

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

What happens inside of you when you meditate on the cross?

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • February 25, In the year of our Lord, 2018

Scripture Reader and Reading: Tim Braden – Philippians 3.3–6

Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Larry Amberg – Songs on the cross.

Prelude:

I. In 1707, Galatians 6.14 (in the *Old King James Version*)

- A. moved Isaac Watts to write the song
- B. “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”

14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world (Gal 6.14, KJV).

II. The song originally began:

**“When I survey the wondrous cross
“Where the young Prince of Glory died”**

- A. In 1709, Watts changed the wording to our present edition.
- B. Plus, the original song had five stanzas, but
 - 1. newer books deleted what is the fourth verse in *Praise for the Lord* (#742),
 - 2. which our books have restored.

III. Let us do as the song suggests and

- A. survey the cross,
 - 1. taking in what happened on it and
 - 2. what it does to us.
- B. For the most part,
 - 1. each verse starts with a thought about Christ and His cross, and
 - 2. the second part of the verse has our reaction.

Persuasion:

I. Verse 1: Pride becomes contemptible

A. "When I survey the wondrous cross"

1. Remember Jesus, but especially His crucifixion.
 - a) It will help you in every part of life.
 - (1) Every situation in which I have found myself and
 - (2) every person who has ever come to me about a trouble,
 - (a) the wondrous cross always had some application.
 - b) You have heard the word "crux,"
 - (1) such as in, "The crux of the matter is..."
 - (2) that is, the heart of a matter is...
 - (a) "Crux" is Latin for "a cross."
 - (b) Someone picked a word that stands for the center of our faith.
 - i) What is the center of our faith?
 - ii) What is its heart?
 - (1) The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (2) This is why it is good to survey the cross.
2. Take a survey of the cross,
 - a) not to see a bloody sight.
 - b) Survey it
 - (1) to see what it does *to* your life, and
 - (2) what He did *for* your life.
3. The cross is wondrous.
 - a) Are we sick-minded with such a thought?
 - (1) After all Jesus was tortured to death.
 - (2) How can we call it wondrous?
 - b) The cross of Jesus Christ brings

- (1) salvation,
- (2) forgiveness,
- (3) the church (Acts 20.28), and
- (4) zeal for good works (Titus 2.14).

B. “On which the Prince of glory died”

1. See a *Prince* on that cross.
 - a) The Romans used the cross for criminals and slaves.
 - b) How then could a Prince be on the cross?
2. We do not speak or sing of just any Prince, but
 - a) the Prince of glory.
 - b) All princes have glory, but
 - (1) not all princes are The Prince of Glory.
 - (2) Do you see the difference between:
 - (a) A *glorious* prince and
 - (b) the *prince of glory*?

C. “My richest gain I count but loss”

1. Living on earth we have rich gains.
 - a) Look at Paul’s list in Philippians 3.
 - (1) What do you think of when you think of gaining in this world?
 - (2) Paul listed both material and spiritual things,

7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by

any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead (Phi 3.3–11).

2. Our lives consist of gaining, but not so with Christ,

9 ...you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich (2Co 8.9).

D. “And Pour contempt on all my pride”

1. What shall we do with our pride?

2. He was rich and became poor.

3. Should we strive for great things *for ourselves*?

a) Jeremiah 45 shows that the prophet had a scribe

(1) who wrote the Book of Jeremiah.

(2) God had a special message for the man who took dictation from Jeremiah.

b) God warned Baruch not to seek great things for himself,

5 “And do you seek great things for yourself? Do not seek them; for behold, I will bring adversity on all flesh,” says the LORD. “But I will give your life to you as a prize in all places, wherever you go.” (Jer 45.5).

4. Keep surveying the cross and you will pour contempt on your pride.

a) How could we be self-serving

b) when Jesus gave Himself a sacrifice for us?

II. Verse 2: All is sacrificed to His blood

A. “Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast”

1. What do we have or what are we that we can boast of ourselves?

2. Lord, help us not to boast.

- a) Jesus who had so much,
- b) gave it all up.
 - (1) How then can we boast of what we have done *for Him*?
 - (2) How can we boast of what we have done *in the world*?

B. "Save in the death of Christ, my Lord"

- 1. There is one thing in which we can boast,
- 2. the death of Jesus Christ our Lord.
 - a) Here is where Galatians 6.14 really starts to shine.
 - b) Let me add Second Corinthians 10.
 - (1) It gives more than the example of Paul.
 - (2) It tells us how to think,

17 But "he who glories, let him glory in the LORD." 18 For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends (2Co 10.17-18).

