

# THE CROSS OF CHRIST

A cross made out of jewellery either around the neck or pinned to a collar tells the world of your faith. It symbolizes a certain moral standard that Christians are to live for. And more often than not it brings a degree of respect from others.

Two thousand years ago the cross was not a symbol of faith but of failure, not of morality but of lawlessness, not of respect but of shamefulness. Then, the cross was not an attractive piece of jewellery, but it loomed menacingly on the side of cobbled roadways for hundreds of miles that went from one Roman province to another. A barbaric monument for all to see that crime against the state does not pay. For Jesus who had no room in the inn at His birth and “nowhere to lay His head” during His lifetime, an old wooden cross was a final place of rejection.

As the hymn says “On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross, The emblem of suffering and shame; And I love that old cross where the dearest and best – For a world of lost sinners was slain”. It was there on that old rugged cross that Jesus raised His weary, bloodstained head and asked the Judge of the whole universe not for vengeance, not even for justice, but for mercy on those who crucified and cursed Him. It was because of Jesus’ innocent shed blood on that cross that humanity received a second chance.

A medical researcher tells us that this was the most agonizing death man could face. The victim had to support his weight in order to breathe. The pain caused by the spikes hitting through the nerves in the wrists explodes up his arms, into his brain and down his spine. The pain through the nerves between the bones in the feet jerks his body erect, then the leg muscles would convulse and drive his body downward. Exhaustion, shock, dehydration and paralysis destroy the victim and in time, flies and other insects find their way to the open bleeding wounds.

To think that God's purpose for allowing "His only begotten Son" to die such a cruel death was to save our souls from a lost eternity. The hymnist again writes "In the old rugged cross, stained with blood so divine, A wondrous beauty I see; For it was on that old cross Jesus suffered and died – to pardon and sanctify me." To pardon means ( to forgive us of our sins ) and to sanctify means (set apart for God ).

Jesus once told a man which still rings true today, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Will you believe in Him?

By John Denman