

The Paradox of the Cross

The cross is a paradox. By human standards, it shouldn't make sense, it shouldn't work, and yet, it does. In fact, it's the greatest paradox—life from death, pardon from penalty, and justification from judgment. In the Roman empire, the cross brought death in a brutal, humiliating way. But instead of shame and defeat, believers of Jesus Christ find life in the cross. Studying the paradox of the cross in Scripture reminds us of the profound love of God. It reminds us how much God values and regards his relationship with us and that only Christ can accomplish the impossible. Join us as we explore how sometimes the life of faith contradicts the logic of this world and what it looks like to live in light of this paradox.

AWARENESS Before listening reflect on what you already know or understand about topics we'll cover in the episode.

- What is a paradox? If you can, articulate a definition or give an example.
- When you see the symbol of the cross, what do you think of? How does it make you feel?



LISTEN TO THE EPISODE: [The Paradox of the Cross](#)

READ [1 Corinthians 1:18-31](#), [Romans 5:1-11](#), [Ephesians 2:8-10](#)

REFLECTION After listening, consider the following questions:

- Reread [1 Corinthians 1:18-25](#). How does this passage deepen our understanding of how we can receive both death and life through the cross?
- In segment 2, hosts Scott Hoezee and Darrell Delaney remark that God does not believe in “irreconcilable differences.” They discuss two Old Testament stories that show how much God loves us and values his relationship with us. They note that in the Garden of Eden, after Adam and Eve sin, God does not completely start over and that after the flood God promises never to destroy the earth with a flood again and turns instead to grace. What other biblical examples can you think of that demonstrate how much God loves us?
- Scott notes that the flip from death to life that occurs on the cross mirrors the flip in our lives when we experience suffering, but then recognize our connection with Jesus and our potential for healing and positive growth. Is it easy or difficult for you to remember this when you're in the midst of suffering? Why? What might help you remember and bring you peace while you endure suffering?
- In this episode, Scott and Darrell mention a number of paradoxes that are results of the “paradoxical exchange” that happens at the cross: God sees potential saints when he should see sinners, sinners become righteous, life comes out of death, crucifixion becomes resurrection, and God's wisdom is foolishness to the world. Are there others you remember hearing? Which one resonates with you most at this point in your life? Which one is the most surprising to you, the most amazing to you, or the most difficult for you?

RELATED PASSAGES for further study

[1 Corinthians 2:6-16](#), [Philippians 2:1-11](#), [John 3:16-17](#), [Romans 6:22-23](#), [1 Peter 4:12-19](#)

CONCLUSION

Because of the paradox of the cross we receive God's grace, we find life, and we know our worth. With this in mind, reflect on Darrell's closing statement.

“And we get an opportunity to live that new life and share with others and there is hope for them. So we not only live it, but we share that good news that that grace is available for other people. It's our responsibility as Christians and disciples.”

How can you live into your responsibility to share the paradox of the cross—the truth of God's love and grace—with the people you encounter in your daily life?

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