

The Cruciform Faith Project

By Andréa Snavely, PhD

Have you ever wondered if your Christian faith is authentic and true, especially compared to how the New Testament describes it? If so, there is no need for you to be alarmed or embarrassed by such reflection. There are plenty of others just like yourself who are wondering about the same discrepancy between how other Christians, past and present, live their Christian lives compared to their own. This kind of dilemma is caused by an even larger problem of how Christianity has been made to “fit into” the cultures of western society, namely North American and European cultures for hundreds of years now. If you have grown up and live within a western culture (or one that has been heavily influenced by one), you have probably struggled with this dilemma even if you have not been able to identify the real problem. Discussing the reasons for this problem and providing some tools to help others overcome it are the reasons why I am so passionate about developing this program.

The Cruciform Faith Project is a multi-faceted program that seeks to explore what it means to live out one’s faith in Jesus as Lord on the sole basis of Jesus’ death on a cross and resurrection from the dead. “Cruciform” simply meaning that our Christian faith is not only formed by the cross that Jesus died on but that his cross must also be the basis for our daily walk of faith and our actions that result from it.

There are certainly many other competing reasons that serve as the basis for the Christian faith, as well as many outward expressions of those reasons. While many might not be able to give a well-thought-out reason for their faith or for their actions based on their faith, there are plenty of others who appeal to reasons *other than* the death of Jesus on a cross and his resurrection from the dead. In fact, these reasons *other than* Jesus’ death and resurrection are often what causes a person’s confusion as to why such a discrepancy exists in the first place. Therefore, understanding the problem and the history behind it places a person a long way down the road in finding the answer.

For instance, have you ever thought about all the excuses that are made for why some Christians are not healed of a terminal illness or why some Christians suffer tremendous financial disasters or family tragedies that are not of their own

making? It seems that much of Christianity in western culture is generally not prepared to give any meaningful theological and biblical reason for such events.

The ones that are given are often shallow and even unbiblical, leaving the Christian even more confused or doubtful than before they asked. This leaves many Christians suffering all alone within their own doubts, feeling like there should be an answer besides the glib and snobbish ones provided by those who end up on the “right side of history” or on the “winning side of culture.” If you have ever found yourself on the “wrong side” of either but still believe that there is more to the Christian faith than what can be seen, touched, felt, or even explained according to the wisdom of experts, then this project is for you.

The failure of these other reasons to explain the Christian faith based on Jesus’ death on a cross is what compelled me to begin this project. Jesus died at the hands of godless men *as the result of how he lived*. It is no less true today that people who follow Jesus often suffer the same kind of persecution, scorn, ridicule, and insult. Such a life is what it means to have and live a cruciform faith in Jesus as Lord. Living the kind of life Jesus lived is no more popular today than it was when he lived. However, Jesus’ command to deny ourselves, pick up our cross, and follow him is just as true for us as it was for his disciples. To do so takes a deep faith and trust in Jesus being who he said he was. It is my hope that the resources you find here will encourage and strengthen you with the kind of biblical view that is able to support a deeper faith and trust in Jesus as Lord in an increasing secular and postsecular world with competing religious expressions and political ideologies.

The Cruciform Faith Project is for those who are looking for a deeper biblical account of their Christian faith that considers the life and death of Jesus (and those who *willingly* give up everything to follow him) as no mere anomaly but the very essence of what constitutes the Christian life. For some, this will require a complete reversal of their present way of thinking, nothing short of a transformation, even a repentance and turning from erroneous views. However, this should not come as a great surprise either, since the New Testament is full of references to repentance as the very entrance into the Christian life or at least synonymous with faith itself, like two sides of the same coin.

So, this Cruciform Faith Project will consist of several different components; adding segments to build a program that is both holistic in its approach and relevant in its application to everyday living. This will include articles, podcasts,

videos, and other components that all cohere together but which can each stand alone and be referred to as a reference point for further studies.

Finally, my prayer is that The Cruciform Faith Project will encourage you to live out your life as a bold witness to Jesus as Lord and help enable you to give an account for the hope that dwells within you. So, please join me as we discover how to follow the first century Jesus in our twenty-first century world.