

The Cross and the Church

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Some think it possible to magnify the death of Christ, symbolized by His cross, while ignoring or minimizing His church. To attempt such is to overlook the vital relationship between the cross and the church according to the Scriptures. Until one sees this relationship, he will not be able to properly appreciate the nature and worth of the church. Neither will he be able to comprehend God's great plan of redemption through Christ and the church without seeing this relationship. Consider the following:

1. **The cross made the church possible.** Paul teaches that God's plan of redemption includes reconciling both Jew and Gentile unto God in one body, the church, through the cross (Eph. 2:14-16). Even more emphatic is Acts 20:28, which speaks of "...the church of the Lord which He purchased with His own blood." Notice some important Truths in these verses:
 - a. The importance of the church is seen in the incomparable price paid for it—the very blood Jesus Christ shed on the cross.
 - b. The church could not and did not exist before the cross, except in promise and plan, therefore it did not exist in the days of Abraham, Moses, or even John the Baptizer.
2. **The cross, the church, and reconciliation are inseparably linked.** Reconciliation—regaining peace with God—is possible only through the cross: "While we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His son..." (Rom. 5:10). Yet, from Ephesians 2:14-16, referred to above, it is clear that those who are reconciled are in Christ's one body, the church. It must follow that the church is that group of people who have been reconciled to God by the blood of the cross. It likewise follows that those not in the body of Christ are not reconciled, thus not friends or children of God. Surely this shows an important connection between the cross and the church.
3. **The worship of the church is linked to the cross.** The Lord's Supper in which faithful saints participate each Lord's Day is centered in the cross. Moreover, it is only because of what Jesus did on the cross that prayer, preaching the saving Gospel, giving of our money to promote the Gospel, and singing praises to the Father and His Son have any validity. Truly every part of worship is rooted in the cross of Christ.

May we never be guilty of trying to separate Christ's church from His cross.

They stand or fall together.

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