

# THE CROSS 'UNCENSORED'

## NOTES

This is not your 'typical' QT material where we work through a book of the bible over the week. Rather, we are going to think through the Cross from a systematic theology perspective. In other words, we will be flipping between passages to make the theological points that God is holy; that we are unholy; that God makes us holy; that we need to go and be holy; and that we must stand firm because we will be holy into eternity.

This might make these studies a bit more complicated. I have given you some notes below to help you in your understanding of the doctrines. The teens will still only get the 3 questions: what does it say, what does it mean, how does it apply! These notes are to help you push them in the right direction in their understanding.

Note that there are many readings and some of them are very long. You can use your discretion, based on the group you have, as to how long you want your readings to be. You can only read what is necessary for the study and spend more time in discussion. However, I suggest, that in your prep, that you read all of the bible references so that you have a clear understanding.

I will be on camp so if you have any questions, please feel free to ask. You might want to think through the application of these doctrines for yourself. If you can't apply this to yourself, then you have not understood it and you will have great difficulty, not only explaining them to your teens, but helping them apply it. Looking forward to being with you on Cross Word 2018.

Gary Bedderson

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## QT 1: The Holiness of God

Isaiah 6:1-5

Revelation 4:1-11

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### 1) Main point

God is holy and must be treated as holy.

### 2) Understanding the theology

#### God IS holy

Isaiah 40:12-25. Holiness is not something that God does, but it is what God IS. He is totally separate from all of creation. This also means that there is nothing we can use to illustrate the nature of God since there is nothing we can actually compare Him to (Isaiah 6:1-5). Holiness also points to God's absolute purity. We see this in the song of the Seraphs and the response of Isaiah to his vision of God. And notice that Isaiah does not even get a good look, since smoke filled the place, etc. But he recognizes that if he sees God, there is no hope because God IS holy. We see other examples of this in Job, Ezekiel, Daniel and Exodus.

*The word 'holy', in the first instance, means to be set apart. For example, a husband is holy for his wife, set apart for her and nobody else. God IS Holy, set apart from this world, etc. In the second instance, to be 'holy' is to be morally upright and pure. This is the way we often use the word. The bible tells us that Christians are holy already since they are set apart by God for His use. But, Christians are to 'be holy', in other words, they now need to act in a way that shows their holiness.*

#### All that God does IS holy

Ezekiel 36:22-23 picks up on the fact that even when God acts to save the world, it is to show his holiness. Salvation does not seem to be about us, but about God showing his

holiness to the world. And the same applies to judgment. Judgment is God's holy response to evil – Ezekiel 28:22 onwards.

### 3) Applying the theology

- You will want to highlight the fact that God IS holy. We must understand that only God deserves our praise and honour and worship (Rev 4:11). And if God IS holy, then how is it possible to approach Him? How can unholy people be in the presence of a holy God? You might want to look at Hebrews 10:10, which tells us that God makes us holy, therefore we can approach Him. But we will deal with this in greater details in QT 3.
- You want to highlight the fact that all that God does IS holy, because, by definition, God IS holy. You want to understand that even when God acts to save people, it is to show his holiness. Salvation is actually all about God, not about us. AND, when God acts to judge people, it is to show His holiness because judgment is God's holy response to sin and evil.
- You will want to spend time this morning thanking God for His holiness, knowing that you can trust him to always act in accordance with His character. We need to 'feel' the weight of God being holy so that we treat Him as holy, and not just like our 'friend down the road'.
- When we don't treat God as holy, then we are treating God with contempt and we need to be clear as to what this looks like. When we disobey God, when we behave in a way that is unholy, then we are treating God with contempt. Think of some practical examples that will identify with your teens where God says one thing, but we do another. Encourage those who are Christians to go and be the people they already are – holy!

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## QT 2: The Unholiness of Man

Genesis 6:1-5

Romans 3:9-18

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### 1) Main point

Man is totally depraved and cannot save himself.

