

**THE CROSS BEFORE US**

*“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” (Luke 23:34, NIV)*

**O**NE MORE TIME we find ourselves here, face to face with the cross of Christ. The Friday that was so very bad for Jesus, we have taken to calling “good.”

I don’t know what this day stirs up in you. Paul told the Romans that some would consider certain days special, while others would consider them all to be pretty much the same.

For those who take the latter course of conscience, watching others get excited about this Holy Week is akin to playing what to you is a casual round with someone whose competitive juices are bubbling over. After all, if we are everyday followers of Jesus, shouldn’t the cross stand before us all the time? The plain answer to that question may be *yes*, but the reality of our awareness is that our momentary circumstances capture our sight ahead of almost everything else.

So how do we keep the cross in sight, taking a day like this seriously?

We begin by keeping our sin in sight. This may sound Calvinistic, starting with where we’ve gone so wrong. But if we do not see our sin for the albatross it is, we have no reason to go to the cross. It’s too bloody a place for our pristine sensibilities. No need to fix what ain’t broken. But when we see our sin, unholy and death-producing as it is, we see rightly that we need rescuing.

We extend our walk to the cross by recognizing the wonder of Jesus. He was not *just* a great teacher, but he was a great teacher! His miracles excited most people in the wrong way, but they did accredit him to us. His love for the most troubled was unapologetic and inviting; his love for the most religious was appropriately stern and challenging. We go to the cross because we are stunned that such a one could ever go there himself!

And now that we are here, our amazement does not cease. Jesus, broken and dying, forgives his executioners, provides for his mother, and welcomes a late convert. His blood—the blood of the unblemished Lamb—flows out of him, covering the sins of the sinful, of those who call on him, those who would be saved.

Count yourself among the covered and you’ll call this day holy, whether or not it’s “the real day.” You’ll call it holy because the cross can be called nothing else.

**Opening questions** Are you a person who enjoys holidays and special occasions? Which are your favorites and what do they commemorate? What do you make of Good Friday and Easter?

**READING** Luke 23:26-49, Hebrews 10:10-14, 1 Corinthians 15:1-7 & 12-19

**The crucifixion of Christ**

What catches your attention freshly from the crucifixion account in Luke 23? What seizes your heart every time you read it?

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**The enduring outcome**

What do we discover in the Hebrews 10 explanation regarding the result, both for him and for us, of Jesus’ sacrifice?

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**Why remember?**

What is Paul’s argument in 1 Corinthians 15 about the ultimate importance the death and resurrection of Jesus?

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