

THE
TRUTH
of
THE
CROSS

R.C. SPROUL

“The gospel is a message of good news that something extraordinary has happened. At the heart of that message is that Jesus, God the Son incarnate, has atoned for the sins of all His people, turning away the righteous wrath of God. The gospel is a cross-shaped message. Sadly, in our day, this message is being re-shaped into other forms, and the results are not happy. We can give thanks for this volume by R.C. Sproul, however, because in it he steps into the breach once more to provide a clear, concise, and thoughtful case for the biblical and historic Christian gospel of the cross.”

—DR. R. SCOTT CLARK

Professor of church history and historical theology
Westminster Seminary California, Escondido, Calif

“The cross stands at the very center of our Christian lives. Still, many Christians are confused about the heart of the gospel, for many deviant views are in the air. R.C. Sproul blows the fog away in this wonderfully clear, theologically profound, and pastorally rich work. Learn afresh or anew what God has accomplished in the cross, so that you will boast only in the cross of Jesus Christ.”

—DR. THOMAS R. SCHREINER
James Buchanan Harrison Professor of
New Testament Interpretation
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary,
Louisville, Ky.

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LIGONIER MINISTRIES

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To R.C. Sproul Jr.,
for his consistent and courageous
stand for biblical truth.

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ONE

THE NECESSITY OF AN ATONEMENT

I'm fascinated by the information that is put out by advertising agencies. It seems that the ad business keeps getting more and more sophisticated as agencies seek to position businesses and products in the marketplace. To that end, billions of dollars are spent every year to create what we call logos—little images, pictures, or symbols that instantly identify a brand or a product and communicate something about it, such as its history, its value, or its significance. I've heard it said that the most recognizable logo in the United

States of America is probably the Golden Arches that you find outside McDonald's restaurants.

The Christian faith also has a universal symbol—the cross. Why the cross? After all, Christianity has many aspects. We see these many facets in the field of systematic theology, which is divided into numerous subsections, such as theology proper, which is the study of God Himself; pneumatology, which is the study of the person and work of the Holy Spirit; ecclesiology, which is the study of the church; soteriology, which is the study of salvation; and so on.

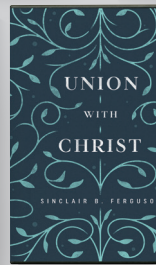
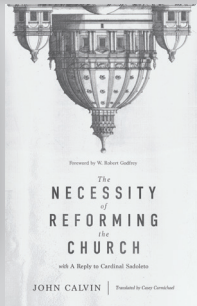
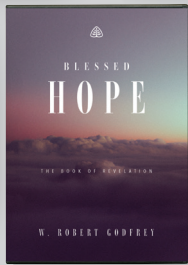
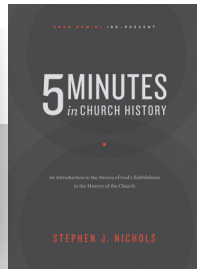
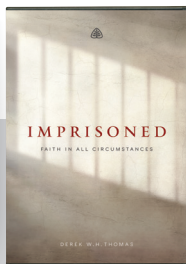
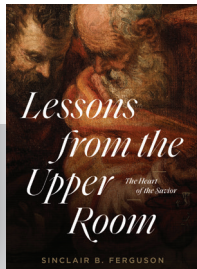
But one of the most important subdivisions of theology is Christology, which is the study of the person and work of Christ. Within that field of study, when we want to get at the aspect that is most crucial, the aspect that we may call the “*crux*” of the matter of Jesus' person and work, we go immediately to the cross. The words *crucial* and *crux* both have their root in the Latin word for “cross,” *crux*, and they have come into the English language with their current meanings because the concept of the cross is at the very center and core of biblical Christianity. In a very real

sense, the cross crystallizes the essence of the ministry of Jesus.

This was the view of the apostle Paul. In his first letter to the church at Corinth, Paul made an astonishing statement about the importance of the cross to the entirety of the Christian faith: “And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:1–2). Paul was a man who had the equivalent of two Ph.D.s in theology by the time he was 21 years of age, a man who wrote with great insight on the whole scope of theology. Nevertheless, he said that the focal point of his teaching, preaching, and ministry among the Corinthians was simply “Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”

When the apostle made that statement, he obviously was engaged in the literary art of hyperbole. The Greek prefix *hyper* is the source of our word *super*, and it indicates a degree of emphasis. *Hyper* takes a root word and makes it emphatic. In this case, the root word comes from the Greek verb “to throw.” So

We want to see men and women
around the world connect the deep truths
of the Christian faith to everyday life.



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