

Concord Ministry

3201 Hiss Avenue
Baltimore MD 21234

ConcordDove@mac.com

443-813-8077

<http://thesignofconcord.com>

If you want Peace, seek Justice for all
Walk in Righteousness, depending on the Love and Spirit of Christ, as His servant forever

Lord God, You have called Your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that Your hand is leading us and Your love supporting us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

January 26, 2026

Dear Redeemed of the Lord,

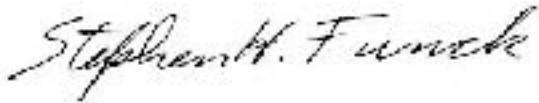
A paradox is a statement, situation, or idea that seems contradictory or absurd but, upon closer inspection, reveals deeper truth, often challenging our assumptions. They provoke deeper thought. Paradoxes exist in logic, physics, literature, and everyday life, showcasing complex realities where opposing elements coexist to create a profound insight. The Bible, Christian religion, is filled with paradoxes. Jesus is both God and man. One God in three persons. Both Saint and Sinner. Ephesians 2:8-9 "saved by grace through faith, not works". James 2:24 "justified by works and not by faith alone". John 14:21 "Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me."

1 Corinthians 1:18 "For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." A common cause for error is forcing a paradox to be logical. Faith, trust, is accepting what seems illogical to be true. It has been called "the leap of faith." Sinful human logic, desire, thinks power and glory are the best way to go. The paradox of God is that His blessed path for us is through the cross.

"**Theology of the Cross**" is opposite to the "**Theology of Glory**". In our nation, at this time, many, who call themselves "Evangelical Christians" believe, promote the theology of glory. The call to make this a "Christian Nation by force is heresy, and opens the path for the "AntiChrist". Instead of loving and caring for the weak, enemies, strangers, the suffering, in obedience to God's commands throughout Scripture, they take actions to hurt and oppress them further. They support this by lies, mischaracterizing those they oppose, in the name of Jesus.

Galatians 5:19ff. "The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."

In the name of Jesus, called by God to proclaim His Love for all,



If you prefer a paper copy mailed, let me know. If you would like to add someone to this mailing list, send me their name and address.

Pastor Stephen H. Funck

"King of Kings" ISBN: 9798373867931 Amazon print or kindle

The background of the life of Christ, footnoted with links to sources

He died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves,
but for him who died and was raised for them. 2 Corinthians. 5:15"

Google Search with AI produced the following:

Theology of the Cross is a Christian concept, popularized by Martin Luther. He coined the term but did not invent the concept. It states: God is best known through the suffering, weakness, and apparent failure of Jesus on the cross. It is opposite to the "theology of glory" that seeks God in human power, wisdom, or worldly success. It emphasizes finding God in suffering and brokenness, recognizing salvation comes solely from Christ's sacrifice, not human merit, and calls believers to follow this path of humble service and reliance on God's grace amidst life's hardships.

Core Principles

God's Revelation in Suffering: God reveals His true nature (love, power, righteousness) not in strength or glory, but in the suffering and death of Christ, making the cross the ultimate source of knowledge about Him.

Contrast with Theology of Glory: It rejects any theology that finds God in worldly might, human reason, or personal achievement, seeing such approaches as diminishing God's glory and leading to self-reliance.

Salvation by Grace Alone: Salvation, righteousness, and good works come entirely from Christ's finished work on the cross, not from human cooperation or merit.

Life as Following the Cross: The Christian life involves daily self-denial and bearing one's own cross, recognizing one's sinfulness and weakness, and finding strength and hope in Christ's resurrected life.

Presence in Suffering: God is present in suffering, not just a way out of it; believers find Him in their own pain, anxiety, and weakness, just as they find Him in Christ's.

Luther first articulated this concept as a debate point, contrasting the humble path of the cross with the proud path of glory.

Salvation through suffering is a theological concept, primarily Christian, meaning that accepting and uniting one's own pain with Christ's Passion leads to spiritual growth, purification, and redemption, potentially and drawing closer to God. While Jesus's suffering on the cross offers ultimate salvation, believers participate by offering their trials to God, seeing suffering as a path to perfection, increased faith, and a deeper understanding of Christ's sacrifice, a process known as redemptive suffering.

Core Christian Beliefs

Participation in Christ's Passion: Believers suffer with Christ, share in His saving work.

Purification & Growth: Suffering acts as a tool to sanctify, perfect character, build endurance, and draw the soul closer to God, who uses pain to get the attention of a "deaf world" (C.S. Lewis).

From Suffering to Salvation: Suffering isn't meaningless; it's a way to experience God's presence, a reminder of human weakness, and a catalyst for turning to God for help.

Action, Not Passivity: Embracing the cross means active movement toward spiritual perfection, not passive acceptance, involving efforts to improve one's situation as well as accepting what can't be changed.

Christ's Example: Jesus's own suffering and victory over death show that the path through suffering leads to life and triumph, making the journey bearable.

