

## The message of the gospel is the message of the cross

No sooner had sin entered the world than God began working toward the fulfillment of a plan to provide salvation from the sin of mankind. To the devil God said, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel” (**Gen. 3:15**). This promise looked forward to the time when Jesus Christ, the Son of God, would be born of a woman, live a perfect life, and submit to the devil’s weapon of death — all in order to defeat death and bring “life and immortality to light through the gospel” (**2 Tim. 1:10**).

Our salvation could not have been made possible without the cross. It was necessary, first of all, in that it did for us what we could never have done for ourselves (**Rom. 5:6**). But beyond that, the cross was the only way God could bring about our salvation and not violate His own character (**Rom. 3:25,26**). Jesus drank the cup of His suffering because it was not possible for it to be otherwise and our sins be forgiven. The Hebrew writer wrote of Christ: “In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him” (**Hb. 5:7-9**).

But, in theory, might our salvation have been accomplished by God without His Son having to die? It’s an interesting question perhaps, but not a very productive one. The fact is, the cross was God’s chosen means toward our salvation — and this implies that God deemed it the best way.

As we engage in the various activities of this week, let’s be mindful that *the message of the gospel is the message of the cross*. There is a real danger that we will neglect the cross because it is so familiar to us. At least once a week — when we observe the Lord’s Supper — we are invited to remember that our salvation would have been impossible without Christ’s death, a death in which He took the punishment for our sins and bore God’s curse for us. This week, let’s remember the cross every day!

### Monday: Matthew 26:36-46

**Key Idea:** Our salvation could not have been made possible without the cross.

**Questions for Family Growth:** What was Jesus praying for when He said “if it be possible”? Do you think God would have asked Jesus to die for us if there had been any other way to obtain the forgiveness of our sins?

**Wisdom for the Day:** **Proverbs 16:21.**

## Tuesday: Hebrews 2:9-15

**Key Idea:** Christ defeated death by dying for us.

**Questions for Family Growth:** In **v.9**, for whom did Jesus “taste death”? In **v.14**, what did Jesus accomplish “through death”? In **v.15**, what benefit do we receive by virtue of Jesus’ death for us? From what slavery does it deliver us?

**Wisdom for the Day:** **Proverbs 16:22**.

## Wednesday: Ephesians 1:7; 1 John 1:5-10

**Key Idea:** The blood that Christ shed on the cross cleanses us from sin.

**Questions for Family Growth:** According to **Eph. 1:7**, what does the blood of Christ make possible for us? In your own words, what does “redemption” mean? According to **1 Jn. 1:7**, what benefit do we have after we become Christians?

**Wisdom for the Day:** **Proverbs 16:23**.

## Thursday: John 3:14-17

**Key Idea:** God’s love for us is shown by the gift of His Son.

**Questions for Family Growth:** What does the word “perish” mean in **Jn. 3:16**? What motivated God to give His Son for us? Knowing that He loves us so much, what should be our attitude toward God in return? Consider **2 Cor. 5:14,15**.

**Wisdom for the Day:** **Proverbs 16:24**.

## Friday: 1 Corinthians 2:1,2

**Key Idea:** We ought to share the message of the cross with everyone.

**Questions for Family Growth:** In **v.1**, what are the “excellence of speech” (NKJV) and “wisdom” that Paul said he did not use? What did Paul say he had determined to preach? What are some ways each of us can help in the preaching of the cross?

**Wisdom for the Day:** **Proverbs 16:25**.

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