

# **The Importance of the Cross**

## **Introduction**

I want to entitle this teaching the “Importance of the Cross.” Consider First Corinthians chapter two. We will begin by looking at a couple of scriptures that will help us see the importance of the cross as viewed from Paul’s presentation there. Verse two states, “For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” Now if you will turn with me to Galatians, chapter six, verse fourteen, “But God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” Now let us look in the second chapter, in verse twenty, “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, and yet not I but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

## **Christ Is Not Our Life Except In Resurrection**

There is a potential for those of us who preach Christ as life, and even more particularly for those who have taken that title, “Christ as Life,” to go directly to that truth without lifting up, or giving equal precedence to the other areas that are necessary, such as the cross. But the truth is, there is more to this than simply believing, saying, or nodding that Christ is our life. And that truth is intimately tied to the cross. Christ is not our life except in resurrection, and there is no resurrection without a death. You cannot, in truth, and in manifestation separate the two. The truth is not a smorgasbord of doctrinal issues that you are allowed to pick and choose from. The Bible is not that way.

## **Not Just An Increasing Of The Teachings Of Christ**

There is the possibility of truth being seen in all of its aspects with the result that it will bring forth what God ultimately wants. However, there are people that will believe a message but only involve themselves in the part in which they are interested. But we need to come to the realization that the Father is not trying to gain a bunch of message-believing people. His goal is to conform us specifically into the image of His Son, not just an increasing of the teachings of Christ. There are people all over the world delivering the teachings of Christ. And I think that it is a sad, sad message that would tell people what Jesus teaches, and not give them His very life which has the ability to perform it.

I do not personally think much of the teachings of Christ whether it is on healing, the teachings on the cross, or the teachings about Christ living in us. Teachings about the cross have no power. Only the cross, as it is applied by the Holy Spirit in our lives has power. Paul did not say, “I have been taught that I have been crucified with Christ.” He said, “I am crucified with Christ.” That is a big difference there. The message as we read in these scriptures is Christ and Him crucified. In these scriptures, we begin to view how the reality of Christ and Him crucified had permeated, and so captured the mind of Paul, that he was no longer just a regular guy who had been a sinner. He was no longer a

religious man trying to do the right thing. He was not just a man that is going to church trying to be good. He is no longer trying to learn good stuff and trying to live a good life. Paul was a man who had been transformed from Paul into the image of Christ... the very life of Christ was bringing forth fruit.

If You Leave The Cross Out, You May Really End Up Missing The Lord.

In the Old Testament we begin to see the picture of this reality of which we are presenting in types and shadows. Consider Numbers, chapter thirteen, and verse seventeen. "And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan and said unto them, „Get you up into the south and go up into the mountain and see the land what it is, and the people that dwell therein, whether they are strong or weak, few or many." Let us drop down to verse twenty-one, "So they went up and they searched the land from the wilderness of Zin, unto Rehob, as men came to Hamath. And they descended from the South as men came from Hebron, where Ahiman and Shis...the children of Anak were. Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt. And they came unto the brook Eschol, and cut down from there a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bore it between two upon a staff, and they brought of the pomegranate and of the figs, the place was called the Brook of Eschol, because of the cluster of grapes that the children of Israel cut down from there. And they returned from the searching of the land after forty days."

The children of Israel had been in Egypt. While there, they were in bondage under the control of Pharaoh and his taskmasters. Their lives were not their own even though they might have felt they had some degree of freedom. But nonetheless, they were slaves. Finally after four hundred years God sent Moses to deliver them out of Egypt. He led them through the Red Sea, through the wilderness and took them to the Promised Land. In type, God just wasn't delivering them out of sin, out of the power of the devil and the world just to bring them into something. That is important but if that is the only truth that you hold you may be missing the Lord.

If you leave the cross out of this, you may really end up missing the Lord. And so, Moses takes them to the edge of the Promised Land and tells them to pick one man representing each of the twelve tribes and go in and search out the land. The scriptures tell us that they went in and saw all the fruit in the Promised Land. God had told them that the land was a good land, and He had given it to them. God told them that the land was full of fruit... flowing with milk and honey. The land was bringing forth fruit before they arrived and it did not need them, but they were to go in and possess what already was. The Promised Land did not need all that Adamic scratching and digging to bring forth fruit. It was already bringing forth fruit without them. They were to just go in and take it.

