

## **TTS Essentials – Session [6]: The Work of the Cross**

### **NOTES**

**Welcome back to TTS! Did you have a good summer?**

Thanks for coming – it's much appreciated.

**Let's get the boring stuff out the way first!**

- **FIRST: About TTS itself.**
  - **Remember the website:**
    - Notes are provided every Monday.
    - Term details, directions, etc.
- **SECOND: Looking ahead...**
  - **The Sunday Foundations Sessions:**
    - Sun 29<sup>th</sup> Sept – S18/19 here at Freedom.
    - Sun 13<sup>th</sup> Oct – S20 here at Freedom.
  - **TTS Essentials:**
    - Wed 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct – S7 at my house.
    - Wed 16<sup>th</sup> Oct – S8 at my house.
  - **TTS Virtues:**
    - Sun 6<sup>th</sup> Oct – at Gill's house.

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### **[1] The Power of the Cross – The Horror and Shame of Sacrifice**

**LOOK:** Acts 2:22-24

**DISCUSS:** What are your impressions?

The Cross of X was a holy, foreknown drama with cosmic proportions.

- **LOOK:** Matt 16:21-23
  - *“From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised” [Matt 16:21]*

**But it's so easy to forget that this was also a human event. Happening to a real human. With real, human emotions. In real, human history. In a real, human way.**

**[1A] LOOK:** Matt 26:36-46

- **This is an incredible scene – feels so real.**
  - **DISCUSS:** What are your impressions here?
- **Note Jesus' response:**
  - (1) Jesus needs to pray.
    - Tells us something about Jesus + prayer.
    - Tells us something about his inner life.
  - (2) Jesus was agitated – “*deeply grieved, even to death*”.
    - A profoundly vulnerable, tender revelation.
  - (3) Jesus asked, “Stay awake with me”.
    - Jesus feels the need for fellowship – re: Inc, amazing.
    - ALSO signals historicity + reliability of Gospels.
- **Luke the physician gives us a critical detail in his account.**
  - **LOOK:** Luke 22:41-44
    - Hematidrosis – documented in those awaiting execution.
- **AND YET – despite all of this, what is his ultimate decision?**
  - **LOOK:** Matt 26:42-46
    - Behold the hero, the ‘Lion Man of Judah’!
      - “Alone of all the creeds, Christianity has added courage to the virtues of the Creator” [GK Chesterton]

Why was he so grieved...? Undoubtedly the battle was spiritual – re: sin + powers. But crucifixion was also a fate of unimaginable, unspeakable horror – **and yet we miss this aspect of his sacrifice, because for us the cross is more a piece of jewellery than a method of execution.** **DISCUSS:** What do you know about crucifixion?

**[1B] The Shame and Curse of Crucifixion in the Ancient World**

- **Crucifixion was designed not just to inflict terrible pain, but to shame the victim forever.**
  - This is something we struggle to get our heads around.
    - The ANE was a profoundly honour & shame fixated culture.
    - Europe not known this since Feudalism.
    - More akin to Japan.
  - Hence the nudity and being left to dogs.

- **In this context, the early Christian message was insanity.**
  - “*The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing ... We proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles*” [1 Cor 1:18+23]
    - “They say that our madness consists in the fact that we put a crucified man in second place after the unchangeable and eternal God, the Creator of the world” [Justin Martyr, *Apology* I.13-14]
      - Hengel – Docetism as a way to avoid this.
- **Foolishness to Gentiles**
  - Augustine’s quotation of Apollo – advising a man on dissuading his wife from Christianity:
    - “Let her continue as she pleases, persisting in her vain delusions, and lamenting in song a god who died in delusions, who was condemned by judges whose verdict was just, and executed in the prime of life by the worst of deaths, a death bound with iron” [in COG XIX.23]
  - From Felix’s *Octavius*, out of the mouth of Caecilius:
    - “To say that their ceremonies centre on a man put to death for his crime and on the fatal wood of the cross is to assign to these abandoned wretches sanctuaries which are appropriate to them and the kind of worship they deserve” [Felix, *Octavius* IX.4]
  - Even began to be used as a vulgarity – like “hang yourself”.
- **A stumbling-block to Jews**
  - **LOOK:** Deut 21:22-23
    - AND YET → LOOK: Gal 6:14

