



INTRODUCTION / WEEK 5 / March 17, 18 & 21

The cross is the most powerful symbol in all of history. It proclaims how Jesus loves the world so much that he was willing to suffer and die for every person. The cross then always adds to life. It proclaims that Jesus died so that our sins can be forgiven; so that we have life now and life everlasting. This means that in our times of feeling abandoned the cross is always a plus.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways is the cross like a plus sign? How does the cross add to life?
2. Why do we as people often seek to subtract from certain people's lives? Why do we often have a difficult time seeing the good in some individuals? How does social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) often put other people down?
3. What does it mean that we need to "put the best construction" on another person's life and behavior? Why is this such an important thing to learn? How does it make you feel when someone puts the best construction on your life and actions?
4. **Read John 3:16-17.** How is this passage such a plus for you today? Why is it so important to remember that Jesus came *"not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him?"*
5. What would it look like to have Calvary so filled with love, grace and care for all people that individuals will want to come and be part of this community of faith?
6. What does the Apostle Paul mean when he said that the cross is *"foolishness"* to those who do not believe; *"but to those who are being saved it is the power of God."*
7. **Read Luther's Explanation to 2nd Article of the Creed.** *"At great cost he has saved and redeemed me, a lost and condemned person. He has freed me from sin, death and the power of the devil—not with silver or gold, but with his holy and precious blood and his innocent suffering and death."* What do these words of Martin Luther teach us?
8. What should it mean to you when you wear some cross jewelry? What are you reminded of when you see the cross in front of our sanctuary? How is Calvary a plus in this community?

MOVING FORWARD

Think about a person (or some people) you know who are feeling down these days. Make plans this week to get in touch with them and be a plus in their lives. Pray each day that you will add to someone's life.

PRAYER

Loving God, we live in a world where we often feel put down and abandoned. Enable us to understand how your cross is always a plus; how you are always there to add to and enhance our lives. And as you, Loving God, add to our lives, empower us to be a positive and affirming advocate for others. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.