

THE BIG IDEA: The cross is the connection between heaven and earth.

The Take-Off

We are quickly approaching the most important day in the church calendar - Easter

Of course, the resurrection gets all the press (come back that day and you'll find out why), but in our passage today, Jesus talks about what had to happen before the resurrection.

Of course, that's the cross.

In Luke 18:31-14, Jesus reminds His disciples about their ultimate destination - Jerusalem - and we see the disciples struggling to understand what He's even talking about.

If you've ever had a moment where you felt like you forgot something important that you should have remembered, then you know exactly how the disciples felt.

Jesus tells them that they're going to see the prophecies fulfilled and they assume (like most did) that He meant establish His earthly kingdom.

But as soon as Jesus started verse 32, everything turned into a blur and nothing added up for them.

The One on whom they'd staked everything suddenly started talking about what sounded like losing everything.

For the disciples, the cross wasn't an expensive piece of jewelry. It was something that was going to cost everything they had but eventually lead them to treasure worth more than they could ever have imagined.

But we're getting ahead of ourselves. Let's read verses 31-34 and then spend some time talking about being ALL IN on the cross.

1. On earth, the cross makes no sense

- a. The disciples could not wrap their brains around the cross because they understood the cross from the perspective of this world.
- b. It was brutal, violent, bloody - and used to punish people who deserved it.
- c. They knew that Jesus wasn't that person.
- d. 1 Corinthians 1:18 says that the message of the cross is foolishness
 - Greek word for foolishness means "silly or absurd"
 - What is the "absurd" message? That a King would submit Himself to it for people who don't even realize that they need it and in fact kill Him on it
 - 1 Corinthians 2:14 uses that same word and says that spiritual things seem absurd when we try to understand them with a "this world only" filter
- e. The disciples weren't thinking about their sin but about their status in the King's kingdom
- f. For Him to point to the cross and say, "That's the next step in establishing my kingdom" was silly, absurd, foolishness to the disciples
- g. It is for many of us here today, too
- h. That's why people can wear the symbol of the cross and be blinded to the meaning of the cross
- i. We need to see the cross from a different perspective than only an earthly one
- j. See, **on earth, the cross makes no sense**
- k. The best we can get from seeing the cross out of this perspective is verse 34: they understood none of it, the meaning was hidden, they didn't understand what He was talking about

2. In heaven, the cross made a payment

- a. But what if we saw the cross from a different perspective?
- b. Instead of seeing it as a symbol of our badness, what if we saw as a symbol of God's goodness?
- c. While the cross might not make sense on earth, it was doing something very different in heaven
- d. **In heaven, the cross made a payment**
- e. Well, more like THE payment
 - Romans 6:23 says that sin leads to a payment of death
 - Colossians 2:14 says that Jesus paid that debt on the cross
- f. What does that mean for us? It means that God's punishment of sin is satisfied!
 - 1 Peter 2:24-25 says Jesus bore OUR sins on the cross
 - Isaiah 53:5 says God's punishment was paid of Jesus at the cross

3. For us, the cross makes a way

- a. Romans 5:8 tells us that the cross reveals God's great love for us
- b. Here's why that's important - the cross wasn't just about a calculating God making a transaction, but a compassionate God making a connection because He wants us to be with Him
- c. **For us, the cross makes a way** for us to have friendship and fellowship with a holy God!
 - Matthew 27:51 / at the moment of Jesus' death ON THE CROSS, the veil of separation was torn
 - "From top to bottom" - God did the tearing - He wants us with Him!
- d. Hebrews 4:16 says that we can now come BOLDLY to the throne of grace
 - Greek word for "boldly" means "with free and fearless confidence"
 - I love how Tim Keller says it: "The only person who dares wake up a king at 3:00 AM for a glass of water is a child. We have that kind of access."
- e. The cross has made a way and, therefore, the cross makes all the difference!

The Landing

Let me wrap up this morning with a series of cheesy illustrations to really help us get this point.

[CONNECTION IMAGES 1-5 / I'll walk us from one to the next]

Do you see why Jesus said twice in Luke that we're to take up our crosses daily and follow Him? It isn't because we need daily reminders of how bad we've been or are, but because we've been called to be walking billboards for how good God is!!

We are ALL IN on the cross because at the cross, God went ALL IN on us!

He wasn't content to be far from us, and **the cross is the connection between heaven and earth.**

Now, we carry that connection everywhere we go!

Let's pray.