When You Look at the Cross What Do You See

Isaiah 53; 1Peter 2:24

We are embarking upon Holy Week when Jesus is making His way to the cross. Significantly, millions will recognize this time as a time when Jesus, our Savior suffered and died on a cross.

The cross was not just any form of punishment. It was a method intent on sending a message to the unwanted and those who disturbed or threatened Roman dominance and control. America used the lynching tree, a method comparable to Roman. The lynching tree sent a message to all who would challenge, upset, or disturb the dominant culture in America.

Unlike the lynching tree, the cross is a symbol of triumph. It is a symbol that gives testimony to the faithful that God is on the side of those who suffer, those who are oppressed. The cross speaks volumes about racism and terror around the world. It stands as a symbol for those who suffer. For those who find themselves living in despair and fear. It lets them know that there is One who stands in solidarity with you. The one hanging on Calvary's cross identifies with you. Jesus says, I understand your pain. I understand what you are going through.

The cross is not only a symbol of faith. The cross is a symbol of action. Action is to be taken by those who would follow Jesus. When we understand that the cross represents more than just individual salvation but parallels the suffering servant of Isaiah 53, our understanding of what it means to live out the Christian Gospel will become clear and focused more on service.

When Christians look at the cross they should see responsibility. Our responsibility that we said we assume when we chose to follow the "Bloodstained Banner." We have a responsibility to become the hope the hopeless have lost living in a world determined to beat them down. We, Christians, are called to become agents of change. If the cross has any impact on us at all this is a message we must embrace.

The Cross compels us to stand against injustice not just with our hearts but with our actions. Our words should have the integrity of our actions behind them.

Solidarity with the cross means solidarity embodying the principles of justice, mercy, and walking humbly with our God.

Exactly what does walking humbling with God mean? Amos meant living a life that was in faithful submission to God. It means recognizing our limitations and the greatness of God's wisdom and love. The cross represents a significant shift in values, in the things we believe are important. The cross introduces in a very tangible way the importance that others should have in our lives. This is reflected in the fact that Jesus gave His life for us. The cross does not call for the elimination of material wealth. It challenges believers to look at how they use their resources.

So, when Black people look at the cross. I hope they can see the threads of suffering and victory woven through our history and our faith.

I hope we can see that God is in control. The cross reveals the power of God and that He is involved in every phase of life.

I hope we can see the Savior's strength as a reflection of our own. It is this strength that God gave to Jesus that God has given all who need His strength to overcome and sometimes endure the challenges of life.

Finally, I hope we can see Triumph over failure. The cross is not a symbol of failure but one of victory. For those who are oppressed and disenfranchised, the cross is a symbol of ongoing defeat. The victory march that began in Gethsemane can be seen with every step we take toward justice and equality. With every step that overcomes hate. With every step of courage, we triumph by the cross. The cross is God's final statement and demonstration that He's got the whole world in His hands. Which means God has us in His hands as well.

Blessings,
Pastor Gool