### [1C] Christianity’s Radical Truth – The Crux of our Faith

- **This is the man early Christians heralded as the Son of God!**
  - AND NOT JUST THAT: but the Cross was predestined.
  - AND NOT JUST THAT: but the Cross was wisdom.
  - AND NOT JUST THAT: but we boast in the Cross.
    - **LOOK:** Phil 2:5-8 – Jesus died the slave’s death.
    - **LOOK:** Heb 12:2 – Jesus endured the shame.
    - **LOOK:** Gal 3:13 – Jesus took on the curse.
- **We wear the Cross as a necklace now – that’s how comfortable we are with it. But once it was utterly radical.**
  - Christian artists hid from the crucifixion for centuries.
    - Earliest surviving depiction done in mockery.
      - Re: the Alexamenos graffito [c.200AD].
    - Possibly the earliest depiction on doors of Santa Sabina in Rome [c. 400AD].
      - Before this – Shepherd, philosopher, etc.
  - Even then, the scene is often idealistic – re: Grunewald.

## [2] How Did the Cross Save Us? – An Ancient Response

Why did he do any of this at all? For you, for me – for his Bride.

**LOOK:** 2 Cor 5:19 – God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.

**LOOK:** 2 Cor 5:15 – and somehow, the death of Christ achieved this.

- *“For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate”*
  - That’s the WHY – but what about the HOW?
    - **DISCUSS:** Imagine: ‘How did the Cross work?’
    - How did Christ’s death bring about salvation?
  - In the time we’ve got left:
    - How the Church has wrestled with this question.
    - Several good answers – but one stands out.

Ancient Christians developed a specific account of the cross – one attentive to a particular kind of Scriptural language.

(NOTE: not the only ancient response, but a dominant one.)

**LOOK:** Mark 10:45 / 1 Tim 2:5-7 / 1 Pet 1:18-19 / Rev 5:9

**DISCUSS:** What do you think this involves?

- **The focus of many ancient Christians was on Christ having ransomed us by his death on the Cross.**
  - Takes account of various images for salvation in Bible:
    - *“Salvation is like...”* –buying slaves out of helplessness, re: Exodus etc.
    - (Also: Shepherd / Conquering King / Bridegroom.)
- Immediately, we might start asking some important questions.
  - For example:
    - How were we ransomed in the first place?
    - What (or who) are we ransomed from?

**LOOK:** Col 2:13-15 / 1 John 3:8

- **Christ saved us by rescuing us from Satan.**
  - The Fall sold humanity into Satanic bondage.
    - *“He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son”*  
[Col 1:13]

## This is called the *Christus Victor* model.

- It's one of the oldest accounts of Christ's work on the Cross.
  - "Thus the powerful Word and true human being, ransoming us by his own blood in a rational manner, gave himself as a ransom for those who have been led into captivity. The apostate one unjustly held sway over us, and though we were by nature the possession of Almighty God, we had been alienated from our proper nature, making us instead his disciples. Therefore the Almighty Word of God, who did not lack justice, acted justly even in the encounter with the apostate one, ransoming from him the things which were his own" [Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* V.I.1]
- How did this happen? How did Christ beat Satan?
  - "[The purpose of the Incarnation] was that the divine virtue of the Son of God might be like a kind of hook hidden beneath the form of human flesh ... to lure the prince of this world into a contest; that the Son might offer him his human flesh as a bait and that the divinity which lay underneath might catch him and hold him fast with its hook. ... Then, just as a fish when it seizes a baited hook not only fails to drag off the bait but is itself dragged out of the water to serve as food for others; so he that had the power of death seized the body of Jesus in death, unaware of the hook of divinity which lay hidden inside. Having swallowed it, he was immediately caught. The gates of hell were broken, and he was, as it were, drawn up from the pit, to become food for others" [Rufinus of Aquileia, *Expositio Symboli* 14]

**DISCUSS:** What are your thoughts on *Christus Victor*?

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## [3] How Did the Cross Save Us? – A Medieval Response

So *Christus Victor* is an ancient account of the Cross. But it wasn't the final word – and the Church wasn't finished. Enter Anselm of Canterbury.

### Anselm of Canterbury:

- Born 1033AD (Aosta, N.W. Italy):
  - Mother died when Anselm was an adolescent.
  - Father became hostile.
    - Anselm left and abandoned a wealthy inheritance.
- Education:
  - **1059AD:** Anselm arrived Bec Abbey, Normandy.
    - Accepted external pupils.
  - **1060AD:** Anselm becomes a monk.
- Career:
  - **1063AD:** Anselm became the principle teacher.
  - **1093AD:** Anselm chosen to succeed his former abbot as Archbishop of Canterbury.
- Died 1109AD (Canter): most significant theologian never heard!

