**Determined to Thrive in 2025**

**January Topic: The Thrive Walk is a Cross Walk**

“**When God forgives our sin, He throws them into the sea of His forgetfulness and puts up a sign that says “No Fishing”! Corrie Ten Boom**

A.W. Tozer: “Where there is no cross, there is no Christianity.” “There’s no receiving Christ without the cross.”

I believe to understand and appreciate the cross. We need to understand sin, the power of sin, the wages of sin, the bondage attached to sin! Sin isn't a casual just doing something wrong, “the devil made me do it” We must see sin as God saw it and still sees it today! Sin came with a high price that Jesus paid for upon the cross !

 Sin comes with chains redemption is the key the releases the chains! Redemption brings freedom from slavery! Redemption is the ransom paid for our freedom.

“When God forgives our sin, He throws them into the sea of His forgetfulness and puts up a sign that says “No Fishing”! However, while God will never go fishing there, there are some trespassing fishermen in God’s sea of forgetfulness.

 **Satan** - The devil is one of those trespassing fishermen! He loves to bring our past in our face! Satan understands the power that our past can have on us when we fail to understand and embrace the cross.

**Family and friends** - Well, unfortunately they also are sometimes trespassing fishermen! They will remind us of our sins, and our failures! They often know them in great detail .

**You and I** - You and I have often been fisherman in God’s Sea of forgetfulness! Why why do we do that to ourselves? It’s because we fail to embrace the cross! Why can we not embrace forgiveness, and the freedom Christ died to provide? I believe it’s often because we haven’t embraced the cross.

We will not walk in full forgiveness until we embrace the cross. We must not bypass the cross and we must revisit it often.

 Be sure to understand that there is an arrogance in bypassing the cross. We don’t think of it that way, but it is a sign of our pride! It is us elevating works above His cross. It’s saying: “Jesus, the cross was not enough. Let me help you out. I’ve got to do this”

Also, though indirectly, we call Jesus Christ a liar. Jesus said: “ I am the way, I am the truth, I am the life, no man comes to the Father but by Me” To try to combine it with works or some big effort on our part, is adding something to the mix!

Without the cross we have no vertical relationship. (No relationship with God)The cross is one piece of wood that is horizontal, and then it is one piece of wood that is vertical. Without the vertical piece, there is no cross. There are only relationships with other human beings, who are in the same boat that we are! We all born sinners in need of a Savior! They need the cross as much as we do!

 However, when you add that vertical that vertical piece of wood, ( as we picture the cross), it brings relationship with God! Yet sometimes it’s that vertical piece of the cross that we try not to think about. We fail to see the freedom it represents. The cross does represent our sins but it also purchased our freedom! When we try to bypass the cross, we will certainly carry guilt and shame. We don’t think we can receive forgiveness from God, and we can’t forgive ourselves!

This is exactly what the devil wants! The devil has crept into some churches and deceived the leadership. As a result, they don’t preach the cross and the blood because “it’s gruesome” “people don’t like to hear about it” But, we must understand that getting away from the preaching of the cross is part of a satanic agenda. Satan understands the power of the cross…. sometimes better than we do!

We must not only make the first stop at the cross for our salvation, we need to revisit the cross often!

In the church we do that through:

 The Lord’s Supper. Jesus said: “This is my body, this is my blood”. It is a time when we remember Jesus Christ and His sacrifice on the cross.

Baptism - In baptism, we are buried in the likeness of His death, and we are raised to new life in the likeness of His resurrection.

Christianity is cross centered! In the Bible we read the words “repentance”, “salvation”, “righteousness” and “power”. The common denominator in all those words is the cross.

Now let’s go to Colossians 2. What was accomplished on the cross? The following is a teaching by Dr. John Piper. He gives a clear and concise teaching concerning this topic

\*We Were Legally Condemned

We were dead in trespasses and sins. All human beings are spiritually dead and blind to the reality of the glory of Christ. We are as dead to spiritual truth as a human corpse is dead to being touched. Paul describes the legal nature of this condition in [Colossians 2:14](https://ref.ly/Col%202.14;esv?t=biblia) with the phrase “the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.” In other words, we’re not only spiritually impervious to God’s touch, but we are legally condemned by the long record of sins that stood against us.

\*Our Debt Nailed to the Cross. God took that long list, that record of sins, and put it in the hand of Christ, and drove a spike through it and through his hand so that he became a substitute for us, bearing the punishment for the record of our debts in his own death. He nailed it. The text says, “nailing it to the cross” ([Colossians 2:14](https://ref.ly/Col%202.14;esv?t=biblia)).

\*Our Debt Canceled

Then verse 14 makes explicit that this nailing of the record of our debt to the cross canceled — “canceling the record of our debt” ([Colossians 2:14](https://ref.ly/Col%202.14;esv?t=biblia)). It is canceled. The debt is canceled because the debt of punishment that we owed to the justice of God has been paid in the punishment of Christ on the cross.