So these twelve men go in as representatives for each tribe and see the fruit of the land. They found a cluster of grapes that was so large they had to hang it on a staff of wood that took two of them to carry it. Now that is some kind of fruit! They also took figs and pomegranates and went back to report to Moses what they saw. The thing to realize is that they did not enter into the Promised Land at that time. They only spied out the land, but they did not enter into it as their habitation. It was not until forty years later that they

finally came to the Promised Land at the Jordan River. But here in this instance there is no mention of the Jordan River. In the scriptures, the Jordan River represents death, it represents the cross, and it represents crossing over from the wilderness into what is of God. The Jordan River represents going down into the waters of death; it is a form of baptism, but it is the baptism unto death, not just a picture of water baptism. After all, water baptism is a picture of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

### **The First Entrance**

And so, here at their first arrival at the Promised Land, when they went in and brought back all that fruit, there was no Jordan River. There was no cross. Were they the people of God? Yes! Are you the people of God? Well, I hope so. Was it God's plan for them to enter in? Absolutely it was God's plan to enter in. There is no question about it, but it is not His plan to enter in without the cross. It is not God's plan to just go in. They tried that in Numbers chapter 14, but God was not with them. There are a lot of people that teach Christ, but leave the cross out. There are a lot of people that teach the cross and leave Christ out. We must accept the full message which is Christ and Him crucified.

Now notice what we find in the book of Joshua, chapter three. This begins the story of Israel finally getting ready to enter in. At last they are prepared to go into the land. It has been forty years from the first time God took them to the Promised Land in Numbers chapter thirteen. And in those forty years a death took place, but it was not the death of the cross. Those people in Numbers chapter thirteen stood there at Kadesh-Barnea and did not enter in. We need to examine ourselves to see, if like them we might be saying, "Well, I want Jesus, I want all this great teaching about being in Christ, but I do not want this cross stuff." But I have got news for you, death is coming your way, one way or the other. It might as well be the chosen death. You might as well choose the death that is going to have life after it. Because if not you are going to drop in the wilderness.

In Numbers chapter thirteen, there were those who did not enter in to the Promised Land simply because they were worried about their children. But the real truth was that they were worried about themselves, because their children were not the ones about to be fighting the giants that were there. So their decision not to enter the Land was really a selfish thing. That is why the Lord spared the children, because it was not really about the kids, it was about a lack of faith on the part of the adults. God could not take them in to inhabit the land in the state in which they were. Maybe it was O.K. to spy out the land in order to see the fruitfulness of it, but it was not O.K. to inhabit the land because they had not gone through the cross. They had not gone through death and that was the reason they were highly motivated by fear and other negative attributes.

This aspect of death is very important but many have yet to embrace the cross in this manner. Like Israel, many of us have said, "I believe in the Lord, and I have a relationship with God." But we are saying the same words as those who never entered in to the Promised Land. They had a relationship with God. In their walk with Him they had experienced miracle after miracle. He had given them blessing after blessing, healing after healing and did incredible things in their lives. But here is the way the Lord looks at

it: without the cross He can only take you and me just so far. God's miracles may have been adequate through the wilderness but when it comes to entering the land, we will fail without the reality of our death and the reality of Christ as our life. That is important and that is crucial!

If a person understands this information and realizes that the alternative to death with Christ on the cross is death in the wilderness, most would choose God's death because it brings forth God's life. The cross brings forth incredible provision beyond our own fleshly abilities. But, for those whose focus is upon themselves, like those at Kadesh-Barnea, they thinking that entering into the land looks like an immediate death while the wilderness looks like it is going to take a long time. And when that last person who rejected entering into the land finally dropped dead in the wilderness, he might have felt pretty good about his decision, thinking that he had lasted for forty years. Well, at what location did he drop dead? In the same location the first guy dropped... in the wilderness where it was a barren, dry desert. Have you ever been dried up, lifeless, wanting the Lord? The Promised Land flows with milk and honey while the wilderness wanderers only experience dull dryness.