### 2) Understanding the theology

#### **Man was created Good, to rule God's good world under God's authority**

Genesis 1:26 tells us that God creates man good, in His image. God gives man the task of ruling the world. After creating everything, God looks at His creation and says that it is very good. Genesis 2:15 tells us what the rules are in the Garden of Eden – you can have everything in this world, just don't eat from that tree in the middle of the Garden. Everything handed to them, just 1 prohibition.

#### **Man rejected God's authority and became sinful (depraved)**

We will explore what it means to say that man is totally depraved. You will want to read Genesis 3 to see what went wrong with the world. Point out that even though Adam and Eve had freedom, they still wanted to make their own rules and not obey God. This came with consequences. The result of sin is that death now enters the world.

David in Psalm 51:4 reminds us that all sin is against God, first and foremost. None of us are exempt and none of us can even dare to think that we are good people. Look at Romans 3:10-12. Paul reminds us that there is no one who is good and no-one who does good, not even one! We are totally depraved, meaning that sin affects all of who we are and every area of our lives.

Sin affects our wills (Romans 7:15-18), our minds and understanding (Genesis 6:5), our affections and emotions (1 Timothy 3:1-5) and also our behaviour (James 3:6). We really need to understand how much trouble we are in when it comes to God.

### **3) Applying the theology**

- You might want to start the study by thinking about what the world says about the human race. Are we essentially “good people who just do bad things from time to time”?
- Make the point that total depravity means that we are unfit for God. It means that we don't love one another as we should. It means that we are unable to save ourselves because we just can't do it. It means that we are under the judgment of God. So where is the hope?
- We will save the details for the next study. But we must give a glimpse of that hope reminding them that because God is holy, he gave us the Cross (1 Peter 3:18). In the next study we are going to look at the detail in how God makes sinners holy – how does the cross do that?

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## QT 3: The Unholy Made Holy

Leviticus 4:1-12; 16:1-22

1 John 1:5-2:2

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### 1) Main point

At the cross, Jesus is killed in our place, taking the full wrath of God upon himself.

### 2) Understanding the theology

#### **Blood must be spilt for sin to be forgiven**

Leviticus 4 is clear that sin has a price and that the price is death. Notice that even sins that are committed unintentionally still have consequences. You cannot plead ignorance when it comes to sin. Whether intended or not, sin is still sin and the price is still death. The rest of Leviticus 4 shows us that all levels of society sin and all have to have their sin atoned for (leader, priest, individual and the community).

But we must not fall into the trap of thinking that the sacrifice that is brought is all that is required. It is not just about the animal that is sacrificed, but also about the heart of the bringer of that sacrifice. Look at the following passages; Hosea 6:6; Amos 5:21; Isaiah 29:13. Note that God is interested in the heart. Sin's price is death because God's anger needs to be appeased. The word the bible uses is 'propitiation'.

#### **Jesus is the propitiation for our sin**

1 John 2:1-2. The NIV uses the words 'atoning sacrifice' but the word is 'propitiation'. The word propitiation means to "appease anger by the bringing of a gift". Let me illustrate. Guys, you know when you have really been stupid and hurt your girlfriend or wife and she is really upset with you, what do you do? You bring a gift. Usually, flowers or chocolates and you ask for forgiveness. She then smiles and says sure, let's forget about it and you move on. This is not the idea with propitiation and God.

With propitiation, it would then be your girlfriend or wife taking those flowers and ripping them apart or throwing the chocolates on the floor and stamping on them. Those things take her anger on them. With God, He pours out his anger on your replacement, on your substitute. Your substitute dies in your place. In this way, the requirement of the law is dealt with, which is death for the sinner. And God is still just because he has not left sin unpunished.

Through the sacrificial system, God satisfies his anger by taking it out (so to speak) on the animals brought as a gift, as a sacrifice. This is propitiation, something or someone else taking your place and your punishment on themselves. This is what is happening on the cross. God satisfies his wrath because Jesus takes his wrath in our place. In this way, Jesus is the propitiation for our sin.

