

THE SYMBOL THAT SAVES

Colossians 2:13-15 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14Blotting 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; 15And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

I. Opening

A. The Cross in Society

1. It is all around us

- a) *It is found in the construction of every home*
- b) *Look at the front of a Chevy Car*
- c) *Look at the flags of certain American colleges*
- d) *As well as the flags of certain countries*
- e) *It is the shape of many swords*
- f) *It is in the basic letters of many major language Alphabets*
- g) *Look at a compass*
- h) *Look at every intersection*
- i) *Look at the Anchor which holds the ship in place*
- j) *Look at the front of hospital buildings and the doors of Ambulances*
- k) *Look at the front of Funeral homes and also of cemeteries*
- l) *Down to the very D-Pad on the game controllers for*

every major video game console.

(1) It is the cross

(a) Worn on pendants, displayed on key chains,
imprinted on clothing,

(2) The Cross is all around us every day

(3) It is impossible for you to have arrived today
without passing a cross your way to get here today.

2. The cross surrounds our lives

*a) All around the world the cross is a universally recognized
symbol*

B. The beginning of the Red Cross

In 1862, Henry Dunant, a young Swiss businessman, wrote *A Memory of Solferino*, in which he described what he had seen on the northern Italian battlefield in 1859 where 40,000 troops were killed or wounded and left without help. His concern touched many, leading to the birth in 1863 of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). This first committee, which included Dunant, adopted a red cross on a white background as the emblem, the reverse of the Swiss flag.

Dunant's ideas led to the Geneva Conventions, international treaties designed to protect these war victims: the wounded and sick on land (1864) and sea (1906), prisoners of war (1929), and civilians (1949). Since then, 165 governments have signed the Geneva Conventions, including additional revisions to protect victims of all armed conflict.

1. The Geneva conventions were established because of the
existence of the Red Cross.

II. The cross is a universally recognized symbol for help

A. Maps

1. When you look at a map and you see a cross, you know that is
where you can find medical attention if you need it

a) When you see that cross, you can rest assured that help is there if you need it.

b) You may have never been to this place before

c) Know nothing about the people or the layout, but the map says that there is a cross, there is a place you know you can go to get help

2. When you look up from your hurt and your pain and see the cross on the hospital sign, it lets you know that you have come to the place of healing and restoration

a) You might be suffering, and in deep pervading pain, but when you look up and see the cross of that hospital it brings a certain assurance that someone is going to help you.

B. In every armed conflict that the United States military goes into, the cross goes with our soldiers

1. For when someone is wounded on the battlefield, a soldier with a cross on their helmet or a cross on their arm will come out and tend to the wounded soldier.

a) Often times these medics risk their own lives to reach those that are wounded.

b) A lot of times medics are unarmed, save for the symbol of the cross, which tells the other army, that they are a healer.

(1) Bill Cosby as a medic – instant doctor ship after 6 weeks

(2) He was really happy to be a medic because of the Geneva Convention which specifically prohibits the killing of a medic

(3) He was very happy to have the Red Cross on his helmet and on his “jersey”

(a) I had no gun – just a briefcase

2. Medics in the United States Army, and also in the United

Nations are identified by the large RED CROSS that they wear on their helmet or armband.

a) The Cross is a universally recognized symbol of help&healing

III. The Cross is a universally recognized symbol of direction

A. When you are lost and you pull out the compass – or like me the smart phone app – it gives you direction

1. Downtown for interviews –

a) I knew that Millennium Park and station were to the east, as long as I kept walking east, I would eventually find them, and I did.

b) The cross gave me direction

2. On the legend of every map are the compass points

a) North, South, East, & West, but always in the shape of a cross.

(1) Whether you are in the United States, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, they all have the compass points so they all have a cross.