### **There Is No Way Into Christ, But By The Cross**

Now in Joshua chapter 3 we have the account of Israel finally coming to a place of entering in but it is forty years later than the original opportunity God gave for entering in. Israel has come back to the Promised Land, but this time they are at the Jordan River. The children that the older generation was worried about, are now all grown up. The parents have all died off in the wilderness. It is a completely different atmosphere now, and it is a whole different feel. Joshua tells the priests to lift the ark up high, and everyone else is told to put their eyes on the ark because they are going in. The ark represents the very presence and person of Christ. After wandering in the wilderness for forty years, you do not see anyone refusing to go in. Joshua and Caleb were the only two of the first generation who will enter in with the younger ones. Caleb looks at those same giants the same way he had forty years earlier. He knows that they are not going to kill him. He knows he is going to defeat them. His faith in God never changed.

But the victory does not come just by entering into the land. That is one of the reasons why Joshua and Caleb could just not go on in earlier. Regardless of your faith in God's ability, you must also become dead to your ability. Joshua and Caleb could not enter in back then for, they too needed the cross worked within. The other reason they did not enter in was in relationship to the body as seen in the whole nation of Israel. God does not do individual resurrections in that sense. We are all raised up and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. The book of Ephesians is clear that we are raised up together and we are made to sit together. That is another reason they did not enter in to the land individually but the main reason I want to focus upon in this lesson is the first one given: they cannot go in except through the cross. You cannot get in Christ except through the cross. There is no possible way around it. But at this second opportunity for entering in, Israel was of a mind to embrace the cross.

Do you think watching everybody drop in the wilderness, might have made them think more sensibly about the cross? They may have thought, "This is a miserable way of living." They had been wandering, having leanness in their soul, never satisfied, because they made a decision against the cross. I can just hear them saying to one another, "Let's go in. It can't be any worse than what we have been living up to this point. Let's try God's way and see what He'll do."

We read in Joshua chapter 3, verse one, "And Joshua rose early in the morning and they removed from Shittim and all the children of Israel lodged there before they passed over... (verse fourteen) and it came to pass, when the people removed their tents to pass over the Jordan and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, and as they who bore the ark were come to the Jordan, and the feet of the priest who bore the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, for the Jordan overflowed all of it's banks, all the time of the harvest."

They were so excited about finally entering in but when they arrive at the Jordan River, its' banks were flooding. At any other time it would have been difficult crossing the Jordan River, but now it is not just a river, it is a flooded river. But the scriptures says, "As their feet touched the edge that the waters that came down from above, stood and rose up in one heap very far from the city Adam, that is besides Zeraphim, and those that came down... failed and were cut off and the people passed over, right against Jericho and the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground until all the people were passed safely over the Jordan."

Here is what all must come to at the hour of entering in: It is God's timing now; this is God's crossing place. Early, Israel had balked at entering in because of giants; will they now withdraw because of floods? They have come to the place to cross. But there is something different at this crossing that the other did not have. Israel had the priests lifting up the Ark of the Covenant far above everything else around them. And Joshua had told everyone to get their eyes on the Ark; keep your eyes on Jesus as we go forward and you will be all right.

I wonder how many believe that you are to keep your eyes on Jesus and not on the giants or floods? But it is not simply a matter of keeping your eyes on Jesus. You do not keep your eyes on Jesus and just go anywhere you please. You keep your eyes on Jesus so that you can go where He wants you to go. You go where He goes, where His intention lies. You do this because your life over on the wilderness side was a mess. Going your own way, even when doing it FOR GOD is no longer adequate. One main purpose for the years of wilderness wandering was to get you to be open to a "way you have not known before". But only by you following Jesus where He wants you to go will accomplish what God wants. This "new way" involves following Jesus in the way of the cross. If one truly comprehended the crossing they would understand that they did not cross over based on a miracle but based on death and resurrection. **THIS** is the new way!

