



# The Theology of the Cross

## Lesson 5: The Theology of the Cross and the Hidden God

### Goal

- Notice how primarily God has not revealed himself in power but hidden himself in lowliness
- Recognize how God's hiddenness brought about our salvation

### Opening Prayer

Lord God, you and all that you are—your power, your glory, your wisdom, your majesty, your very being—is beyond our comprehension. Yet, you have chosen to come to us not in that great glory but in lowliness and humility. Open our eyes with your Spirit that we might see even this as a demonstration of your mercy and love. May we always immerse ourselves in that mercy and love made ours through your Son, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

### Introduction

1. How would the average person expect to encounter God?

### God Reveals Himself

2. Read Exodus 19:16-19; Numbers 16:28-34; 1 Kings 18:36-39; and Isaiah 6:1-5. What did the Israelites' glimpses of God's glory accomplish? What did they never accomplish?
3. The greatest revelation of God is himself coming in the flesh. Read Philippians 2:6-8 and describe how that revelation took place.
4. One cannot deny the power displayed in the miracles of Jesus. Yet, what do the following passages tell us about these displays of power? Read Mark 5:40-43; 6:45,46; John 6:15.
5. Even in Jesus' actions after his greatest miracle, the resurrection, we don't see great and grand displays of glory. Instead, where does Jesus point his disciples for comfort? Read Luke 24:25-27, 32, 49.
6. Philippians 2:9-11 describe Christ's ultimate exaltation. When will that exaltation take place? (When will these verses be fulfilled?)

## Salvation from a Hidden God

7. The height of Jesus humility came during Holy Week when he was betrayed by one from his own inner circle, abandoned by his closest friends, falsely accused, convicted, mocked, abused, scourged, and crucified. And all this he did without help from anyone. In what ways does this add to this all-important work?
8. In what ways does the completeness of Christ's work on the cross impact the believer?
9. Luther goes one step further in his Heidelberg Disputation. How does Luther apply the completeness of the cross of Christ to the life of the Christian in these words?

*The Lord humbles and frightens us by means of the law and the sight of our sins so that we seem in the eyes of men, as in our own, as nothing, foolish, and wicked, for we are in truth that. Insofar as we acknowledge and confess this, [there] is no form or beauty in us, but life is hidden in God (i.e., in the bare confidence in his mercy), finding in ourselves nothing but sin, foolishness, death, and hell... Such a man therefore is displeased with all his works; he sees no beauty, but only his ugliness.*

10. One might think that a complete condemnation of *self* and all we are would lead to despair. However, that attitude actually results in the most comfort and hope. In what ways is this true?

## Closing Prayer (All Praise Be Yours, CW 350:2,3)

**You came to us in lowliness of thought; by you the outcast and the poor were sought,  
And by your death was God's salvation wrought. Alleluia!  
O Jesus, let your mind within us be, For you were servant that we might be free  
And humbly stooped to death on Calvary. Alleluia!**

## For those reading along at home...

1. Where has God hidden himself from man? How is God found? (pages 113-115)
2. Instead of submitting to total humiliation before God, self wants to divide our lives into what three categories? (pages 127,128)
3. Why does God delay most spiritual rewards for Christians during earthly life? (page 131)
4. The role of good works is a primary issue in the contrast between the theology of the cross and the theology of glory. Give some examples as an illustration. (pages 134-136)
5. List the three tests that determine if a theological doctrine is sound or flawed. How does the theology of glory fail all three tests? (pages 136-138)