



The Old Cross and The New

By A. W. Tozer (1897-1963)



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Unannounced and mostly undetected there has come in modern times a **new cross** into popular evangelical circles. It is like the old cross, but different: the likenesses are superficial; the differences, fundamental.

From this new cross has sprung a **new philosophy of the Christian life**, and from that new philosophy has come a new evangelical technique -- a new type of meeting and a new kind of preaching. This new evangelism employs the same language as the old, but its content is not the same and its emphasis not as before.

The old cross would have no truck with the world. For Adam's proud flesh it meant the end of the journey. It

carried into effect the sentence imposed by the law of Sinai. The new cross is not opposed to the human race; rather, it is a friendly pal and, if understood aright, it is the source of oceans of good clean fun and innocent enjoyment. **It lets Adam live without interference.** His life motivation is unchanged; he still **lives for his own pleasure....**

The new cross encourages a new and entirely different evangelistic approach. The evangelist... preaches **not contrasts but similarities.** He seeks to key into public interest by showing that Christianity makes no unpleasant demands; rather, it offers the same thing the world does, only on a higher level...

The new cross does not slay the sinner, it redirects him. It gears him into a cleaner and jollier way of living and saves his self-respect.... **It is false because it is blind. It misses completely the whole meaning of the cross.**

The old cross is a symbol of death.... The race of Adam is under death sentence. There is no commutation and no escape. God cannot approve any

of the fruits of sin, however innocent they may appear or beautiful to the eyes of men. God salvages the individual by liquidating him and then raising him again to newness of life.

That evangelism which draws friendly parallels between the ways of God and the ways of men is false to the Bible and cruel to the souls of its hearers. The faith of Christ does not parallel the world, it intersects it. In coming to Christ we do not bring our old life up onto a higher plane; we leave it at the cross. The grain of wheat must fall into the ground and die.

God offers life, but not an improved old life. The life He offers is life out of death. The life He offers is life out of death. It stands always on the far side of the cross. Whoever would possess it must pass under the rod. He must repudiate himself and concur in God's just sentence against him.

What does this mean to the individual, the condemned man who would find life in Christ Jesus? How can this theology be translated into life? Simply, he must repent and believe. He must forsake his sins and then

go on to forsake himself. Let him cover nothing, defend nothing, excuse nothing. Let him not seek to make terms with God, but let him bow his head before the stroke of God's stern displeasure and acknowledge himself worthy to die.

...let him gaze with simple trust upon the risen Saviour, and from Him will come life and rebirth and cleansing and power. The cross that ended the earthly life of Jesus now puts an end to the sinner; and the power that raised Christ from the dead now raises him to a new life along with Christ....

Dare we, the heirs of such a legacy of power, tamper with the truth? Dare we...alter the pattern shown us in the Mount? May God forbid. Let us preach the old cross and we will know the old power.

"...none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God." Acts 20:24

"O what marvelous kindness is this! Is my worthless name written in His book of life? Am I redeemed by His blood, renewed by His Spirit, beautified with His loveliness, and clothed in His righteousness? O wonder of wonders! How can I forbear to love this adorable Savior? Can I withhold my choicest affections from Him?" - John Fawcett

* A. W. Tozer, *Man, the Dwelling Place of God*, 1966)

* This article appeared in *The Alliance Witness* May 15, 1963, just two days after the death of Dr. Tozer."

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