **lift up** was a common biblical phrase used in the context of worship, both in the Old and New Testaments. We see, particularly in Isaiah and the Psalms, numerous references are made to what we're **lifting up**. For example, in **Isaiah 24:14**, we read, "*They **lift up their voices**, they sing for joy; over the majesty of the LORD they shout from the west.*" And in the Psalms, we see, **Psalms 25:1**, "*To you, O LORD, I **lift up my soul.***" **Psalms 121:1**, "*I **lift up my eyes** to the hills. From where does my help come?*" And in the New Testament, when the Apostle Paul was giving instructions to Timothy about corporate worship, he stated, **1 Timothy 2:8**, "*I desire then that in every place the men should pray, **lifting holy hands** without anger or quarreling.*" The list could go on, but you have the general idea, figuratively speaking, believers are to "**lift up**" our hearts and minds, body and soul, in worship. But in every case, we're **lifting up** part of **ourselves ... in order to worship Him.**

But here in **John 12:32**, and, in fact, every time Jesus uses this phrase about Himself, He is referring to the **Cross**. Being "**lifted up**" was Jesus' way of referring to His death, His crucifixion. John makes that clear in the next verse, when he says, **verse 33**, "*He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.*" Therefore, being **lifted up** was the equivalent of being hung on a **Cross**.

But remember, He's used those words before. Back in **John 3**, in His discussion with Nicodemus, Jesus reminded him, **John 3:14-15**, "*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,*<sup>15</sup> *that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life.*" Jesus is referring to the account in **Numbers 21**, where Israel spoke rebelliously against the Lord and incurred divine judgment. Poisonous snakes were sent to bite the Israelites and many died. The people then confessed their sin and pleaded with Moses to intercede with the Lord on their behalf. Moses did so and the Lord commanded Moses to make a **bronze serpent** and lift it up on a pole before the people so that whoever looked at it would be **healed**. The parallel that Jesus is making is that in the same way that people were **physically** healed by looking at that which was "**lifted up**," so it is that **spiritual** healing and eternal life will come to whoever looks, in faith, to the Son of Man who is "**lifted up**" on the **Cross**.

So, the idea of being "**lifted up**" has everything to do with Christ's crucifixion. And it is through this atoning sacrifice on the **Cross** that Jesus will draw people to Himself, which will demonstrate ...

#### v. 32b: **THE POWER OF THE CROSS**

Thus, we see the **power** of the **Cross** to draw men and women to Jesus Christ for salvation, **verse 32**, "*And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will **draw** all people to Myself.*"

What is this “*drawing*” of Jesus? It is the same work of God that Jesus referred to in **John 6:44**, “*No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.*” This *drawing* is the sovereign, transforming work of God where He changes the heart of a person who is dead in trespasses and sins to make him desire to come to Christ.

Do you remember some years ago, in January of 1982, when Air Florida flight 90 crashed into the Potomac River? At that time, the Potomac was a very cold, very icy, very frozen river, and there were a lot of people dying in the river because even though they got out of the plane, in the water they ended up dying from hypothermia. And over 70 people died that day.

There was a man, another passenger, who kept going back in. He saved several people. Do you remember that? Every time, someone said, “Don’t go back in there. Don’t go back in there, because this could be the time you die.” He kept saying, “I think I can save one more.” Finally, he went back in and never came back out. Hypothermia set in for him too, and he fell unconscious and he drowned and he died. His last act was passing the lifeline to another passenger, a woman. She couldn’t hold on to the rope in the freezing water and another man jumped in and got her the rope, and she was saved. The rescuer who jumped into the 34-degree water was Lenny Skutnik. And the passenger who kept going back to save others, at the sacrifice of his own life, was Arland Williams. And today, the official name of the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge in DC is the Arland Williams Memorial Bridge. I remember a helicopter pulling his body by a rope up out of the water. As he was *lifted up*, everybody just looked at this man who had **sacrificed himself**, and your heart was drawn to him.

At that moment, you begin to see why Jesus says, “*And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself.*” When a Christian sees the beauty of what Christ did on the **Cross**, you find you can never get over it. You’re attracted to it. The transcendent splendor of His sacrifice draws you like a magnet.