## Around 1093AD, Anselm composed *Cur Deus Homo?* – or *Why Did God Become Man?*

- Hugely influential and important text.
  - Anselm’s stated purpose:
    - “I am attempting for a little while, insofar as the heavenly grace deigns to allow me, to arise to contemplate the logic of our beliefs. ... [The] subject-matter [is] precious [and] in conformity with the fact that it is about someone beautiful, ‘with beauty excelling the sons of men’ (Ps 44:3 VG), it is itself correspondingly beautiful in its logic” [CDH – Commendation + I.1]
- **To this end, he provides an account of the Cross based in Feudal society.**
  - One that would have resonated deeply with his contemporaries.
    - It’s called the ‘Satisfaction Model’.

### [3A] Anselm’s Satisfaction Model

- **Anselm agreed with the notion of ransom:**
  - “It was from our sins and from his own anger and from hell and from the power of the devil that God ransomed us, and he came himself to drive out the devil on our behalf because we were ourselves incapable of this” [CDH I.6]
- **However, Anselm was careful to avoid one key mistake:**
  - “[Given] that neither the devil nor man belongs to anyone but God, and that neither stands outside God’s power: what action did God need to take with, concerning, or in the case of, someone who was his own, apart from punishing this bonds slave of his who had persuaded his fellow-bonds slave to desert his master and come over to join him...?” [CDH I.7]
    - Christ certainly defeated the devil.
    - But God didn’t need to ‘pay’ the devil anything.
    - God is sovereign over all things.
- **So Anselm re-orientates the idea of ransom completely:**
  - **NOT:** God offering up a baited payment to Satan.
  - **BUT:** the God-Man paying our debt of honour to the Father.
    - “[Everyone] who sins is under an obligation to repay to God the honour which he has violently taken from him, and this is the satisfaction which every sinner is obliged to give to God” [CDH I.11] – **i.e. this is not something we can escape from, payment is necessary.**
    - “But this cannot come about unless there should be someone who would make a payment to God greater than everything that exists apart from God” [CDH II.6] – **i.e. the payment required exceeds anything a creature could offer.**

- “But the payment rests with man, and no one else, to make the payment referred to. Otherwise mankind is not making recompense” [CDH II.6] – **i.e. the payment exceeds human potential, but it’s necessary for humans to pay it. So we’re in a dilemma.**
- “[No] one can pay except God, but no one ought to pay except man: it is therefore necessary that a God-Man should pay it” [CDH II.6] – **i.e. the payment is God-sized, but a human must pay it, hence the need for a God-Man!**
  - Re: the importance of Anselm’s feudal context here.
- **DISCUSS:** What are your thoughts on Anselm’s account of the Cross?

### **[3B] In response to Anselm – Abelard’s ‘Moral Influence’ Model**

- Peter Abelard [1079-1142AD] – French scholastic.
    - **The moral influence model.**
      - “Christ has united our human nature to himself, and by suffering in that same nature has demonstrated to us that supreme love... Therefore, our redemption through the suffering of Christ is that deeper love within us which not only frees us from slavery to sin, but also secures for us the true liberty of the children of God” [Expositio in Epistolam ad Romanos II]
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## [4] How Did the Cross Save Us? – A Reformation Response

To a greater or lesser extent, we can affirm all of these.

Ransom / Satisfaction – an attempt at an ‘Objective’ Atonement.

Exemplar theology – an attempt at a ‘Subjective’ Atonement.

### They each reflect the ‘plurivocality’ of Scripture.

- Christus Victor:
  - *“He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel”*  
[Gen 3:15]
    - Christ defeated Satan – Amen.
- Satisfaction:
  - *“The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world”* [1 John 4:4]
    - God owes Satan nothing – Amen.
    - We owe God everything – Amen.
    - Only the God-Man can do this – Amen.
- Moral Influence / Exemplar:
  - *“We love because he first loved us”* [1 John 4:19]
    - God is love and the Cross is proof it – Amen.
    - God in Christ is our Example – Amen.

**DISCUSS:** But do you think they have any limitations? If so, what?

- Christus Victor:
  - Satan and God’s sovereignty.
- Satisfaction:
  - Anselm’s feudalism.
    - The Scriptural 1:1.
- Exemplar:
  - Can’t account for judgement.
  - Can’t account for Total Depravity.
  - Can’t account for God-centred salvation.

