



April 2020

Dear CWR/PTM Friend and Partner,

... I didn't try to impress you with polished speeches and the latest philosophy. I deliberately kept it plain and simple: first Jesus and who he is, then Jesus and what he did—**Jesus crucified** (1 Corinthians 2:1-2, *The Message Bible*, my emphasis).

**T**he plain and simple focus of our faith is who Jesus is—what he did—and what he will always be and do. The heart and core of our faith good news/gospel revolves around “*Jesus crucified*”—the death and resurrection of Jesus.

“*Jesus crucified*” is the *crux* around which our center and our core revolves. The etymology of “*crux*” is a Latin word that builds on the Cross of Christ so that the word “*crux*” broadly defines the essence and core of any subject—“let’s get down to the *crux* of the matter.”

“*Jesus crucified*” IS the *crux* of the matter—“*Jesus crucified*” is the central and most significant fundamental and essential ground of our being. **All other beliefs and practices of Christ-followers spring from the foundational truth—“*Jesus crucified*.”**

The Cross of Christ is the absolute once and for all, one of a kind, unique and ultimate illustration and outpouring of God’s love and grace. “*Jesus crucified*” was the monumental and earth-shaking moment in time when God transformed the universe.

The Cross of Christ is the “once for all” (Hebrews 9:26) foremost demonstration that God’s love is lavish and extravagant (prodigal) love. God’s love turns any and all human definitions of love upside down.

The Cross of Christ is the love, grace and mercy of God in action. Love on the human level wants something for itself. Love on the human level wants something from another person—love on the human level is about contracts, deals, bargains and transactions.

“*Jesus crucified*” only seeks to love you and me because that’s what the love of God does. God’s love does not expect or demand anything—all it wants is everything for you and me. The love of God is characterized by giving and outpouring, whereas human love is about getting and acquiring. “*Jesus crucified*” upends hatred and lust and greed and turns it all into love. The Cross of Christ transforms our lives and our hearts—it transforms everything!

The Cross of Christ stands forever enshrined as omnipotent and eternal proof that God is not filled with wrath and anger. On his cross Jesus absorbed all human hatred and evil, without in-kind retaliation. He made no vows of retaliation—he did not threaten to send anyone to hell—rather he forgave them as they killed him.

The Cross of Christ is also the most atrocious abomination ever—the ignominious, outrageous and failed human attempt to kill God! At the same time the Cross of Christ is our focus and our brightest hope. The Cross of Christ was the *worst* that humanity can do to God, while the Cross is the absolute *best* that God does for us.

The Cross of Christ seems foolishness to the human mind apart from God (see 1 Corinthians 1:18-31). "*Jesus crucified*" seems like a humiliating defeat, and for that reason they made Jesus carry his cross to his place of execution. They mocked him. They tortured and crucified him. They impaled him on a cross.

Jesus voluntarily allowed "them" to do this to him, as a lamb being led to the slaughter. He accepted their abominable and repugnant hatred. Jesus received and digested the "cup" of human vindictiveness and malice. He accepted the totality of evil, visible and invisible, in turn consuming and burning up all evil within him. *Out of the ashes of evil, God the Son, Creator of all, creates something new.* He returns evil for good.

What humanity intended as death, defeat and obliteration Jesus transformed into his throne of love and grace. They killed him and buried him—but "*Jesus crucified*" rose from the dead. The Cross of Christ is the throne of new life, resurrection and hope.

"*Jesus crucified*" is a different kind of a king, whose kingdom is a completely different kind of a kingdom than the world offers and experiences. The Cross of Christ is the throne of Jesus, the King of kings. Who is this different kind of a king whose throne is a cross?

"*Jesus crucified*" conquers through service. Jesus forgives instead of retaliating. Jesus rejects pride and exalts humility. Jesus' power is all that appears to humans to be weak and vulnerable.

The Cross of Christ, followed by his triumphant resurrection, means that victory over sin and death has been won. "*Jesus crucified*" is risen! He wins! Yes, for now, the world still runs on the high octane destructive fuel of lust, ego and greed spewing out its polluted exhaust of wars, abuse, hatred, torture and slavery. But the Cross of Christ and his triumphal resurrection declare that the ultimate outcome has been decided. "*Jesus crucified*" wins!

"*Jesus crucified*" is risen. He is alive! Our world is groaning on its death bed—we can hear the death rattle coming out of the lungs of desperate, corrupt and depraved leaders of government and religion in our world. But it is not Jesus who is dying! We have nothing to fear. Because of The Cross of Christ and his resurrection we are not lost nor are we without hope.

"*Jesus crucified*" is the most one-sided transaction of all time. No matter what Christ-less religion might tell you, "*Jesus crucified*" is not a contract. ""*Jesus crucified*" is not God saying to you and me, "OK—this is what I have done for you, now, what will you do for me?" God doesn't make deals with us. God does not bargain with us. We have nothing God needs. We have nothing to offer him that he doesn't already have.