Jesus says, “If you see the depth of your sin, the magnitude of the holiness of God, the power of His justice, and the magnitude of My sacrifice and what I’ve done for you, if you see that, if you begin to **glory** in that, you will find the fact that I died for you ... **is the most important thing about you.**” You have to go to the **Cross**. You’re drawn to His sacrifice, because this “*drawing*” of Jesus is the divine opening of the eyes of one’s heart that were previously blind, so that the **glory** of the Son of Man on the **Cross** becomes irresistible, and, like iron to a magnet, you are drawn to embrace Christ in repentance and faith.

**And the point of our passage** is that this heart transformation, this opening of the eyes, **is in the Cross**. The **Cross** doesn’t just hold out a hypothetical offer of salvation to anyone who will come. The **Cross makes** God’s people come. The **Cross draws** the elect irresistibly to the Savior, precisely because it has **power** to overcome every resistance within the hearts of God’s people — all of God’s people.

This is the way we must understand the “*all*” of **verse 32**. Jesus is not saying that He will draw every single person to Himself. If so, then everybody would be saved. No, Jesus is saying that on the **Cross** He will **draw** to Himself **all of God’s people**. So, to sum up: The death of Jesus glorifies the Son of Man because it reveals Him for who He truly is. Jesus is revealed through the **Cross** to be the Son of God who has the irresistible magnetism to **draw** all of God’s people to Himself for salvation. This is the **glory** of the Son of Man we’re to cherish.

And where is Jesus as He speaks these words?

**On His way to the Cross.**

Of course, the fact that the Messiah had to die to accomplish His mission was precisely what created such a **scandal** in the mind of the people. They had no problem with a king who would lead them in triumph against their enemies, but they weren't looking for a Redeemer who would die for the sins of the world. They no longer understood their need for such a Messiah.

Jesus is bringing a radically different message. Essentially, He's telling them, "The **power** that I am going to show you is a **power** that comes when I am lifted up." The **power** comes in the death, "When I am lifted up, My blood will **silence** the accusation of the ruler of this world. I will **silence** that accusation by fulfilling the righteous law of God. I will **silence** that accusation by taking upon Myself the condemnation against sin. And in **silencing** the accusation of guilt and shame and sin against My people, I will draw them to Myself."

The Pharisees were worried about Jesus' **power** and they said, "Let us show you where His power is. We can't do anything because the whole world is following after Him." Jesus said, "No, no, no — this is nothing. When I am *lifted up*, when the Gospel goes forward, then you will see **the power of God** unto salvation to everyone who believes." So that **every time** that teenager in Africa walks away from spiritualism and **confesses** Jesus as Lord, **every time** that woman in Haiti walks away from Santeria and **confesses** Jesus as Lord, **every time** that that Party official in China walks away from materialistic communism and **confesses** Jesus as Lord, **every time** that that self-righteous Southern Presbyterian walks away from his own righteousness and **confesses** Jesus as Lord, **every time** that happens, rippling out through the centuries and all over the world, Jesus is demonstrating **the power of the Cross**. It is a power that's different than the power they want ... and to be honest, often it's different than the power we want.

And from this point on, the doctrine of the **Cross** and our salvation through Christ's death would continue to prove foolishness to the Gentiles and a scandal to the Jews. As the Apostle Paul would later put it in **1 Corinthians 1:22-25**, "*For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, <sup>23</sup> but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup> but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup> For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*" There's a clear choice to be made here. **The Cross of Christ** is either folly and weakness ... or it is the power and wisdom of God, bringing salvation to those who are called. Which is it? How you answer those questions will help to determine your ...

#### **v. 33: PERSPECTIVE ON THE CROSS**

John goes on to explain, **verse 33**, "*He said this to show by what kind of death He was going to die.*" Very clearly John identifies the **lifting up** of Jesus with His death. In John's mind, the exaltation of Jesus is not just something that happens after His death; no, His **lifting up** is His death itself.

What to the world was Jesus' greatest **weakness** was in reality His greatest **strength**. What appeared to be His greatest **shame** was in reality His supreme **glory**. What seemed to be the ultimate **degradation** was in reality Jesus' ultimate **exaltation**. And so for Jesus, the statement, "*The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified,*" and the statement, "*The hour has come for the Son of Man to die,*" are essentially equivalent statements, for it is precisely through His death that Jesus is **glorified** and no other way.

