

III. THE CROSS OF CHRIST

¹⁴ *“But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”* Galatians 6:14

A. Jesus, with excruciating pain, carries His cross, then dies on it!

The Cross is that “altar” on which God’s suffering Passover Lamb shed His precious blood to cleanse us from all sins, make us righteous, and reconcile us back to God (1Pet.2:24; 1 Jn.1:9). Jesus final victory cry was: “It is Finished/*Paid in Full*”. The cross once a symbol of guilt, shame and capital punishment is now Christianity’s emblem of *faith*, enduring *hope* and message of redeeming *love*!

B. Christians now, in Paul’s words, “glory in” and must “preach the cross” as God’s wisdom and power – Good News that saves all who believe!

This “Greater Love” has been poured in our hearts by the Holy Spirit’s loving *presence* producing fruit, evidenced in our sacrificial service for others. Yes, God’s will is that we daily present our bodies as “living sacrifices” (Gal.5:22; Rom.5:5; 12:1-2). An ancient Roman coin pictured an ox with a plough and an altar on each side of it and subscription: “Service or Sacrifice”. That’s sacrificial service!

BE TRANSFORMED BY THE GREATER LOVE SACRIFICE

Must Jesus bear the cross alone and all the world go free? No, there’s a cross for everyone and there’s a cross for me!

So, this Good Friday-Easter, have you received this “greater love”? If so, in what specific ways can you show it to others around you.

Mahatma Gandhi asked the Indian Christians to sing his favorite hymn: “When I survey the wondrous cross”, which submits... “love so amazing so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all!”

GREATER LOVE Greater Love Sacrifice Dr. Chris Gnanakan

Introduction:

A. It wasn’t the nails in His hands and feet that held Jesus to the cross. It was the greater love for all of humanity that caused Jesus to endure the cross. Jesus revealed that there is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for others. He demonstrated that greater love when He voluntarily laid down His life for us.

¹³ *“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.”* John 15:13

¹⁴ *“I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.*

¹⁵ *As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.*

¹⁷ *“Therefore, My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.*

¹⁸ *No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.”*

John 10:14-15, 17-18

B. Let Jesus come alive in your life this Easter! Attend the Greater Love Teaching Series to witness three major scenes surrounding the death of Jesus and be transformed by the greater love of Jesus.

Mar 30
Apr 6
TODAY

Greater Love Prayer
Greater Love Trial
Greater Love Sacrifice

C. **TEXT:** John 19:17-30

³⁰ *“So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.”* John 19:30

HOW TO BE TRANSFORMED BY THE GREATER LOVE SACRIFICE

What is “love”? Today, this word has many ambiguous meanings that are rather selfish; even sensual in nature. Yet, its Biblical use in reference to God and what is expected of Christians is radically different. Divine love (HESED/*agape*) is best depicted with one word – Sacrifice! It is demonstrated “in Jesus” who loved us and gave Himself for us. This becomes clear studying the Crucifixion with three graphic images of Jesus’ love for us: 1) the Passover Lamb, 2) His Crown of Thorns, and 3) the Cross of Christ...

I. THE PASSOVER LAMB

²⁰ *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”*
Galatians 2:20

A. Christianity, unlike all other religions, is the story of God’s *redeeming* love for rebellious sinners who deserve to die, eternally separated from Him.

Yet, God’s *unconditional* love performed the first animal sacrifice to clothe Adam and Eve. God promised us forgiveness through the woman’s seed and that He will provide a “lamb” (Gen. 3:15; 22:8).

B. God’s people were instructed to sacrifice a lamb “*for without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins*”.

John the Baptist identified Jesus as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the *whole* world” (Lev. 17:11; Jn. 1:29). In our text, Jesus Christ, God’s sinless Son, was crucified on Passover Day as that “once and for all” sacrifice for sins (Heb. 9:26). The details within our text show Him as the fulfilment of God’s promised salvation!

II. A CROWN OF THORNS

¹⁶ *“By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”*
I John 3:16

A. Jesus’ murder was a mockery of His claim to be God’s righteous *King* (Jn. 19:19).

For this He was stripped naked, brutally beaten and dragged shamefully through the streets. A crown of thorns was thrust into His “sacred head” before He was crucified as a criminal! Jesus didn’t die suddenly but *suffered* to take our sins on Himself, as our *Substitute*! (1Pet. 3:18)

B. Jesus embodied sacrificial love.

He *laid down* His life and was crucified i.e. *lifted up* to die! It’s sad that He came to His *own* people, the Jews but was painfully rejected by them (Jn. 1:11). Yet, at the foot of the cross, the three Mary’s and John, the beloved disciple, identified Jesus’ sacrificial love and *proved* it in their lives and service for Him. Greater love bears all things, believes, hopes and endures all things for Jesus’ sake! (1Cor. 13:7)