**Cross Vision: Mark 10:45 (Hosea 13:14, Acts 20:28)**

The Cross is at the heart of the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It has become the defining image of worship for Christians, and what was a fearful symbol of torture and execution in the Roman world is now worn casually as jewellery by people of faith and without it. The cross is like a diamond with many facets, and this Lent we will be looking at three aspects of the work of Christ on the cross.

In Mark 10:45 Jesus says he came to ‘give his life as a ransom for many’

The earliest Greek Church fathers (e.g. Origen) saw the cross in terms of *Ransom*. A ransom is a price that is paid to release someone from captivity; occasionally someone will volunteer themselves to be held to ransom in place of another (c.f. Judah for Benjamin in Genesis 44:33).

We need to understand the Cross in the light of Jesus self-understanding of what was going on. We wouldn’t have guessed the Cross was the way for the victory of God to be won. We wouldn’t have guessed that the Son of God would position himself as a Passover lamb unless he had done it himself.

* Ransom. A ransom is paid to release someone from the power of those who hold them captive.

What are we held captive by?

1. Satan (Acts 26). We are held captive by Satan because we have colluded with him, given him house room (Matt 12:29), sold ourselves to him so he says we have a legal right to have us. (c.f. Gomer in Hosea). Jesus describes his opponents (John 8:44) as children of the devil ‘who was a murderer from the beginning’.
2. Death. The outworking of that captivity is ‘death’, physical and spiritual death.
3. Satan is legalistic. The nature of the word itself is legalistic (prosecution) accuser or adversary (c.f. Zechariah 3:1-7). It’s as if satan says to God- by your own holy nature you can’t allow these corrupted ones into your kingdom, they belong to me- look at the hold they have given me over them.
4. Jesus comes as one over whom the devil has no hold. (John 14:30). In his desire to have a hold over God’s son and in his murderous malice Satan drives (through Judas) the betrayal and crucifixion of Jesus. In doing so he overreaches himself. Jesus walks into a trap (Psalm 91) that we might be set free from the trap.
5. Death and Hell can’t keep the ransom. Resurrection is the victory of God.

Outcomes for us.

* A ransom has been paid for us if we accept it! If we accept that Jesus died for us we can walk freely and forgiven into the mercy of God
* We need not fear death because just ad it couldn’t hold Jesus it won’t hold us.
* We can renounce the devil and areas of control or saccusation over our lives.