The hour has come for the Son of Man to be **glorified**. The time has come for Him to die. And that identification leads us to ask the question: How does the death of Jesus **glorify** the Son of Man? The answer to that question is that the death of Jesus **glorifies** the Son of Man

because through **the Cross** the reality of who Jesus is becomes evident to all. It is through **the Cross**, and never apart from it, that we see the **glory** of Jesus revealed for us to worship and adore and cherish.

Specifically, our passage teaches us **two things** about the **glory** of Jesus revealed on the **Cross**. **First**, Jesus is the Son of God who loved the **glory** of His Heavenly Father even more than His own life. **Second**, we can see that the Son of Man is **glorified** through His death, because **the Cross reveals Jesus** as both Judge and Savior. Look again at our verses, “*Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out.*”<sup>32</sup> *And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.*” Judgment for this world, the casting out of Satan, the ruler of this world, the salvation of all men drawn to Jesus — **all of these** are in the Cross of Christ and **through all of them** the Son of Man is **glorified**. Both mercy and wrath are attributes of the divine character of God.

Salvation and judgment are both works of God. Paul writes in **Romans 11:22**, “*Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God’s kindness to you, provided you continue in His kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.*”

And nowhere is the kindness and severity of God, the mercy and wrath of God, His salvation and His judgment more evident ... than in the Cross. The **Cross** shows very clearly God’s wrath against sin and His mercy to repentant sinners. The **Cross** of Christ represents judgment for the world. The Greek word for judgment is *krisis*, crisis. The **Cross** of Jesus Christ is the supreme crisis of the world, the supreme moment of decision, for it is at the **Cross** that the true state of everyone’s heart is laid bare. The **Cross** demands a response from you and me, from every person in this world. Will we be **drawn** to the **Cross** and cherish its mercy or will we bristle at the humility and repentance demanded by the **Cross** and add our voices to the throng shouting, “**Crucify Him**”?

According to Jesus “*this world*” is under the dominion of Satan, “*the ruler of this world*,” and will inevitably **condemn itself** by its treatment of the Son of Man. The point is very simple, the **Cross** of Christ is the judgment of the world and Jesus, exalted and **lifted up** as the Son of Man on the **Cross**, is the judge. Jesus expressed it this way in **John 5:22-23**, “*The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son,*”<sup>23</sup> *that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.*” And a few verses later in **John 5:26-27**, “*For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son also to have life in Himself.*”<sup>27</sup> *And He [God the Father] has given Him [God the Son] authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man.*” The **Cross** is judgment.

But there is more in the **Cross**. Just as the **Cross** represents the judgment of this world, so it also represents the defeat of Satan. To the world, it would appear to be just the opposite. It would appear to be the hour of Satan’s greatest triumph in the killing of the Son of God. But in the mysterious wisdom of God, the reality is just the opposite. Satan was defeated **precisely** in what appeared to be the moment of his greatest triumph. Now note the future tense of the verb: “**now will the ruler of this world be cast out.**” There is a process involved. The evil one has not been totally vanquished. That awaits the second coming. But the decisive blow has been dealt. Satan is on the run, a defeated ruler — defeated by the **Cross**, by the Son of Man who was **lifted up** on the **Cross**.

Jesus Christ came to go to the **Cross**. And so, unless you understand that doctrine of the **Cross**, most of the rest of Christianity doesn’t matter. The **Cross** is absolutely necessary to our salvation, the **Cross** attracts us like nothing else, the **Cross** forces us to choose a perspective of

judgment and wrath, or mercy and salvation. Perhaps another way of understanding the **Cross** comes by asking ...

### **CONCLUSION: What Do You Glory In?**

You **glory** in something. Whatever you **glory** in is what drives your life. There's a great place in Galatians where the Apostle Paul says, **Galatians 6:14**, "*But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*" The Revised Standard Version translates that verse, "*far be it from me to **glory** except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Have you heard that before? What Paul is saying is if you want to **glory** in the **Cross**, you have to recognize the other things you **glory** in. You **glory** in things you think will give you significance.

