



GRACENOTE

MUSIC & WORSHIP ARTS AUXILIARY



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“At the Center of It All” (Part I)

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are being saved it is the power of God.”

(1 Cor. 1:18 KJV)

Everything has a center. From the mammoth to the microscopic, there is a center-point. It’s as true of the world as it is of the Word. At the center of the Bible is God’s story of redemption. At the center of that story is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Allow me to suggest that at the center of His life story is the cross. Notwithstanding His role in creation, His pre-incarnate appearances, and His climactic reign in the Revelation, it is the salvific work of God’s Son on the *cross* that stands at the center of it all.

Why does the *cross* serve as the principal symbol for the transformative movement launched by the peasant preacher from Galilee? What are the distinguishing characteristics couched within the most beloved stories and songs communicated, commemorated, and celebrated by His disciples around the world? Let’s consider three possibilities.

First, perhaps the *cross* stands at the center of it all because it is **The Crucible of Our Redemption**. Since Adam’s failure and fall in the Garden of Eden, all of humanity has been contaminated by and condemned because of sin. God, offended by His crowning creation, established blood sacrifice as the acceptable offering to redeem the guilty. All along, however, He knew the slaying of countless lambs, bulls, and goats never would fully satisfy His justice. Thus, the *cross* of Calvary ultimately proved to be the altar of all altars and the anvil upon which the payment for our debt and liberation were hammered out (Col. 2:14). “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, because it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree’” (Gal. 3:13 CSB). Indeed, it was the crucible by which the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ was shed (Matt. 26:28). Let’s remember, “... without the shedding of blood there is no remission” (Heb. 9:22b KJV). This is why songs of redemption impact the soul:

“Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it! Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;
Redeemed through His infinite mercy, His child and forever, I am.” (F. Crosby)

“I am redeemed, bought with a price. Jesus has changed my whole life.
If anybody ask you just who I am, tell them, I am redeemed.” (J. Dixon)

“I know it was the blood. I know it was the blood.
I know it was the blood that saved me.
One day when I was lost, Jesus died on the *cross*.
And, I know it was the blood that saved me.” (Traditional)