

"Why Jesus Died"

Was it really necessary for Jesus to be crucified? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Jesus suffered and was crucified, and today we'll see why.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. The Scriptures teach us about God, His love for us, and His provisions for our salvation. If God had not given us His word, we wouldn't know about His mercy and grace. We wouldn't know to what great lengths He's gone to demonstrate His love and to win our hearts. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

What is the dominating value in your life? What motivates you? When you have to make life choices, what one thing becomes the most important in your decisions? Now you might say all kinds of things: career or family, a hobby, or perhaps a bucket list of things to do. The apostle Paul answered that question in 1 Corinthians 2 and verse 2, "For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." That was his dominating focus in life, preaching Christ and Him crucified. He never wanted to get away from the cross of Jesus Christ.

I can understand why. You see the cross is what draws us to Jesus Christ. Jesus is the one who loves us, who forgives us, and who gives us eternal life! The world is beautiful, but it's filled with many mixed messages that may distract us from an eternity with God. 1 John 2:15 to 17 says, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever."

This week and this month we're offering a study "Kneel at the Cross" and we'd like to offer it to you free. If you'd like a printed copy or a CD of our study and you live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, and we'll read from Isaiah 53:3 to 6, and explore our need to be right with God.

Our reading today comes from the prophet Isaiah chapter 53 verses 3 to 6. In this section he's dealing with the suffering servant in his discourse in that latter part of that book. And he talks about the suffering of Jesus the Messiah. Let's read.

He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;
And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.

That's Isaiah's statement about the suffering of Jesus. Let's pray together.

Oh Father we're grateful for Your love and we're thankful that Jesus was willing to bear our sins and to be able to free us from the guilt of those sins and the punishment. Help us Heavenly Father to love You and to love Your son Jesus always. It's in His name we pray, Amen.

You can find the details of the suffering of Jesus Christ on the cross in all four gospel accounts; Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The preaching of the cross dominates the book of Acts and permeates the epistles. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are the most important events of all history. All that came before His death and resurrection pointed to it, and all that follows His death and resurrection makes sense because of it. And it's no wonder Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2 and verse 2, "For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

The Scriptures give more than 50 reasons why Jesus bore the cross. I want to explore five reasons why He died. First, Jesus suffered on the cross to demonstrate His great love for us. Romans 5 verses 6 to 10 explains: "For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

Now this passage describes God's love for us: and it's an amazing, amazingly kind love, a graciously forgiving love, and a deeply committed love. There are four adjectives used in this passage that describe the spiritual condition of humanity and reveal the greatness of His demonstrated love.

First, humanity is spiritually helpless or weak, incapable of saving itself by itself. We needed the spiritual help of God. Humanity without the Lord Jesus cannot find salvation or gain eternal life. The Lord Jesus blessed the helpless, who desperately needed him.

Second, humanity was helpless and ungodly. Now an ungodly person is irreverent and has no respect or fear of God. An ungodly person may not think about God at all. Consequently, he lives on his own terms, never caring whether God is pleased and often acting against God. God loved you, even when you never gave Him a second thought, even before you knew He existed.

Third, a helpless and ungodly humanity is made up of sinners. Now sinners, have no relationship with God at all. They weren't interested in keeping God's laws; and, as a result, they were outsiders without God and without hope.

Fourth, because they were helpless, ungodly, and sinners, they were also enemies of God and hostile to Him. According to James 4 and verse 4 befriending the world makes one an enemy of God. When a person chooses to follow the ways of the world and ignore the teaching of God, God regards that person as hostile.

Neither the Father nor the Son was content to leave people in a condition of being hostile enemies. They wanted them to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2 verses 3 to 4). They loved people in spite of their thoughtless and hostile ways. The Lord Jesus said in John 12 verse 32, "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." You see His incredible love shown on the cross draws people. If He was willing to make this great sacrifice for you and me, how could we not love Him? Jesus suffered on the cross to show the depths of His love for us. Now the world thinks little of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. And they have forgotten the great price that He paid. Does it matter to you? No one has ever loved you to the extent that Jesus loved you.

Second, Jesus suffered on the cross to atone for our sins. Now the word "atone" is actually an old word made up of the two small words. The word "at" and the word "one." Jesus died so that we could be at one or united with the God the Father. John said in 1 John 2 verses 1 to 2, "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with

the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous (one). (And) He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.”

Now the word “propitiation” refers to Jesus as the atoning sacrifice for our sins. His sacrifice made it possible for us to be “one” with the Father, to be in a right relationship and in His grace and favor. Sin had spiritually separated us from God and caused us to be people who were against God. Now in order to restore a right relationship with God, Jesus had to pay the penalty for our sins. He was the righteous One dying for the unrighteous. Isaiah 53:5 and 6 prophesied, “But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” Now Jesus suffered the cross to bear our sins, so that He could bring us to God. That is what propitiation is all about.

2 Corinthians 5 verses 19 to 21 reminds us: that “in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. (And) We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. (Oh) For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him (that is in Christ) we might become the righteousness of God.” Forgiveness means that God was no longer counting our trespasses against us. Jesus’ suffered for us, so God could forgive us. And this opened the door to reconciliation, that is making friends again, with God.