Chapter four of Joshua, verse one begins to show us this reality of death and resurrection. “And it came to pass, when all the people were passed over the Jordan...” Now notice, the scripture is going to begin talking about these stones and what they represent. But He waited until everyone got completely over to the other side of the Jordan before He started telling them about what has happened to them. In other words, God does not explain everything to you at first. He wants your heart and not your head. He can explain everything to you and you might follow His request simply because you feel comfortable knowing what is going to happen, but that is not what He is after.

“Keep your eyes on the Ark... (keep your eyes on the Lord) for you have not passed this way before.” Do you know what that means? It means you are pioneering a new way. For you, it is pioneering, because no matter who might have been before you and tried to explain it to you, it is never as good as when you experience it from the Lord for yourself. You have now become a pioneer of the heavenly way and not just continuing in finding provision from God for life in the earth.

He tells Israel once they are across the river, “Take ye twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man, and command them saying, Take ye out of the Jordan, out of the place where the priest.s feet stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you and leave them in the lodging place where ye shall lodge this night. Then Joshua called the twelve men, whom he had prepared of the children of Israel out of every tribe a man, and Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst of the Jordan, and take ye up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribe of the children of Israel, that this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in times to come, What mean ye by these stones? Then you shall answer them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord when it passed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off and these stones stand as a memorial unto Israel.”

You may read the rest of this on your own, but I wanted you to notice what Joshua told them to say when their children asked about what had happened that day. He said to tell them, the waters were cut off before the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord. You could well say that if Jesus had not been in this equation they would have all drowned. The fact that they had their eyes on Him denoted oneness, one mind, one accord. The children were to know that there were not many entries into the Jordan River but one entry. And this example shows forth the New Testament truth of being in Christ... this is the truth of what Jesus did and what we reckon on, what we are a part of by virtue of union and oneness with Him in it.

The twelve stones that were taken from the Jordan and set up as a memorial in the land, and the twelve stones that were placed back in the Jordan River represented the twelve tribes of Israel. However, the stones that were set up as a memorial after crossing the Jordan River represented resurrection out of death, and the stones they placed back in the Jordan River represented the death of all that which was old and never to be seen again after the river closed back again. In type and shadow the stones are a memorial to the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

If you will notice, the twelve stones that were placed as a memorial are not the same that were placed in the river. The stones that came out of the Jordan were something altogether different, a new creation. And this is to remind you of exactly what the cross of Christ represents. But if our understanding of the cross was depicted here then Joshua would have simply thrown a big Jesus stone into the Jordan River which died but somehow the Jesus stone rolled out on the other side from the momentum of throwing Him in. That is almost how people think concerning what Jesus did on the cross. This is how they view the cross: "Jesus went to the cross, died for me, rolled out in resurrection and later on raised me up." It is as if they are saying that if we throw a big stone into the Jordan it will go into death, and the momentum will carry it to the other side and break off into a bunch of little pieces and we will all be saved. But the reality of the fact is that Jesus went through death and resurrection jointly with all of us. That is why there were twelve stones and not just one big one. It was not until the Ark of the Covenant, which we all know is a type of Christ, stepped into the Jordan River that the waters rolled back. Jesus did it as the One who is many. He became one with us and that is why the waters were rolled away... for Him (and for we who are one in union with Him).

So just entering the land is not enough. This was proven by Israel who entered but were not allowed to stay unless they entered in through the river of death. This point is tremendously important. There are a lot of people who are beginning to hear this whole reality of Christ as life, and want to enter in. They want to understand and have a revelation of the fullness of Christ but without the cross. They are similar to those at Kadesh Barnea with no cross and no death. The twelve that entered into the land at that first time walked around and saw fullness like they had never seen in the wilderness. Do you understand the contrast that must have been seen by them? In the wilderness, there were no huge clusters of grapes, no figs, and there were no pomegranates. They had manna in the wilderness but the fruit in land was beyond being lush, the land was extremely fruitful. With that entrance, they had seen the fullness of the land. They had seen how the Lord could bring forth incredible fruit, but there is a difference between just seeing it and dwelling in the place where it becomes YOUR reality. The spies never dwelt there, Joshua and Caleb eventually did, but they only dwelt there because they entered in through the cross at a later date. The cross must be embraced by all for God is no respecter of persons.

