

PARK HEIGHTS CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Thus Saith the Lord

LIFTED UP

By Jeff Sweeten

“And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself. This He said, signifying by what death He would die” (John 12:32).

The cross had ugly baggage (Galatians 3:13). It was embarrassing and denigrating, reserved for the worst of offenders. Yet, when Jesus died this death, the cross took on an entirely new meaning.

There is an inherent irony in the futile attempts of unbelievers to mock the cross because they disbelieve in its ability to change a life. The correlation made between the cross and the electric chair, hangman's noose or guillotine, as an item of jewelry, misses the point. Those who derisively make this analogy do not realize the strength in the argument made **for** the cross in these negative parallels. It's not about the “bling,” it's about the cross.

You see, if the promised Messiah were to have died by the hangman's noose or any other predicted, prophesied means of demise, God's Son would have transformed the image of that method of death into something completely opposite its historic character. Therefore, a most horrendous form of death (and the cross certainly represented this) was transformed in the minds of humanity into its polar opposite. To this day, the cross inspires everlasting hope and some of the most beautiful songs ever penned by human hand.

However, there is a more important impact in the cross. Jesus's death on the cross inspires a transformation within all those drawn to it. People, soiled and damaged by sin and its consequences, find their release from the burdens of their history and are transformed into something more lovely than they ever could've imagined (2 Corinthians 5:7) **by the cross**. The filth that once stained them can be washed “as white as snow” (Isaiah 1:18b) **by the cross** of Christ. Those who understand and accept the cross can obey “*from the heart that form of doctrine*,” die to sin and rise up to walk in newness of life through the watery grave of sin-forgiving baptism (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-4, 17). Like the cross, those drawn to it become the polar opposite of what they were (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Peter 4:4).

Oh, the wondrous cross of Christ and what it can do for you. “Lift the precious Savior up. Still He speaks from eternity” (Johnson Oatman, Jr.).

JOIN US ON SUNDAY AND WEDNESDAY!

SUNDAY: 9:30 a.m. Bible Study • 10:25 a.m. Morning Worship • 1:30 p.m. Bible Study

WEDNESDAY: 7:00 p.m. Bible Study • Contact the minister at 254-370-4130