\*Our Record Set Aside

Then Paul adds, “This he set aside” ([Colossians 2:14](https://ref.ly/Col%202.14;esv?t=biblia)). Literally, it says he “took it out of the midst” — very unusual thing to say. In other words, in the courtroom of heaven, where our record of debt guarantees our condemnation, nobody can find it. It’s taken. Where did it go? This was in the folder here just a minute ago. It’s taken out of the midst. It’s gone. “As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us” ([Psalm 103:12](https://ref.ly/Ps%20103.12;esv?t=biblia)).

\* We are Forgiven

Then he makes explicit that the effect of our sins being nailed, and the record of debt being taken out of the way, is that we’re forgiven ([Colossians 2:13](https://ref.ly/Col%202.13;esv?t=biblia)). He applies to us personally what Christ accomplished perfectly. When we are united to Christ by faith, his punishment becomes ours and his righteousness becomes ours, and God counts our sins against us no more.

\*We Are Made Alive

Paul says in verse 13, therefore, “God made [you] alive together with him.” Because our sins are forgiven, he makes us eternally alive. Now, we’re no longer a corpse that can’t be touched by spiritual reality. We see Christ for who he is, and we are moved to prefer him and prize him and treasure him and love him and trust him above all things.

\*The Devil was Disarmed

And now, on the basis of those six terrible and glorious realities, we see in verse 15 that something amazing happened to the rulers and authorities, to Satan and his “cosmic powers . . . in the heavenly places,” as it says in [Ephesians 6:12](https://ref.ly/Eph%206.12;esv?t=biblia). This is [Colossians 2:15](https://ref.ly/Col%202.15;esv?t=biblia): “He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.” The word translated disarmed means literally stripped. It’s used one other place — namely, in [Colossians 3:9](https://ref.ly/Col%203.9;esv?t=biblia), where the Christians are to strip off their old nature.

So, what we see first in verse 15 is that just when people thought Jesus was being stripped of his clothing, and shamed in nakedness at his final trial, and led in triumphal procession to Calvary, what was really happening was the reverse. Namely, Satan and his demonic forces were being stripped. They were being shamed. They were being led in triumphal procession. I’m going to mention two ways (there are more) that the achievement of the death of Jesus in verses 13 and 14 brings about this stripping (or this disarming) of Satan and his rulers.

\*No More Condemnation

First, we know from [Revelation 12:10](https://ref.ly/Rev%2012.10;esv?t=biblia) that Satan, by the very meaning of his name, is the great accuser. Satan can do a lot of damage to us physically, emotionally, and relationally in this world, but he can only condemn us or damn us or bring us to eternal ruin in one way — namely, by a valid accusation of our sins before a holy God.

“The power to accuse God’s people successfully has been taken away.”

If he can do that, we’re done for. If he can make our sins stick in the courtroom of heaven as he accuses us before the judge of the universe, we’re doomed; we’re hopeless. And the point of verses 13 and 14 is that the record of debt that Satan could use to accuse us and condemn us has been nailed to the cross. The one damning weapon that he has — namely, unforgiven sin, with which he could accuse us — has been stripped out of his hands.

This is what Paul meant, I think, when he said in [Romans 8:33–34](https://ref.ly/Rom%208.33%E2%80%9334;esv?t=biblia), “Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died.” So, the first way that the demonic world was stripped and disarmed by the cross is that the power to accuse God’s people successfully has been taken away. That sin is already punished. It was nailed to the cross. We can’t be accused with it.

\*No More Fear of Death

And the second thing, the only other thing I’ll mention, is a glorious thing experientially now — namely, Satan was robbed. The powers and the rulers, the authorities, were robbed or stripped of their power to hold us in slavery to the fear of death. Now, I get that straight out of [Hebrews 2:14](https://ref.ly/Heb%202.14;esv?t=biblia), which is an absolutely amazing, wonderful verse

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood [that is, we’re human], he himself likewise partook of the same things [he became human], that through death he might destroy [nullify, abrogate, revoke, abolish] the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil.

“When Christ died in our place, he took the sting out of death.”

When Christ died in our place, he took the sting out of death because he took sin out of death. He took condemnation out of death. And so he took fear out of death, which means that the second great weapon of the devil that was stripped from him is the power to hold us in bondage, which is what the next verse in Hebrews says: he held us in bondage through fear of death our whole life long ([Hebrews 2:15](https://ref.ly/Heb%202.15;esv?t=biblia)).

He can’t do that anymore. He has been disarmed of the weapon of fear of dying, because the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law, and all of it has been satisfied and punished on the cross.

\*Glories of the Cross

So, you can see why I love [Colossians 2:13–15](https://ref.ly/Col%202.13%E2%80%9315;esv?t=biblia). The riches of these verses are infinite. I encourage you to spend hours pondering the glories of what God achieved for us on the cross, especially as it relates to the devil and the evil rulers and authorities — and I’ve only mentioned two. There are other ways that Satan has been stripped, but these two are wonderful. Power to condemn us with sin stripped. Power to terrify us with death stripped.

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