I know that there are some who do not understand that while thinking that they do but, God is no respecter of persons. If you go the way of the cross, if you go the way of death, burial, and resurrection, you are treated by the Father in the same manner as Jesus was treated. Some have a romantic idea of what that means but it means that, if Jesus went through the cross then so shall we. You are treated like Jesus. But too many are want to be treated like some other person that we think is getting better things than what we have got. That is the big issue the carnal man has. He does not want what Jesus wants, he wants what the other person has. That is where the focus is, on one another and not on Jesus.

But if you go the way of the Lord all provision is there for you regardless of your person. Christ freely provides it for those who cling to union and enter into these things based

solely on union and not personal merit. God does not have to see a particular face. God does not have to look at your past to see if you are qualified. God does not have to consider all of the things of your life. God looks at us and asks, “Did you enter in by the door? Did you enter in through the death, burial and resurrection of my Son?” But some might respond, “No, I came in through Kadesh Barnea because it was a lot easier and shorter. I have seen the vastness of this “in Christ” reality. I have seen the incredible fruit of abiding in the vine, but I entered in through Kadesh Barnea to avoid the cross”. If this be the case then God cannot trust us for there has been no death to our flesh.

Kadesh Barnea represents the revelation of the depth of Christ without having the cross applied to our life. It was a way of seeing the Promised Land but it was not the way of the Jordan River... the way of the cross. In this two-fold picture of Israel entering into the Promised Land, God has made known unto us what His view is. You and I must enter in through the way of the cross whereby the old man’s reign is ended and is never to be seen again, in the same manner as those rocks left at the bottom of the Jordan River. Until there is an actual reality of death with Christ, it is impossible to come to where the new and living is raised in newness of life of resurrection in the Promised Land.

Let us go back to Numbers chapter thirteen but this time let us look at verse twenty-six. Remember that, at this point in the journey they are at Kadesh Barnea but not at the Jordan River... the way of the cross. After entering into the land (as spies and not as inhabitants), and checking it all out they went to Moses, Aaron and all the children of the congregation of Israel saying, “This place is extremely fruitful.” Verse twenty-seven recounts, “And they told him, We came unto the land to which thou sent us and surely it floweth with milk and honey and this is the fruit of it.” In other words, “Oh man, you cannot beat this land. It has got the goods.” But all that fruitfulness has not been their main focus while in the land. In verse twenty-eight we find them saying, “Moreover we saw the children of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south and the Hittites and the Jebusites dwell in the mountains and the Cannanites dwell by the sea and the edge of the Jordan.” They have seen the fruitfulness of the land, but they have also seen something that God did not want them to meditate on.

God had already told them He had given them the land. He did not say, “I will give it to you.” He said, “Every place you put your foot you will possess... I have already given you the land.” As far as God was concerned, the land was theirs. Yes, there is a process that requires us to possess the things of God in a personal way. There is a commitment, there is a walk, and there is a searching of the scriptures. There is a giving of your time and there is a commitment of your heart, but it is only yours because He already gave it to you, not because you earn it by doing those things. He gave it to you because of Christ... because you are in Christ, and you are one with Christ. The quicker we quit thinking about ourselves and just start reckoning ourselves as one with Him, the quicker these things come by spontaneity of fruit more than by human effort.

So here they are at Kadesh Barnea telling Moses, “There are a bunch of really bad giants in the land.” But in verse thirty we have another view stated, “Caleb stilled the people before Moses and said, Let us go up at once and possess it.” I love the fact that he did not

just say, "Let us go up at once," but he said, "let us possess it..." which means to walk it out. Caleb continued on by saying, "God is with us, and we do not have to worry about these difficulties." Does any of you reading this believe that? But does it mean that if God is with us we will not have trials? No! Does it mean if God is with us we will not face giants? Of course we will face giants. Yes, we will have trials. But what Caleb was saying is that if God was with them, they really did not have anything to worry about. Why? We are to be plugged into Jesus' life, into His nature, into His oneness through the cross. That is the only way what is true in the Promised Land will ever become our in experience.

