

Be Strong #25

“The Cross that Divides”



Have you seen the 170 foot cross on the Beltway at I-45 South? Maybe you have heard about, or read about it, or seen it on one of the news broadcasts. It stands taller than the Statue of Liberty---17 floors high. Pastor John Morgan from the Sagemont Church said, *“We erected the cross to remind everyone who sees it of the grace of Jesus Christ.”* But that’s not how everyone sees it. Many neighbors in the community are concerned! They don’t want the cross there. One man said, “They have no right to force their religion on us.” Another was concerned that the cross would devalue their property. Others love it! When they drive by, or see it out their windows, it reminds them of what it stands for---the price their savior paid for their sins. They are comforted and have a sense of peace when they see it out their windows.

The cross has divided the community, but the reality is that Jesus has always divided. He said in Matthew 10:34-39, *“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law – a man's enemies will be the members of his own household. Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”* Jesus has divided those who believe from those who don’t. In fact, Paul said, *“The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God”* 1 Corinthians 1:18.

What comes to your mind when you see a cross? Do you think that’s a beautiful piece of jewelry? Do you wonder why people hang them from their rear view mirrors? What do you think? Is it a reminder of Jesus and the fact that *“For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning and shame”*? A reminder that he paid a debt he did not owe, and I owed a debt I could not pay! A reminder that I am free today as I embrace the cross of Christ. In Galatians 6:14 Paul said, *“May I never boast except in the cross of Christ.”* That word “boast” simply means to be in the spotlight---center stage. May I never place anything in the spotlight of my life, more than Jesus and what he has done for me. Jesus put it this way, *“Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness”* Matthew 6:33.

Today we battle the natural tendency to be in the lime light and to take center stage. In fact that’s what the world says---**it’s all about me**. Jesus says, **it’s all about Me!** That’s the tension we live with everyday. That’s the tension our children live with. They hear it in their classrooms and see it in every form of media.

How are you doing with this? What are you doing as a parent to lift high the cross and lead your children to seek him first in life? What does the cross mean to your family? Is it a dividing point or is it a place where each of you come together on your knees in gratitude to God? You’re in a

raging battle and we have a relentless adversary who is doing everything he can to keep the cross from being ever present in our thoughts! But thanks to God, “Greater is He who is in us is greater than he that is in the world.”

So today, let every cross you see remind you that you are His and that He is the only thing in life worth boasting about. So let’s turn on the spotlight and get out of the way! Be strong in the Lord this week and remember---**you are the only parent your kids have!** Be the best!

In His Joy!

Jerome