### **3) Applying the theology**

- It is important to understand that actions have consequences. Sin must be punished – similar to being grounded by parents when teens misbehave.
- It is equally important to understand what propitiation means. Jesus actually takes our place and takes God's wrath upon himself so that sinners like us can escape that punishment. We have an amazing gospel.
- Because of the cross we are made holy (2 Corinthians 5:21). This is how the unholy get to be holy and so spend eternity with God. And because of the cross, we can be reconciled to God. There is always hope for the repentant sinner. Notice that we are already made holy and in the next study, we are going to think about what this should look like for us.

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## QT 4: Holiness on Display

Deuteronomy 14:1-21

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### 1) Main point

Christians show that they belong to God by living holy lives.

### 2) Understanding the theology

#### If God said it; that settles it

Verses 1-3 are clear. They are told what they can and can't eat. There is no health reason as to why they should avoid certain foods. Notice that the foods themselves are not unclean, but the food is unclean 'for them' (vs 7, 10, 19, 21).

#### Evil comes from within

In Mathew 15:1-20, Jesus is clear that the real problem is not with what we eat, but with what is in our hearts. We saw this already in QT2. This is a good reminder. And eating the right food will therefore not make you clean, it will not make you holy.

#### Be the people you are called to be

For those who have been made holy, they are now called to **be** holy. Peter reminds us that we must be holy (1 Peter 1:13-25). In other words, we must remember that we are set apart for God and we must rather listen to him and not our culture around us. For the Israelites, it meant that they should not eat certain foods. For us it looks different. Explore what it looks like to be holy in the application.

### 3) Applying the theology

- Understand that God's command should be sufficient for us and we need to obey, even when we might not fully like it or understand it. If God has said something, that should be enough for us.
- We are not to judge or be judged by what we eat or which religious festivals we celebrate or don't celebrate. Colossians 2:16-17 reminds us that our spirituality is not seen in these things we do, but rather in obedience, as we put off the old self and put on the new self.
- It would be worth exploring what it looks like to be different in our culture today. You might want to apply this to what God says about gender compared to what the world says about gender fluidity. You can take that further to think about how the world views death compared to the hope Christians have. We can talk about anger and lashing out, where some would say that you should, while the bible says that we must forgive, etc.

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## QT 5: Holy Forever

1 Corinthians 15

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### 1) Main point

Jesus' resurrection authenticates the gospel and we ought to stand firm in it and give ourselves fully to the work of the Lord.

### 2) Understanding the theology

#### **Believing the gospel will save you**

1 Corinthians 15:1-5 makes it very clear that believing the gospel will save you. And Paul even gives us the gospel clearly. There is no other way to find forgiveness.

#### **Because Jesus has been raised from the dead, so will those who believe in him**

Make the point that Paul makes in this passage. In verses 12-15 Paul is clear that because Jesus has been raised, all those who believe in Jesus will be raised. The death and resurrection of Jesus is at the centre of Christianity.

#### **Our resurrected bodies will bear the likeness of Jesus**

In verses 42-49 Paul gives us a picture of what we will be like in eternity. Read the text as it is self-explanatory. That is something worth looking forward to.

### 3) Applying the theology

- It would be good to go through what the gospel actually is, from 1 Corinthians 15:1-5. Explain it in detail.

- Think about why the resurrection is so important in Paul's thinking. Paul is clear that if Christ has not been raised, then our faith is useless!
- You might want to also be thinking about what we will be like as far as our bodies go. We are given some insight, but Paul does not answer every question we have.
- Then, apply 1 Corinthians 15 in the way Paul applies it. Look at verse 58. In the light of the gospel, in the light of your future resurrection from the dead, stand firm, let nothing move you and always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord because your work is not in vain. You might want to think about what it looks like to stand firm and to give yourself fully to the work of the Lord.