### **Their Viewpoint**

Verse thirty-one holds the rest of Caleb's conversation, "Let us possess it, for we are well able to overcome it. But the men that went up with him said, We are not able to go up against the people for they are stronger than we." Do you see what the people's response to Caleb entailed? Their viewpoint was, "When I measure myself by the giants, they are stronger than me, therefore there is no hope." Did they ever think about adding God into the equation instead of just looking within themselves? Me and God are a majority regardless of the odds. In verse thirty-two we see the discouragement these men brought to the rest of the people of God. "And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched, unto the children of Israel. Saying the land through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof and all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature. And there we saw the giants the sons of Anak who come of the giants, and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers and so were we in their sight." The problem here involves their image of themselves in contrast to having the image of Christ. Have any among you ever had a self-image problem? Probably all of us have at one time or another. Why are we told that one of the greatest acts of this eternal plan of God is that we be conformed to the image of Christ? It is to break us free from our life, our past, our way of thinking and our natural tendencies.

How will you overcome your personal tendencies? By your own efforts you will not, and you cannot. That is why the Holy Spirit takes you to the cross and brings forth the life of Christ in you. Jesus Christ does not have a problem dealing with, or overcoming self image issues. If He does not have a problem with them while seated on the throne, then He will not have a problem with them in you, if you let Him live in you. But most Christians will only give Him place every so often because the cross has not been worked deeply in them. Paul's phrase, "I am crucified" is meant to be a present reality, and not just an historical event that happened two thousand years ago. A historical event did not crucify me. However, a revelation of my union into that event does have an effect in the here and now. The reality that I am crucified with Christ is impacting me even today. Yes, there was an event, and yes it has an impact, but it was so impacting that I am keenly aware of it today in my present trials and situations. It is during real life situations that the cross should have the greatest effect in our lives and not just during a doctrinal sermon about the cross.

Paul had the cross so powerfully worked into him that his tendencies were dead and evaporated, as it were, because he was crucified. Christ's tendencies of love, mercy, joy, peace and all such attributes came out of him, and when someone started complimenting him, he would say, "It is not me, it is Christ."

When someone told Paul that he was not an apostle, he said, "I have showed the signs of an apostle more than all of you." But then he had to stop and recant, "Not I, but the grace of God that worketh in me." He knew that what others were experiencing was not out from himself but was Christ in him. If you say that it is clearly not you, but you are crucified with Christ then you cannot turn around and in the next breath say, "Well, it is me." Although Paul might have blurted something out when he was under attack such as... "I have shown the signs of apostleship more than you all", Paul made sure to add... "Well, not me, but the grace of God that works in me". The apostle was saying that he could not run far enough away from the cross, it had him. I knew what he was naturally. He murdered Christians, put them in jail, and allowed horrible things to happen to them. That is who he was without Christ's life, but yet how incredible the grace of God that worked in him later. God does not just save me, Paul or you. God saves me from my tendencies by putting Christ in me.

Christ may be my life, but there is not any Christ as Life until there is the cross. There is not going to be any embracing of Christ as Life until you have firmly embraced the cross first. It is possible to embrace Christ as Life, but all that it will ever be is a message until the cross becomes a living reality working in your life. I know that we are very blessed by what the Lord is doing among us, but we must never relent. We should always be crying out for more of Jesus and less of ourselves. He must increase and we must decrease (John 3:30). Do you hear the heart cry of that? It is as if I can hear the cry of the Father saying to us, "Jesus must increase, for if He does not, I will not be satisfied."

Our attitude should be one in which we desire an increase of Christ but we cannot sit still with where we are spiritually right now. We have had some great victories over the last couple of years, but we are not satisfied. We want more of Jesus. It is common in Christianity to sit on all the victories by spending a week, a month, or years rejoicing over all the little victories instead of pressing on. But Paul said, "I press." Do you have any idea what that involves? "I press..." Anytime you press against something, there is going to be some resistance. Paul was saying "but I am pressing towards the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus." You do not get there except through the cross.

You must embrace the cross! \*\*\*