C. "All the vain things that charm me most"

- 1. Something charms each of us.
- 2. Certain subjects can be brought up to us and
 - a) we can get excited.
 - b) Do those favorite things of ours
 - (1) excite us more than what Jesus did for us
 - (2) on that wondrous cross?
- 3. Are they not vain by comparison?
 - a) What charms us more than the cross of Christ?
 - b) What provides greater blessings than the crucifixion of the Prince of glory?

D. "I sacrifice them to His blood"

1. Therefore, we take all those charms and
2. sacrifice them to His blood.
 - a) If He gave up what He did,
 - b) surely if the need arises I can give up the things that charm me.

III. Verse 3: A rich crown

A. “See, from His head, His hands, His feet”

1. Look at them.
2. What do we see?
 - a) We see the wounds of His slow, tortuous death.
 - b) We see the skin broken.
 - c) We see blood.
3. We cringe.

B. “Sorrow and love flow mingled down”

1. When we see the blood flowing down,
 - a) we wonder why it happened.
 - b) Why did He do this for *me*?
2. What drove the crown of thorns into His head and
3. what nailed Him to the cross?
 - a) Initially, we see blood flowing down His body.
 - b) However, God teaches us
 - (1) that He sees sorrow and love flowing down.
 - (2) Jesus loved us, but
 - (a) man’s rejection of Him,
 - (b) man’s demand of His torture,
 - i) broke His heart and
 - ii) it broke the heart of the Father, and it breaks our hearts.

C. “Did e’er such love and sorrow meet”

1. Find any event in history where love and sorrow were so intertwined.
2. Do we understand what happened that day?
 - a) Isaac Watts was not done showing us the paradoxes of the cross.
 - b) Listen to what he said next.

D. “Or thorns compose so rich a crown?”

1. A crown made of thorns?
2. Are not crowns made of precious metals and jewels?
3. Why was His made of thorns?
 - a) Even as the antonyms of sorrow and love worked together that day,
 - b) so did thorns and a crown.

IV. Verse 4: Dead to the world

A. “His dying crimson, like a robe”

1. Picture what Mr. Watts saw.
 - a) See Jesus still alive on the cross, but
 - b) in the process of dying.
 - (1) How is He dying?
 - (2) Was a natural process of old age taking His life from Him?
 - (a) No, Jesus was dying by *slow violence*.
2. See His exposed body covered in crimson blood.
 - a) He has nail wounds in His hands and in His feet,
 - (1) thorn wounds on His head and
 - (2) scourge wounds on His back, but
 - (a) as the scourge came across His back,
 - (b) the device might come around to the front slightly.
 - b) Thus, see **“His dying crimson, like a robe,”**

B. “Spreads o’er His body on the tree”

1. Paintings often show a trickle of blood on His body, but
 - a) there had to have been more.
 - b) It is true that the nails would not allow much blood to seep out, but
2. His head wounds would have dripped down upon His whole body.

C. “Then am I dead to all the globe”

1. After viewing the bloody body of Jesus,
 - a) how can I live for the world?
 - b) How can the world hold any attraction for me?
2. He is my Master and
 - a) He died to the world,
 - b) so I, His disciple, do the same.

D. “And all the globe is dead to me”

1. I am dead to the globe, and the globe is dead to me.
2. What is life to me now is the One who died for me.

V. Verse 5: Demands my all

A. “Were the whole realm of nature mine”

1. Think of owning all of nature.
2. No one has ever come close.
 - a) Daniel 2 makes a strong statement about Nebuchadnezzar,

37 “You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; 38 and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all” (Dan 2.37–38).

- b) However, God gave it to him and
 - (1) it was restricted to his kingdom.

(2) And he does not own it now.

B. "That were a present far too small"

1. What is ownership of all of nature
 - a) in comparison to the gift
 - b) that Jesus brought through the cross?
2. One is temporary, the other is eternal.
 - a) What is the ownership of the whole realm of nature,
 - b) if we lose our souls?

C. "Love so amazing, so divine"

1. It is beyond comprehension.
2. It is divine.
 - a) He loved us first,
 - b) while we were
 - (1) without strength,
 - (2) ungodly,
 - (3) sinners, and
 - (4) His enemies!

D. "Demands my soul, my life, my all"

1. If you have thought about this song, and
 - a) if you have been thinking about the cross, and
 - b) if you have been seeing yourself in the song,
 - c) it is logical to see that the cross demands:
 - (1) All that *I am*.
 - (2) All that *I have*.
2. This survey shows that the cross is not so much for admiring, but
 - a) for making us think

- (1) about His sacrifice and
- (2) about what we should do.
- b) The cross demands:
 - (1) My soul,
 - (2) my life,
 - (3) my all.

Exhortation:

I. Sing this song to yourself this week.

- A. See what it does to you.
- B. It is not the song, but
 - 1. the cross that is affecting you.
 - 2. Do not hold yourself back.
- C. Give yourself completely to do His will.

II. Let us pray for you