

## A RUGGED CROSS FOR RUGGED TIMES

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1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1:17-18 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. 18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

### I. Cross at Ground Zero

#### A. September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks

##### 1. The tragedy of lives lost in that attack

a) *Yet from the millions of tons of rubble that were all that remained of the World Trade Center – a cross was discovered*

b) *Late into the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of searching rescue worker Frank Silecchia found a cross standing upright at the peak of a hill of rubble*

c) *It was merely a linked piece of two sheared metal beams standing about 20 ft high but it became a symbol of hope and comfort to those workers and grieving families.*

d) *Those that had lost a loved one in the attack would come and write a message or leave a personal item at the ground zero cross. One grieving family member put it this way, When I came to leave my tribute at the cross, I could feel some of my pain and anguish leave as well. I have never felt closer to Jesus.*

e) *Some would argue that it's velocity or physics that put it there But to me it's an act of God, Frank Silecchia told the press.*

(1) Just recently last year, the ground zero cross was placed into the September 11<sup>th</sup> memorial museum.

(2) Some might say that it is coincidence or happenstance that those beams would land in that exact

configuration at the top of the rubble heap, but I would say to you church that Rugged Times, need a Rugged Cross

## II. The Old Rugged Cross

### A. George Bennard

1. He was not envisioning the Ground Zero Cross
2. But he did envision the original old rugged cross.

On a Hill Far Away stood an Old Rugged Cross

The emblem of suffering and shame.

But I love that old cross where the dearest and best

For a world of lost sinners was slain.

### B. Glitzy crosses

1. In a society where the cross has been stylized and made into a fashion accessory we still need that original old rugged cross
2. In a world where the cross has been updated and modernized to reflect a more materialistic mindset, we still need that original old rugged cross.
3. In a day and age in which sin has been minimized and downplayed, we still need that original old rugged cross.
4. A Rugged Cross for our Rugged Times.

## III. Perilous times

### A. Rugged = perilous

1. Definition – Rough, Harsh, full of hardship and trouble; severe; hard

B. The Bible describes the last days as perilous times  
2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2:1-5 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

1. Perilous Times are here

- a) *Selfish*
- b) *Covetous – Greedy*
- c) *Proud - Arrogant*
- d) *Blasphemers – No reverence for God*
- e) *Disobedient to Parents –*
- f) *Unthankful –*
- g) *Unholy*
- h) *Without Natural Affections*
- i) *Fierce*
- j) *Despisers of Good*
- k) *Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God*
- l) *Form of Godliness*

(1) According to George Barna 86% of Christians will not attend Sunday School today

(2) Only one in three Christians will read their Bible or pray outside of Church

(3) We live in Perilous Times

(4) Rugged times need a Rugged Cross

IV. The Old Rugged Cross

A. We need to catch another glimpse of the old Rugged Cross of Calvary

O that old rugged cross, so despised by the world

Has a wondrous attraction for me.

For the dear Lamb of God, left His glory above

To bear it to Dark Calvary

1. Not the glitz and glamour of the cross today, but the original Rugged Cross

a) *A place of agonizing pain*

b) *A place of shame and humiliation*

c) *A place of sin and iniquity*

d) *A place of loneliness and isolation*

(1) This was the original rugged cross

e) *But it was also a place of the ultimate gesture of LOVE ever given*

f) *It was the place of hope for all of mankind*

Colossians 2: 13-14 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

(1) He nailed our sins to His cross at Calvary

2. The Original cross, became the symbol of hope for the future

a) *That's where my Savior died*

*b) That should have been me upon the cross*

*c) But that's where my debt was paid*

*d) That's where your debt was paid*

(1) Jesus Christ looked down through time and saw my sins and your sins and said, "I'll die for that"

(2) That was the Original Old Rugged Cross

B. The cross endures

1. Despite the circumstances surrounding it, that original cross stood out as a beacon to a rugged world

2. A symbol of shame became a symbol of salvation

*a) When the original city of Jerusalem was destroyed, the cross endured*

*b) When the Roman Empire later fell, the cross endured.*

*c) When the Dark Ages came upon the world, the cross endured*

*d) As the black death swept across nations, the cross endured*

*e) Through countless wars, depressions, famines, diseases, and acts of terror, across the eons of time itself THE CROSS ENDURES!*

*f) Not the original beams of wood, but the substance behind the symbol*

(1) We do not worship the architecture of the cross, but the accomplishment of the cross

(2) The Substance behind the cross was redemption for mankind

(3) The substance was forgiveness of sins for you and for me

C. The cross will endure

1. We know that we live in a rugged world

- a) *Financial issues*
- b) *Wars and rumors of wars*
- c) *Emotional problems*
- d) *Hate, Bigotry, Genocide,*
- e) *Famines, diseases, Earthquakes, Floods*
- f) *The collapse of the family*

(1) What do we have left to cling to?

To the Old Rugged Cross I will ever be true

It's shame and reproach gladly bare

Then He'll call me some day to my home far away

Where His glory forever I'll share

So I'll cherish the old rugged cross

Till my trophies at last I lay down

I will cling to the old rugged cross

And exchange it someday for a crown.

Ephesians 1:6-7 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

D. Apply the Cross to your Life

1. Jesus did not stay on the Cross

*a) He died, He was buried, He rose again*

2. Repentance

3. Baptism in Jesus Name

4. Receiving the Holy Ghost

*a) Then someday, you can exchange your cross for a crown*