

Fresh Fire Ministries
The Expository Teaching Ministry of Jay Duane Driver

“The Foolishness of the Cross”

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to those of us who are being saved it is the power of God.” I Corinthians 1:18 (NKJV)

We are witnessing in real time, live and in living color, the secularization of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ on a local level. It would be unfair to imply that this secularization is taking place in all churches everywhere or within the context of the “universal” body of Christ. Secularization takes place when this world system and all that it represents slowly, yet very clandestinely begins to infiltrate the church and as a result the church has a decreasing and diminishing impact on the world. The manner and method of worship, and the liturgy that once espoused traditional core values have now become something far less than what we once knew. Changing demographics, a decline in church attendance, a reduction in baptisms, and over all apathy has left many congregations scrambling to recast their vision as the world becomes more influential within the confines of the church.

The central theme of Christianity for now and for all time is the cross at Calvary and the death, burial, and resurrection our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. **“For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received; that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.” I Corinthians 15:3 (NKJV)** It is the focal point of our justification, sanctification, and ultimate glorification when we see Jesus on that day, face to face. It is the bridge between a holy God and an unholy and undeserving people who merit hell. Yet its message has been muted by a generational society that has succumbed to the dictates of social media influences and other allures that now beckon for time, attention, and priority. The message of the cross has been “dumbed down”, and replaced with messages admonishing us “how to do, how to get, and how to get more.” It has even gone to the extreme as Paul relates that the preaching of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. Here the idea of “foolishness” is that the message has become silliness, and an absurdity to those who refuse to believe.

While foolish to some, that same message, that same gospel, has become the power of God to those who believe. **“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.” Romans 1:17 (NKJV)** It is the power that saves us from the penalty of sin. (Justification) It is the power that is saving us from the power of sin. (Sanctification) And it’s the power that will ultimately save us from the presence of sin. (Glorification) Without the cross there is no message to be preached and as Paul says in I Corinthians 15:17, that without the culminating resurrection early Sunday morning that our “faith is futile.” It is useless, of no effect, void and without power. But thank God for Jesus that the grave couldn’t hold Him, and death could not keep Him. Hallelujah! If you were to visit the site and scene of the most horrific crucifixion in the history of mankind, you will find the cross unoccupied, and the tomb completely empty.

Perhaps there is an interesting correlation between a muted gospel message and the madness of the masses who have regarded the preaching of the cross as foolery which in effect accommodates those who blatantly disavow the gospel’s power and impact on a dying world. As a result the local church has begun to compromise that same message that used to resonate from pulpits all across our nation in order to bring these apathetic groups back into the church. The gospel message of the cross must be preached. It is before the cross we live, at the cross we die, and after the cross we live again in the likeness of our Lord. Jesus please keep us near the cross. **“For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is to me if I do not preach the gospel!” I Corinthians 9:16 (NKJV)**