**None of these models account for the full witness of Scripture.  
None of these models answer how exactly Christ’s death saved us.  
None of them provide for us the ‘main thing’.**

**LOOK:** Isa 52:13-53:12

**DISCUSS:** What are your thoughts / observations?

It's a sacrifice of Expiation – "*made us whole*" [53:5b]

It's a sacrifice of Propitiation – "*crushed for our iniquities*" [53:5a]

**This is called Penal Substitution.**

- **LOOK:** Rom 5:6-11
  - Penal:
    - Christ suffered the Father's wrath, the just punishment for our sin.
  - Substitution:
    - He does so in our place, vicariously.
- This is then taught throughout the NT.
  - **LOOK:** John 3:36 / Rom 5:8-9 / 1 Thess 1:9-10 / 1Th5:9
    - **Unless this note is sounded, there can be melody – but never harmony.**
- **LISTEN:** Calvin – Institutes II.XVI.5
  - "Thus we shall behold the person of a sinner and evildoer represented in Christ, yet from his shining innocence it will at the same time be obvious that he was burdened with another's sin rather than this own. He therefore suffered under Pontius Pilate, and by the governor's official sentence was reckoned among criminals. Yet not so – for he was declared righteous by his judge at the same time, when Pilate affirmed that he 'found no cause for complaint in him' (John 18:38). This is our acquittal: the guilt that held us liable for punishment has been transferred to the head of the Son of God (Isa 53:12). We must, above all, remember this substitution, lest we tremble and remain anxious throughout life – as if God's righteous vengeance which the Son of God has taken upon himself, still hung over us" [*Institutes II.XVI.5*]

**DISCUSS:** Why should we insist on PS?

I would suggest three reasons...

**[4A] It best reflects Scripture's most direct way of speaking.**

- I mean two things by this:
  - NOT JUST: Scripture is clear on this point;
  - BUT ALSO: there are differences in how God speaks.
    - Approximate language – i.e. "salvation is like...".
    - Accommodation language – i.e. "*under his wings you will find refuge*" [Ps 91:4].
    - Direct language – when God tears the veil a little...
- When Scripture speaks about Christ's work on the Cross it might speak approximately ("the Cross was like a ransom").
  - BUT when it speaks most directly it often employs PS logic.

**[4B] It seamlessly dovetails with other Foundations.**

- **With God as God** – re: his justice and goodness.
- **With Election** – a definite payment for a people, Grotius / Owen.
- **With Union** – “he became sin, so that we might become...”
- **With Christocentrism** – re: 2 Cor 5:14-15

**[4C] Pastorally, it's the stuff of rejoicing!**

- **Christ has become sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God.**
  - “There can be nothing more logical, nothing sweeter, nothing more desirable that the world can hear. I indeed derive such confidence from this that I cannot now express in words with what joy my heart is rejoicing. For it seems to me that God rejects no member of the human race who approaches him on this authority” [CDH II.19]

*“God put [Christ] forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus”*  
[Rom 3:25-26]

*“Destruction is decreed, overflowing with righteousness”* [Isa 10:22]

“As long then as the former time endured, He permitted us to be borne along by unruly impulses, being drawn away by the desire of pleasure and various lusts. This was not that He at all delighted in our sins, but that He simply endured them; nor that He approved the time of working iniquity which then was, but that He sought to form a mind conscious of righteousness, so that being convinced in that time of our unworthiness of attaining life through our own works, it should now, through the kindness of God, be vouchsafed to us; and having made it manifest that in ourselves we were unable to enter into the kingdom of God, we might through the power of God be made able.

But when our wickedness had reached its height, and it had been clearly shown that its reward, punishment and death, was impending over us; and when the time had come which God had before appointed for manifesting His own kindness and power, how the one love of God, through exceeding regard for men, did not regard us with hatred, nor thrust us away, nor remember our iniquity against us, but showed great long-suffering, and bore with us, He Himself took on Him the burden of our iniquities, He gave His own Son as a ransom for us, the holy One for transgressors, the blameless One for the wicked, the righteous One for the unrighteous, the incorruptible One for the corruptible, the immortal One for those who are mortal.

For what other thing was capable of covering our sins than His righteousness? By what other one was it possible that we, the wicked and ungodly, could be justified, than by the only Son of God? O sweet exchange! O unsearchable operation! O benefits surpassing all expectation! That the wickedness of many should be hid in a single righteous One, and that the righteousness of One should justify many transgressors! Having therefore convinced us in the former time that our nature was unable to attain to life, and having now revealed the Saviour who is able to save even those things which it was [formerly] impossible to save, by both these facts He desired to lead us to trust in His kindness, to esteem Him our Nourisher, Father, Teacher, Counsellor, Healer, our Wisdom, Light, Honour, Glory, Power, and Life, so that we should not be anxious concerning clothing and food.” [Mathetus (c.150AD) – *Epistle to Diognetus IX*]