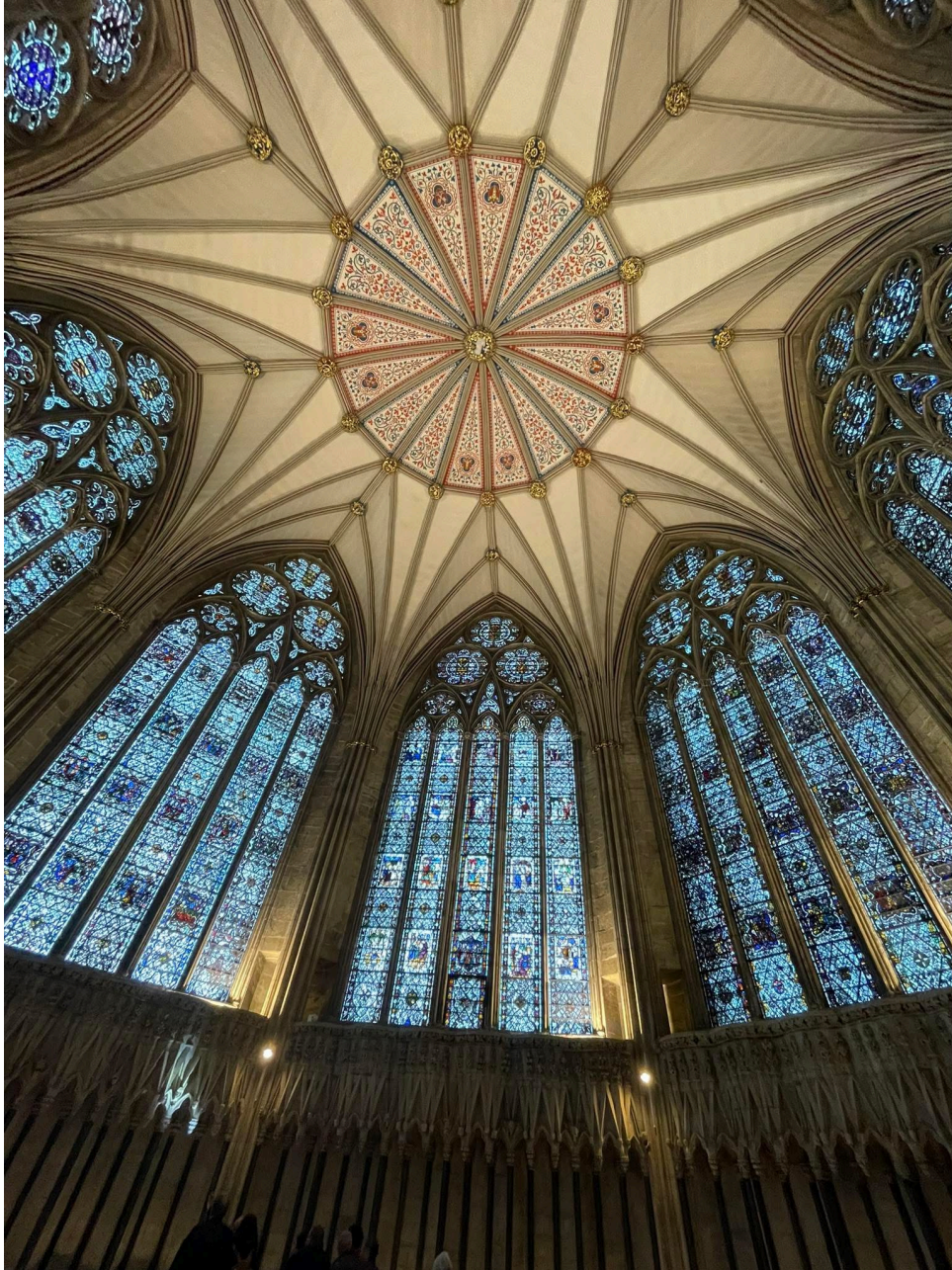


Speaking to the soul



The cross

Christ cancelled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. In this way,

he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross. Colossians 2:14-15

The cross stood right at the centre of Paul's understanding of the good news. Put simply, if you want to understand Jesus, you have to see him through the lens of the cross. John Stott, in his book [itals](#)The Cross of Christ[end itals] (#), summed this up when he wrote: "There is then, it is safe to say, no Christianity without the cross. If the cross is not central to our religion, ours is not the religion of Jesus." For this reason, Paul focused his preaching on the cross even though he was fully aware that the message didn't always go down well. Jews found it a stumbling block because the law of Moses declared that anyone who hung from a tree was cursed. Meanwhile, non-Jews just found the idea of someone dying on a cross completely foolish. How could anyone find anything commendable in the brutal death of a good man? However, Paul wasn't fazed by these reactions because he had discovered that the word of the cross was both the power of God and the wisdom of God.

It is always challenging and tough to think about the cross. None of us can fully imagine the intense pain that Jesus had to endure. Even if we have experienced severe pain, none of us has known the agony of being cut off from God. What we do know is that no one will suffer for another person unless they love them intensely. So, as often as we reflect on the awful pain of Jesus' death, we need to realise that we are staring at love in its purest form. As John Stott wrote: "If we are looking for a definition of love, we should look not in a dictionary, but at the cross."

If you ever feel unloved or unlovely, the very best thing you can do is look at the cross. What more could anyone do for you?

QUESTION

What's your reaction to the fact that Jesus died on the cross for your sins?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, thank you that you were willing to give your life so that I can be free. Amen