Jesus revealed the Father. Jesus put flesh and blood on God. Jesus provided visible evidence, demonstrations and teachings of God and his love. "*Jesus crucified*"—the greatest and most ultimate of all these demonstrations and teachings—is the Cross of Christ.

The Cross of Christ is the personification and embodiment of all that Father, Son and Holy Spirit is and forever will be.

The Cross of Christ is the dynamic vertical, divine intervention of God's love, the nexus into our horizontal world of law. "*Jesus crucified*" is our loving God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, meeting us on the basis of love rather than on the basis of law, penalties and punishments.

The Cross of Christ announces that God's relationship with humanity is not based on law but rather he reveals himself to us through his love, grace and mercy.

We don't owe God because of the Cross of Christ. "*Jesus crucified*" is not a deal—he is a gift. The Cross of Christ is not a loan which God expects us to repay. Even if he did, we will never have enough spiritual treasure to repay him. "*Jesus crucified*" is not a transaction wherein God does something for us expecting something in return.

"*Jesus crucified*" turns this sin-sick and corrupt world right-side-up! The love of God evidenced in the Cross of Christ is everything—without the Cross of Christ life is meaningless and worthless.

*The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross (Colossians 1:15-20).*

Because of "*Jesus crucified*" we have hope beyond the troubles and trials and afflictions we experience and endure in this *present evil age* (Galatians 1:4). The Cross of Christ fills us with the peace of God, and welcomes us into our resting place in Jesus, who is our Lord and Savior.

Let us give thanks—let us praise God—let us be overwhelmed by the breathtaking and majestic love and grace of God, exemplified for us in the Cross of Christ. May this Easter season be for you a time of true and profound spiritual refreshing and rejuvenation, a celebration of our eternal hope, Christ the Lord. **He is risen! He is risen indeed!!**

Your brother in Christ,



Greg Albrecht

President, Plain Truth Ministries

P.S. We share this note of thanks from a person who has been helped by the ministry of CWR/PTM, which you help us continue to provide to people all over the world. **THANK YOU!**

*I love everything CWR/PTM has sent me—it's my life! I have been with you for a long time. I am 86 years old. Please keep me in your prayers.—Saskatchewan, Canada*

## CWR/PTM Prayer List—April 2020

These requests for prayer represent just a few of the thousands we receive and pray for. We invite you to join us in praying for these and the others that space does not permit us to include here. Thanks for joining with us as a CWR/PTM Prayer Partner.

*Please pray for me. I have cancer and my white blood cell count is going up.—Ohio*

*Please pray for my mind and heart. I need encouragement after I was scammed on my credit cards.—California*

*Please pray for my wife—she had a mastectomy and cataract surgeries. She also suffers with osteoporosis.—Louisiana*

*Please keep me in your prayers. I have blood problems—I just spent four days in the hospital. I'm now home taking medications.—Saskatchewan, Canada*

*Please pray for God's healing of my two brothers who have advanced cancer.—Maine*

*Please pray for my husband who is still in the hospital (after four months) with a stroke from his brain operation. He's on a feeding tube now.—Oregon*

*My husband's Parkinson disease continues to get worse. On weekends and at night, I have no one to help me. We live far out in the country. Please pray that I can find a place to live near a small town.—Virginia*

*Please pray for my healing—my hips and knee are failing me. Please also pray for me to have a better income. I am in great debt.—Florida*

*I'm requesting prayers for my friend's dad. He is suffering from several complications of diabetes and is currently in a critical care unit in the hospital. It looks like he has a heart blockage and his organs are failing.—California*

*Please pray for my anxiety attacks and my heart A-fib condition.—Illinois*

*Please pray for my sister who has polychondritis and has been dismissed by doctors for almost two years.—Michigan*

*Please pray for my granddaughter who has left her family and is becoming an alcoholic.—Indiana*

*Please pray that God's wisdom will be given to me to choose the right eye doctor because of my failing vision.—Florida*

*Please pray for three gentlemen in our facility who are fighting cancer.—Pennsylvania*

*Please pray that my daughter and grand-daughter will find a good place to live soon. They have both been living with me but now the place we live in is for sale.—Tennessee*

*Please pray that God will heal me. I have congestive heart failure, kidney and lung problems.—Texas*

*Please pray for my cousin who has suffered a heart attack and has to have stents put in his arteries.—Kansas*

*Please pray for my son to win his battle with alcohol and for my grandson's depression.—Arkansas*

*I'm asking for your prayers for our extended family as several have suffered the loss of loved ones.—Missouri*

*I'm having pain and discomfort in my right knee. Please pray for me. —Connecticut*

*Please pray for a friend who has bone marrow cancer. Please pray for treatments to be effective and for her complete healing through God's power.—Maryland*

*I need prayers for my fluctuating physical health pertaining to my diabetes.—Arizona*

Our Father in Heaven: We thank you for your grace, mercy and love. You love each of these individuals, and we thank you in advance for the answers you will provide for each request. With thanksgiving for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, our suffering servant who heals us, in whose name we pray—Amen.