



The Power of the Cross

It is a humbling exercise to so focus on the scene of Jesus' crucifixion that we can picture ourselves there. This is what the authors of this new hymn have done, and they invite us to join them. They provide the picture, painted with words and notes. We must provide the heart that is willing to "go there."

This is not an easy exercise, because we know that had no one else sinned, Jesus would still have to be up there on that cross because of us. Yet, this is a good thing to know. It causes us to be humble in our dealings with others in their sin (or at least, it should). Seeing ourselves in this scene humbles us as we consider any good works we might be a part of. This scene bolsters us on bad days and enriches our good days as gifts.

This scene also challenges us. It challenges us to believe that we have actually been forgiven. It challenges us to receive that forgiveness and then to live unchained from guilt. The fourth stanza takes us to that realization..."Oh, to see my name written in the wounds..." We don't like to see our name appear in places we haven't authorized. But our name appears in this scene, whether we want to admit it or not.

The power of the cross is a magnetic power. It pulls us into the beautifully terrible scene and facilitates our forgiveness. It humbles us and casts its shadow over all of our life. The crosses that stand over our graves are little ones. The big one stands over our life, its shadow pointing the way of Christ-following.

The power of the cross extends to our ethics. How do we treat other people, even the very frightening ones? Jesus died for them. We are to be Christ-followers, following the example and teachings of our Master. When we step out of the shadow of the cross, the searing sunlight exposes our real hearts. The power of the cross is a power that crucifies us daily.

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