

GOOD FRIDAY: MEDITATIONS OF THE CROSS

Romans 3.19-26

Preparing our hearts: Our meditations on God's word should not embrace an 'emptying of our minds' for peace but rather, as Scripture commands, 'filling our minds' with the truth found in God's word. (Romans 12.2, Philippians 4.8, Psalm 1)

We are all accountable and helpless without Christ

We are all accountable to God, and despite our efforts, we cannot bridge the chasm between ourselves and Him. We are helpless in our sin, and only God's intervention, seen in Jesus Christ, can bring us into right standing with Him. (Romans 3.10-20)

The turning point: "But now..."

"But now the righteousness of God has been manifested...". (Romans 3.21) All of Scripture is pointing to Jesus and that God was on a rescue mission. Through Christ and the power of His Spirit, He has now entrusted this mission to us as ambassadors of His great name.

John 1.14 tells us, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us... full of grace and truth." Galatians 3.13 reads, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us." Jesus is God in the flesh, come to seek and save the lost.

God justifies sinners through Christ alone

We are "justified by His grace as a gift." (Romans 3.24) This is the doctrine of justification: God declaring sinners righteous and innocent through Jesus. His righteousness is imputed to us. We are clothed in Christ, and therefore, our horizontal living must be shaped by our vertical relationship with God.

Living as light in a dark world:

- Proclaim the Gospel authentically & boldly
- Look for Spirit-led moments
- Practice radical love & mercy
- Model repentance & humility
- Engage with purpose, not passivity

Our efforts in serving others in a dark world can be used as an apologetic/defense for the gospel light within us.

The cross demands response

The cross is not only where Jesus died. It is also where we come to die to ourselves. It is not merely a symbol of comfort, but a place of death and yet, profound hope. For it is there, at the end of ourselves and in the gaze toward Christ, that new life begins, and eternal life is found.

"Whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it." (Mark 8.35)

"My deepest awareness of myself is that I am deeply loved by Jesus Christ and have done nothing to earn it or deserve it." – Brennan Manning

Key Point: Though all have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God, we are justified by His grace through the redemption that is in Jesus who God put forward as a propitiation, so that He might be both just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Small Group Application Questions:

What would it look like for me to truly *slow down and meditate* on the cross this week?

How does the truth of the cross change the way I see my past, my present, and my future?

What does it look like for me, in my unique season of life, to treasure Christ and disciple others faithfully?