Everybody glories in something. Everybody tries to get **glory**, significance, from other things. You just have to figure out what yours are. For some of you, it's your career. Some of you, it's relationships. Some of you, it's achievement. Be honest! Most of you moved here because you want to make it ... It's not just an economic issue; it's essentially a self-image issue. It's a **glory** issue. "I have to make it. I have to know I've done well here so I can accept myself, so I can love myself, so I can know I count!" Paul says, "Everybody is **glorying** in something. Everybody's trying to get their **glory** from something. God forbid you should **glory** in anything except the **Cross** of Christ."

This week I read about a woman who had become a Christian. Before she came to church she'd lived a pretty miserable life. She was a lovely woman, and what had happened ... was that from the time she was 14 **she had never NOT** had a boyfriend, and she'd spent the next 15 years of her life always having to have a guy who she thought loved her. She always had to be on some guy's arm.

At a certain point, she began to realize how it was just ruining her life. She went to a counselor. She went to a lot of counselors. Every one of the counselors said (and they were right, as far as they went), "You have a Cinderella complex. You've decided the only way you'll ever feel worthwhile, you'll ever feel valuable, you'll ever feel substantial is if some man loves you. You've given the **glory** to the male gender ... and now **what they think of you** is driving your life." That's true, by the way. There's a lot of women who let what **men think about them** drive their life. And it's usually pretty unhealthy.

So, she says, "What do I do?" They said, "Well, you have to go out and get a career. You have to see you're worthwhile." She says, "How do I know I'm worthwhile? How do I know I count?" "Well, go out and get a career." But then she said to the counselors, "If I go out and get a career, then why won't I be just as emotionally in bondage to my career as I was to men?" They said, "Oh, I see your point." She says, "Well then, how do I know I count?"

It wasn't till she became a Christian that she realized, "**If Jesus Christ**, if someone as **glorious** as that, someone who **really counts**, someone as **significant** as that, if a **glorious** person like that ... would actually do this for me, would love me so much that He would die for me, **even death on a cross** ... now I know I matter. Now I know I matter to the only One who matters. **Now I know!** I can have a career now. It's just icing on the cake. I can have a relationship now. It's just icing on the cake because ... finally, **I know I count**. Finally."

When she stopped **glorying** in anything but the **Cross**, she got **glory**. When the Bible says, you have to lose yourself to find yourself, what it's saying is only if you ascribe all **glory** to God and to what Christ did on the **Cross**, only if you say, "The most important thing about me is that I mattered so much to Jesus Christ that He would die for me," when you begin to let **that**



**drive your life**, you have all the sense of being worthwhile and valuable and substantial. You suddenly realize, “I matter that much to Him!?” Yes, you do. And the Cross proves it.

Take that to heart ... You need to pray.

Take a moment to do that, and then I'll close.

*Dear Heavenly Father, Open our eyes that we might see our **sin** and then see our Savior. Teach us the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus our Lord. First of all, we would confess to you we haven't really let the **Cross** shape us. Many of us give lip service to the fact that there is a **Cross**, that Jesus died on the **Cross** for us, but we haven't let the **Cross** change us. We haven't let the **Cross** attract us. We don't **glory** in the **Cross** and we certainly don't boast in the **Cross**.*

*Now Father, we pray you would enable us to see we don't **glory** in the **Cross**, but we tend to **glory** in other things, so our lives are driven to the point of spiritual bankruptcy. You ask us to glorify You because You know it's the only way we will finally find out that we count, that we'll finally get rid of this sensation of being weightless and inconsequential, of being forgettable and ignored. We haven't thought deeply enough about how much we matter to You or about how much we must be loved. As a result, some of us are anxious, unhappy, desperate, always having our egos hurt. We pray, Father, that you would forgive us for not being attracted by the **Cross** and not being shaped by the sacrifice of the **Cross**.*

*Thank you that at **Palm Sunday** your wisdom was revealed, and it shows the wisdom of the world to be a pale and thin and weak thing. Most of all, help us to embrace that remarkable wisdom that was revealed to us at the **Cross**. Lord, we thank You for that **Cross**, this **Palm Sunday**, in the Name of Your Son, Jesus, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. Amen.*

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### **Galatians 2:20; 6:14**

*“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me **and gave Himself for me**. ... [Therefore] far be it from me to boast **in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ**, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”*