HOLD ON TO THE CROSS

For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: **19** Whose end *is* destruction, whose God *is their* belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame, who mind earthly things. Phil 3:18-19 (KJV)

 I never want to be an enemy of the cross of Christ. One might not want to be a friend to **a cross,** but I should always want to be embracing **the cross of Jesus**. A cross was a well-known instrument of most cruel and ignominious punishment, borrowed by the Greeks and Romans from the Phoenicians. It was used for torture and death with the guiltiest criminals, the basest slaves, robbers, and those who started and led insurrections (Strong’s Dictionary). No I do not want to be the friend to a cross. Yet, in my sins, I deserved such a death. I was no better than those whose fate was found in a cross.

 The cross of Christ is different. It was the plan of God for his Son Jesus to die on the cross. He would take our place on Calvary’s cross. We deserved the cross but Christ chose it. The cross was Christ’s chosen path. He said that Pilate was not taking his life but rather Christ was giving it. Did he dread going to the cross? Of course he did but for the joy set before him he endured the cross despising the shame. The joy that was set before him was the salvation of you and me. His joy was our freedom from sin! What a Savior we have! We must hold on to the cross!

 Some churches today will not preach about the cross because it is too bloody. The blood of Jesus is the cure for our sinfulness. His death means life for us. There is no possible way for mankind to get to heaven unless they go by the Cross of Calvary. Without the preaching of the cross of Christ a church is no more than a glorified social club. We can preach about Jesus death and resurrection every Sunday, Sunday Night, and Wednesday Night and never go wrong. The church can preach and teach everything else and never get it right. We can preach everything in the Bible and skip the cross and empty grave and rest assured we have missed the mark because everything in the Bible is either leading to the cross of Jesus or is based on the cross of Christ.

 So, Brothers and Sisters, hold on to the cross of Jesus. It is death to our sins. It is freedom from the bondage of sin. It is the banner for the gospel we preach. I will say this, based on another testimony I heard, if I were in a prison and could only have one book; give me the Bible. If I could not have the Bible but could have one of the books of the Bible; give me the gospel of John. If I could not have one of the books of the Bible but could only have one chapter; give me John chapter three. If I could not have a chapter but could only have one verse; give me John chapter three verse sixteen. If I could not have the whole verse but only one thing from that verse; give me God’s Only Begotten Son!!!

Yours in Christ,

Brother Randy Burtram