THE MEANING OF CHRIST'S DEATH

Scripture: Phil. 2:5-11
Text: Matt. 20:28

Introduction

Is there a man with soul so dead that he can consider without emotion the fact of Christ's death? Yet for the Christian it is more than a fact. Christ's death holds for him tremendous significance and meaning. Mere facts have little value until they are clothed with meaning. The man who asks merely for the facts asks for the bone without the meat, the cup without the water, the shadow without the substance. The meaning we place upon Christ's death will determine the degree and quality of our development in Christian character. What meaning does the death of Christ hold for you? Matthew gives us the fullest answer to our question in these words, "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many".

I. Errors in popular conceptions of the meaning of Christ's death.

A. Those who treat the death of Christ as part of a great drama between Father and Son and not as between God and man.

B. Those who suggest that God's love and righteousness are at variance.

C. Those who consider that an exact equivalence holds between Christ's penal suffering and condemnation.
D. Those who hold that Christ's merit and our guilt are externally transferable. 
(Bunyan's Pilgrim Progress)

II. Certain Fundamental conceptions that go into determining our view
A. God - One God, no split personality. God not angry at man but intolerant of Sin.
B. Man - Created in God's image and therefore capable of being re-created as Son of God.
C. Evil - Not God's personal adversary but man's. Satan can not dethrone God but he can dethrone man.
D. Law - Not arbitrarily imposed but an expression of nature of God.
E. Sacrifice - Not ceremony or ritual but a necessary expression of conformity to the higher law of relationships. Relation to God

III. The death of Jesus Christ Ransoms Believers From Sin
A. Cause and effect blend in Christian experience atonement in light of fruit produced in man.
B. The ransom from Sin is accomplished by His life
   (1) "To give his life" Key to whole transaction Physical, Physical, Ethical, and Moral
   (2) If only physical then external and dramatic. It was both external and internal.
   (3) By living in man to overcome Sin. Rom. 8:2
C. Fruit of atonement to be seen in true Christian Living
   (1) Moral - (Jesus and woman at the well)
   (2) Business Relationships - (Zaccheus)
   (3) Money - (Rich Young Ruler)
   (4) War and Peace

D. In His death he establishes His life in His followers
   (1) Not physical death but salvation from sin and guidance to the way of the cross. Matt. 16:24-25
   (2) Lord's Supper - To ratify this principle and to pledge ourselves to live by it.

Conclusion

To give this profound message to the world it was necessary for Jesus to die upon the Cross. A Godless and sinful world will always crucify a righteous savior who calls for Holy living. Only by giving his son to die could God gain control of the Soul of man. As we think of these great truths today, we can say, as those of old on the way to Emmaus. "Did not our hearts burn within us while he spake to us in the way, and opened to us the scriptures?"