

**March 1, 2009**  
**Matthew 16:21-28**  
**I Corinthians 1:18-25**

## **Lent 2009 - The Crux of It All**

# **The Cross as the Great Necessity**

In a survey of literature we find numerous stories where someone or something has to be sacrificed for things to be made right. This suggests an inherent understanding that sacrifice is necessary.



The whole of our lives ought to give evidence to the truth that the sacrifice of the Son of God was necessary and it worked!

*If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.*

Matthew 16:24-25

Do you have a favorite story (written literary work, movie, etc.) where someone or something is sacrificed to make life right for someone else? Why is this story a favorite?

### **THE CROSS**

What does the cross symbolize? In the column to the left, list all the words you can think of.

**READ** Matthew 16:21-28 and I Corinthians 1:18-25

From these texts add to your list of words that describe what the cross symbolizes.

In Mt. 16:22 Peter fights against the notion that Jesus must suffer and die. In the next verse in Matthew and in the I Corinthians passage the unwillingness to accept this is described as a “stumbling block.” In what ways do you find it difficult to accept the need for the Son of God to suffer and die?

“Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified.” (I Cor. 1:22-23)

What does it mean to you to preach Christ crucified?

What do you tend to look for or demand from God that gets in the way of accepting and preaching Christ crucified?

The Greek tragedies were stories where someone was always sacrificed to make things right. Given that the Greeks were very familiar with the necessity of sacrifice, why do you think they reacted to the story of Jesus as “foolishness” (I Cor. 1:23)? What is the difference between the Greek tragedies and the story of Christ crucified?

The truth of the story of Christ crucified is made known through the impact it has in our lives; to the extent that it becomes true in our lives. What implications does this have in your daily living?

Reread I Cor. 1:18. In what ways is the message of the cross power in your life? How do those around you come to know the power rather than the foolishness?

Reread Matthew 16:24-25 (copied at left). The suggestion here is that we too must sacrifice. Why do you think this is necessary? In what ways is the truth of these verses evident in your life?

### **PRAY TOGETHER!**

Let your prayers be guided by what you discussed today.