In the long history of the world, if you had to pick one event… one point in history… as the most significant of them all, which would you choose? It really should be that hard. The event upon which all the rest of history hinges too place upon a mountain called “The Skull.” There, the Bible teaches, no less than the Son of God himself hung upon a cross and died. In his death, Jesus sent shockwaves both backwards and forwards in time. He changed *everything*. The reality: it is the cross and empty tomb that stand at the center of human history. And whether you know it or not, they are at the very center of your existence.

Join us in the weeks leading up to Easter. Prepare your hearts and your minds. Learn what it means to live…

*IN THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS*

In this six week series, we will discuss the following:

*The devil is defeated.* Satan and the demons are real. Their plan of attack, as first seen in the Garden of Eden, is to lead us astray from the sure promises of God. But God promised to send a champion to battle the devil for us. This morning, we see Jesus conquer our biggest foe. And through his Word, he gives us the power to do the same. Standing in the shadow of the cross, we do not dread the Evil One.

*The gift comes by faith.* Not a holy life, not acts of obedience, but simple trust in the promise of God brings the gift of living water for thirsty souls. Abraham believed God’s promise and so became not only the father of a nation, but the forefather of the Promised Seed who would bless all peoples. He had faith in God who justifies the wicked, and so God credited it to him as righteousness. By this same faith, faith gained in the shadow of the cross, Christ gives righteousness to all who believe.

*The blind can finally see.* We were born in the blindness of sin, and without the light of Christ we could not find a way to safety. Christ comes to shine his light into our darkened eyes that we might see him and live. Yet for those who refuse to see their Savior in Christ, the blindness of unbelief remains. He gives gracious sight to the blind who trust in him; he gives blinding judgment on those who reject him. Finally, Jesus displays the work of God in the lives of those who now walk in the light of Christ, which for now means walking in the shadow of the cross.

*We are raised from death to life.* Inside every person’s heart burns a big question. What happens when we die? You cannot find the answer to that question in a laboratory or philosophy textbook. But the Lord of Life has an answer for us. Death is not the end. It is only temporary. But just as our Savior uses his almighty power to raise us from spiritual corpses (unbelief) to spiritual life (faith), so also with his word Jesus will raise our bodies as well. He proves he can do that in the Gospel. As we stand in the shadow of the cross, we trust that just as Jesus’ death was not permanent, neither shall ours be.

*Selfishness is crushed.* How many of the world’s problems… how many of the problems in your life… can be traced back to this simple truth: We tend to think of ourselves more than others. We care about our wants and needs much more than the wants and needs of anyone else. Man is, by nature, utterly self-absorbed. This preparatory season of Lent changes that. In the shadow of the cross, we learn repentance. And through repentance we learn to subjugate ourselves to others… to become willing servants, modeling our lives after our Savior Jesus. In pushing selfishness aside and engaging in willing service, we find a joy and freedom we did not know possible.

*King Jesus humbly walked.*  From his birth to his death, Jesus demonstrates remarkable humility. He is King of kings. And yet when born into our world, he did not have a golden crib, but only a manger. When he rides into the royal city as a king it is not on a stallion, but a little donkey foal. And when he, as Lord of Lord, mounts his position of authority, it is not a throne, but a cross. Why would one so great be so unspeakably humble? And what is there for us to learn in his humility? One cannot stand in the shadow of the cross for long. Instead, gazing upon such love, we fall to our knees in adoration.