IV. The Cross is a Universally recognized symbol of Sacrifice & Victory

A. If you take a trip to our nation's capital

1. You must take some time to visit Arlington National Cemetery

a) There you will see the graves of our brave veterans

b) Laid out field after field of White Crosses

(1) Honoring the sacrifice of these valiant men and women who sacrificed so that we could be free

B. If you visit European countries, you will find monuments to great

battles that were fought

1. On the plain of Agincourt, there stands a cross as a monument to the great battle that was fought there in 1515.
2. The sacrifice of young men on the beaches of Normandy –
 - a) *There is a grave sight of white crosses stretching out in a green field. An enduring symbol of the sacrifice of those young men on that terrible day*
3. The fields of Dunkirk
 - a) *Have a similar memorial to the soldiers that lost their lives in World War 2.*

C. Today soldiers still carry on that tradition of the cross symbolizing sacrifice

1. For when a soldier dies in a conflict today, the soldiers will take the fallen ones boots, gun, and helmet.
 - a) *They will then have the boots support an upright gun and balance the helmet on top of the gun to symbolize their fallen comrade*
2. The boots with the gun standing upright and the helmet on top makes a cross symbol
3. A cross is a universal symbol of sacrifice & Victory
 - a) *You do not get to make a monument unless you win the battle. Losers don't get to build monuments. Only the victors do.*

V. The Original Cross

A. Yes we see the cross all around us every day

1. And the truth is that what the cross symbolizes in society is the very same things that it accomplished two thousand years ago at Calvary

B. The Cross is a place of Help & Healing

1. A cross marks a medic or a hospital as a place of healing

a) Isn't it interesting that the symbol for help in society is a RED CROSS

(1) Not a green cross, not a yellow cross, not a purple cross, but a RED CROSS

(2) The PC answer is that it is the reverse of the Swiss flag, but the real truth is that it refers back to the original cross, stained with the blood of Jesus Christ.

2. The cross of Calvary is a place of Help and Healing

3. Mankind was dying in their sin and iniquities

a) We could not save our selves

b) Like the wounded and injured that come to the hospital or that cry out for a medic, we were unable to heal our own souls

c) But Jesus came to the cross, The Bible tells us

Isaiah 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

4. The cross became a place of healing for all mankind

a) Those that are hurting, those that are in pain, those that can't help themselves, can look to the cross

b) Your transgressions and sins were taken care of at the cross

c) Your iniquities were taken care of at the cross

d) You can find peace at the cross

e) You can find healing at the cross

C. The Cross is a symbol of direction

1. A compass gives us direction

a) *When we don't know which way to go, then we are "lost"*

b) *But Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost*

c) *He came to give us direction*

(1) The cross is a symbol that points us in the right direction

(2) Toward a relationship with God, and the promise of Heaven

d) *We sing it still all over the world – Amazing Grace how sweet the sound – I once was LOST – but now I'm found*

(1) Find your way through the cross today

D. The cross is a symbol of sacrifice & of Victory

1. Much like crosses all around the world, commemorate the sacrifices of those that have gone before

a) *The crosses that endures to this day, all point back to that original old rugged cross of Calvary*

b) *For it was on this cross, that the ultimate sacrifice was made for you and for me*

c) *For Jesus Christ, He who knew no sin, became sin for us*

d) *He took on the punishment for all mankind*

e) *He sacrificed His life – long before brave soldiers' graves and great battle fields were ever marked with a cross, the ultimate battle over sin and death was waged and won on a hill call Calvary.*

f) *That symbol of sacrifice and victory still endures to this day.*

VI. Apply the Cross

A. It is a symbol that saves

1. But it is more than just a symbol

a) For a symbol is no good unless it is applied

2. You can see the help of the Hospital, but you do not get well unless you go there

3. You can see the direction of the compass, but you do not find your way unless you follow it

4. You can see the monuments to sacrifice, but they do nothing for you, if you reject what they fought and died for. Their victory becomes meaningless to you if you do not embrace their ideals.

a) It is the same with the cross

b) Salvation must be applied to our lives

(1) Through Acts 2:38 – which has been quoted here today.

(2) Repent

(3) Be Baptized

(4) Receive the Holy Ghost

(a) Like millions before you, the cross stands out to you today

(b) A symbol calling you to a place of help and healing, a symbol calling you to find your direction, a symbol calling you to sacrifice your life

(c) Paul put it this way

1st Corinthians 1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

(d) The Symbol that Saves