Rest in Him by Gary Wilkerson

Under pressure, most of us rehearse our need over and over: "If only I had this one thing... If I could just work on that one weakness..." However, Jesus tells us not to fixate on our need but rather on our supplier. "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?" (Matthew 6:25-27, ESV).

In the Old Testament when things looked impossible for King Asa, he fixated on his supplier, not his problem. When the kingdom was surrounded by a massive enemy with no hope in sight, Asa prayed, "Lord, I don't know what to do, but my eyes are fixed on you" (see 2 Chronicles 14:9-12)

Jesus shows us that we are to give thanks in the midst of our situation. Facing the starving masses with just a handful of fishes and bread loaves, Jesus gave thanks to God. Jesus thanked the Father before the need was even filled, and a miracle followed. "...He told his disciples, 'Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost.' So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, 'This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!'" (John 6:12-14).

Your situation doesn't depend on your resources; it depends on God's. "And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

You may have cried your heart out over your need. Now it's time to remind yourself of God's goodness. It's time to stop fretting and instead give him thanks. It's time to draw on the strength of your faith-family when you don't have it for yourself. Rest assured, your God is about to show himself great in your life. Believe it, and find rest in him!

Hindering the Life of Christ David Wilkerson

If your hindrance is ambition, God may open to you a tremendous door of opportunity. It might be the biggest, most ambitious project of your life, and God will allow you to step into it thinking, "This is it! I finally got my big break."

Then the Lord will allow the whole thing to fall to the ground. You'll end up standing amid the ruins of your dream, crying, "Lord, I thought this project was your will. I thought it had your blessing. I prayed to you faithfully about it, and you brought me this far. How could you allow it to fail so miserably?"

The failure of your project is meant to be a death to everything that hinders the Christ-life from being manifested in you. Your hindrance could be the incredible revelations you receive from God's Word. You may ask, "How can fresh revelation ever be a hindrance to a lover of Jesus?" You may be reveling in new truths being opened to you. Your confidence is growing because you consistently apply every new revelation to your walk with the Lord.

Suddenly, for no apparent reason, your soul is stricken with dryness. Soon your joy and assurance give way to a sense of frailty and uselessness. An unexplainable depression fills your soul, and each day becomes a burden to you. Scriptures that had come so alive in your heart now seem like a closed book.

The fact is that revelation tends to produce pride. This is the very reason God gave Paul a thorn in his flesh. God wanted his faithful servant to remain humble in all things. Your dryness is meant to hasten your death to all confidence in your flesh. It's a death to your tendency to glory in the revelation you are given, rather than getting your joy from Christ.

This whole process of having to endure "death situations" can seem cruel. Without question, it is one of the most painful aspects of our walk with Jesus. If we resist death's work, we will not ever have Christ's life in us. If we allow death to finish its work in us, though, Christ's own resurrection life will flow freely out of us!

Joni Eareckson Tada www.joniandfriends.org.

Joy By Shawn Thornton President, Joni and Friends

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice.” PHILIPPIANS 4:4

Joy does not rest in the reality of life’s circumstances. Joy rests in something (Someone) deeper. Christian joy flows from knowing that God is with us, for us, and still at work within us.

Paul wrote Philippians from prison. Guards watched over him; the future was uncertain, and yet joy overflowed from his heart. That alone tells us where true joy comes from. It does not grow from comfort. It grows from Christ.

Joy is not the denial of pain. It is the defiance of despair. The Spirit does not pretend hardship is small. He reminds us that suffering is never the final chapter when God is the Author. He helps us experience hope through hardship.

In daily life, joy becomes a quiet strength. It steadies us when plans unravel. It lifts our eyes when disappointment settles in. It allows us to serve freely without demanding perfect conditions.

Joy also becomes a powerful witness. A joyful believer does not claim everything is easy. Joy simply declares that God is always faithful, always near, and always working for His glory and our good. Joy is rooted not in circumstances but in Christ’s unchanging presence.

Love By Shawn Thornton President, Joni and Friends

“And now these three remain: faith, hope and love.

But the greatest of these is love.” 1 CORINTHIANS 13:13

Within the fruit of the Spirit described by Paul in Galatians chapter 5, love stands first for a reason. Every other fruit flows from it. When Paul speaks of love in Galatians 5, he describes more than affection or emotion. This is self-giving, sacrificial, covenant-shaped love. It is the steady decision to seek another’s good, even at personal cost.

Romans 5:8 reminds us that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. God did not wait for our improvement. He moved toward us in our need. The Spirit now works to grow that same kind of initiating love in us.

Love often reveals itself in very ordinary places. It shows up in patience with a child, grace with a spouse, compassion for someone who cannot repay us. Love costs time, comfort, preference, and control. That is why it always requires God’s power.

Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 13 that giftedness without love accomplishes nothing of lasting value. Activity can impress. Love transforms. The Spirit does not merely help us feel more love. He teaches us how to live it.

In a world that often defines love through emotion, Scripture defines love through action. The Spirit grows in us a love that looks like Jesus. Love is not proven by feelings but by faithful, Christlike action.