1 Peter 3:18 says, “For Christ also (suffered) died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.” Even though sin placed us far away from God, the blood of Jesus allowed us to be brought near. And even though we were strangers to the covenant of promise outside of Christ, the blood of Jesus allowed us to become fellow citizens with the saints in God’s kingdom and members of the household of God (Ephesians 2 and verse 19). Because of Jesus we can become sons and daughters in God’s family!

Third, Jesus suffered on the cross in order to be an act of obedience to His Father and as an example of obedience to us. Hebrews 5:7 to 9 says, that “In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation.” When Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night before He was crucified, He spent three hours in prayer. He knew the Father’s will that He suffer many things and be crucified, and that is a most painful death. He was troubled and sorrowful to the point of death. And He fell on his face and He prayed to the Father, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.” (Matthew 26 and verse 39). Jesus chose to obey and suffer out of love for the Father and for us.

Now Paul used this example of love and obedience to teach the church at Philippi. He said in Philippians 2 verses 5 to 8, “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but (He) emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” Now just as Jesus humbled Himself and became obedient, so we are to be obedient. Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to those who obey Him.

Fourth, Jesus suffered the cross to be a ransom for many. In ancient times when people were enslaved, kidnapped, or captured in war, they would live very harsh lives. And someone who loved

them often paid a ransom to free them. The Lord Jesus said about Himself in Matthew 20 and verse 28, "the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." He came to ransom us from enslavement to sin. And Peter explained in 1 Peter 1:18 to 20, "knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you."

Now Jesus could have instantly manufactured all the gold or silver that He wanted with just a word, just as He multiplied the loaves and the fishes. But gold and silver was no cost to Jesus. No, He paid the dearest price that He could pay. He paid with His life and with His blood. Your ransom price was not cheap! Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 6 verses 19 to 20, "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: and therefore glorify God in your body." Have you considered what a great price the Lord Jesus paid for your salvation?

Fifth, Jesus suffered on the cross to heal us spiritually. God didn't merely want to forgive us. He wanted to transform our lives, to make us righteous, so that we could become like His Son Jesus. 1 Peter 2 and verse 24 says, that "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed." Now, this healing in this passage, is is not physical healing but spiritual, and each of us needed healing spiritually. For a long time, I've believed what is most needed by Christians today is a very long look at the cross. If we're ever to heal spiritually as individuals, as families, as a church, or as a country, we must come to the cross and obey the will of God.

Now, the way of Jesus is abundant. The Lord Jesus said in John 10:10, that "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." Now the Christian life truly is abundant; it is truly the best way to live. Galatians 5:22 to 23 says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." You see, the way of Christ lifts, it lifts men up, and makes them better, and blesses all of society. Without Christ, this world would be harsh and chaotic, confused, a place filled with the worst that man has to offer. But with Christ, we have hope of something better. Galatians 1 and verse 4 says that Jesus "gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father." And when you look at all the sinfulness in the world, you must admit we needed the salvation that Christ provides. We need His love, grace, forgiveness, and hope. Without Christ, this world would be a sad, sad, sad place indeed! Let's pray together.

Oh Father we're thankful that out of Your love for us and out of the love of our Lord Jesus, He was willing to die in our place. That we might be reconciled and that our lives might change. Help us Heavenly Father to do Your will always in Jesus name, Amen.

One cannot look long at the cross and remain unmoved. The cross reveals the worst of men and the best of God. I'm amazed at how far selfish, sinful men will go to preserve their power. And, and I grieve at how cruel people can be, and how they can do horrible things to others. The cross reveals man at his worst, condemning an innocent man. Yes, Jesus endured the worst that men could do to Him, while He did what was best to bless them.

The cross reminds us that sin is real and it matters to God. God hated what sin does to people enough to send His Son to destroy the works of the devil. Jesus revealed the ugliness of sin. And the cross also speaks to the ugliness of my sin and yours. The Lord laid upon Him, that is Jesus, your sins

and mine. Jesus paid the ransom price for us. 1 Corinthians 6 and verse 20 says, that “You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. (And) So glorify God in your body.” We must understand: I don’t belong to me anymore, and you don’t belong to you. We belong to the Lord.

The blessing of Christ’s sacrifice comes to those who obey Him. Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Hebrews 11 and verse 6 says, “And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.” Second, turn from sin to righteousness; you see this is repentance. Luke 13:3 says unless you repent, you will perish. Third, confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God. And fourth, be baptized into Christ Jesus and into His death, so that your sins will be done away with! When you’re crucified with Christ in baptism, you’re no longer a slave to sin. You’re redeemed and a child of God (Romans 6 and Galatians 3 teach this). So my friend be obedient today!

We hope today’s study about why Jesus died has stirred you to love the Lord Jesus. We’re offering this free little book called “Kneel At The Cross”. It’s free. And if you live in the United States and want a free printed copy or a CD of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. You can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: www.searchtv.org. There’s also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches that are in your area. And you can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, “SearchTVMinistry” on YouTube. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don’t worry, if you get a hold of us, we’re not here to get your money. We’re here to help you get to heaven.

We do ask that you please get involved with a church of Christ. If you’re looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we’ll be happy to help you find one. Well, we’ll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God’s Word with us and do tell a friend about this program. As always we say to you, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord’s Way.