

Crosses on the Roadside

Franklin Church of Christ
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AM Worship

Introduction:

We have all seen them. They irritate some of us. They sadden others. Some of us simply pass them by and pay no notice. After today, I hope you will look at them just a little bit differently. I am talking about crosses on the roadside. Without getting into discussions about the appropriateness of using a cross or the possible distraction these crosses can be to a driver, I want us to consider these crosses for a few minutes. These crosses are placed as a memorial to someone who died in a car accident. When a family member passes by, they are reminded of their daughter or son, their husband or wife, their mother or father. Of what are you reminded when you pass by? I would like us to ask five questions about these crosses that will hopefully impact us every time we see one from now on.

Discussion:

- I. Did the deceased know they would become crosses on the roadside?
 - A. Consider the person that cross represents and the day the accident happened. Did that person know they were going to become a cross on the roadside? Did he know he would never see his family again? Did she know she would never hold her children again? Did he know he would never worship again? Did she know she would never pray again? Did they know they would never have another opportunity to obey the gospel again?
 - B. Of course not. They were driving along the road, with little thought of dying. They were thinking about what they would have for lunch. They were thinking about the ballgame. They were thinking about trouble at work or at home. They were thinking about their child's grades. They were thinking about any number of things, but not about dying. Yet that is what they did.
 - C. **Ecclesiastes 9:11-12** demonstrates time and chance overtake us all. Death will fall upon us suddenly. **Ecclesiastes 8:8** demonstrates no one has power over the day of his death. These people were driving along with all manner of thought in their mind and suddenly the great majority of thoughts, worries and anxieties were rendered pointless, because the people died.
- II. Why did someone want to leave a cross on the roadside?
 - A. Why would someone want to leave a cross there? Why would someone want this constant reminder of the death of their loved one? Of course, I cannot answer this question except for with my own speculation.
 - B. I can imagine numerous reasons for which someone might want to memorialize their family member or friend. But in general, this memorial demonstrates that somebody thought the deceased was worthy of memory. There was something about the way this person lived that caused others to want to remember their life and their death.
 - C. I consider passages like **Ecclesiastes 7:1**. "A good name is better than precious ointment." For some reason, someone thought the deceased had a name that ought to be remembered.
- III. Was the deceased prepared to become a cross on the roadside?
 - A. Now, down to the heart of the issue. When I see a cross on the roadside, I do not think so much about the way they died. I do not think about how much pain they went through. I do not think about their job, the car they drove, the house in which they lived or the kinds of clothes they wore. I do think a little about the family they must have left behind. But most of all, I wonder where they are right now. Were they prepared to become that cross on the roadside?
 - B. By prepared, I do not mean did they have life insurance. I do not mean did they have their papers and wills in order. I do not mean had they prepared their children or other family members for the possibility of their death. Though all of these things are important, what I mean is, were they prepared to meet God?
 - C. **Hebrews 9:27** declares clearly that after death comes the judgment. Were they ready for that judgment? **Luke 16:19-31** tells the contrast of Lazarus and the rich man. Lazarus the poor beggar, was prepared to die. When he did, the angels carried him to comfort in Abraham's bosom. The rich man, however, was not prepared.
 - D. What about that cross on the road? Was that person prepared to become a cross on the roadside? I can only wonder and hope.

- IV. Can the deceased do anything about it now that they are crosses on the roadside?
- A. When I think about whether or not the deceased was prepared, I cannot help but recognize that they cannot do anything about it now. I hope and pray they were prepared for that moment, but if they were not, it is too late for them.
 - B. Consider again the story of Lazarus and the rich man in **Luke 16:19-31**. The rich man was in torment. He could not do anything about his state. He could not do anything about the state of his brothers that were still alive. The dead cannot do anything about being prepared for judgment. They can simply wait and consider what they did while they were on the earth.
- V. What about me? What about you?
- A. After thinking so much about the person that cross represents, I have to think about me. And I hope you will think about you. What about us?
 - B. How many of us think we will become crosses on the side of the road today? Perhaps our demise will not take place in a car. How many of us think we will die today? Yet, that person did. We do not know when we will die, but rest assured of this: there is some day that will be your last day. You will die. It happens to all of us. **Ecclesiastes 9:2-3** points out that everyone dies.
 - C. Will anyone look at our lives and think that there is anything worth remembering? In **Hebrews 11:4**, the Hebrew writer claimed that Able, even though he was dead still spoke. His life continued on speaking after he was gone, because there was something worth remembering and emulating. Whether or not anyone will put a cross on the side of the road for you is really immaterial. The question is are you living in such a way that you leave behind something for your family, your children, your friends, your co-workers, your neighbors and your brethren to remember and follow. When you are dead will your life still speak to others? What will it say? Will it say be a good husband or wife? Will it say be a good father or mother? Will it say work as though for the Lord? Will it say be a good neighbor and friend? Most importantly, will it say be God's servant above all else?
 - D. When your moment comes to be nothing more in this world than a cross on the side of the road or a headstone in a cemetery and memories in the minds of those you left behind, will you be ready? Yes, I hope your will is in order. Yes, I hope you have enough life insurance. Yes, I hope you have taken time to prepare your family and especially your children. But what I really want to know is, are you ready to face God in judgment? In **Luke 12:16-21** we learn of a rich man who was prepared to live for many years; but he was not prepared to die. He was the most foolish of the fools, because he thought wisely about the things of this world. He was successful and fruitful. But he did not think about the next. He had not laid up riches in heaven. He had not been rich toward God. And his riches would not help him at all in death. Are you ready?

Conclusion:

The Preacher in Ecclesiastes said it will go well for those who fear the Lord (**Ecclesiastes 8:12**). Do you fear the Lord? Have you obeyed Him, working out your salvation in fear and trembling (**Philippians 2:12-13**)? You can be prepared to die and if so, your death will not be a time for mourning, but a time to rejoice—because another of God's children will have departed to be with Christ (**Philippians 1:23**). Do you believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of the Living God who died so that you might live, then confess that faith (**Romans 10:9-10**), repent of your sins and submit to Christ in baptism for the remission of your sins (**Acts 2:38**) and you will receive the promised salvation. If you have already become a child of God, but have turned again to sin, then repent. Be dead to sin, presenting your members as instruments of righteousness to God (**Romans 6:12-13**). Then you will be prepared to die.