

Why Christ Died

Sunday, July 6th, 1986

Luke 23:33

“And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.”

I'm reading today from the book of Luke, the 23rd chapter at verse 33. This is my subject: “WHY DID JESUS CHRIST DIE ON THE CROSS?” What was the reason for His death? Why did Christ die?

In Luke 23:33 the Scripture says, *“And when they were come to a place that is called Calvary, there they crucified Him.”*

Now, everyone knows that Jesus of Nazareth was born of Mary in Bethlehem; everybody knows that and you know that. Everyone listening to my voice is aware of the fact that a man called Jesus of Nazareth was born to Mary in Bethlehem.

In fact, the Old Testament prophesied and promised His birth several times. God said in Isaiah 7:14, *“Behold; the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a child and thou shall His name Immanuel.”*

In Isaiah 9:6, the Scripture says; *“Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace.”*

We know that the angel appeared to Mary when she was engaged to be married to Joseph. The angel said, *“Blessed art thou among women; the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the High shall overshadow thee. That Holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”*

Then, the angel appeared to Joseph and said, *“Fear not to take unto thee Mary to be thy wife because the child that is born of her shall be the Son of God. Thou shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.”*

Then, the angel appeared to the shepherds and said unto them, *“Unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, Christ the Lord.”*

We are all familiar with that story; you have heard it read many, many, times. Everyone knows this; everyone knows that Jesus of Nazareth was a great Prophet, a great Preacher.

In fact, Nicodemus said to Him, *“No man could do the miracles you do except God be with Him; we know that you are a man sent from God.”* Jesus of Nazareth was a great Prophet. *“No man spake like this man.”* He spoke with authority.

“He knew no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.” Even His worst enemies could find no fault with Him.

He went about doing good. He healed the sick and the lame and even raised the dead. He told them who He was; He said; *“I and My Father are one. The works that I do are not my works they are the works of Him that sent me. The words that I speak are not my words but the words of Him that sent me.”*

Yet, they didn't believe Him. These people did not believe Him; they despised Him and hated Him. *“They hid as it were, their faces from Him. He was rejected of men, a man of sorrows acquainted with grief.”*

They nailed Him to a cross. It says here in the Scripture, *“They took Him to a place called Golgotha, (the place of the skull or a place called Calvary). There between two thieves, they crucified Him.*

John said, *“He was in the world and the world was made by Him but the world did not know Him.”* John also says, in John 1:11, *“He came unto His own; (He came to his own temple, His own people, His own prophecies and sacrifices), and His own received Him not.”* They crucified Him.

Here is my question: Why did Jesus Christ die on a cross; why did He allow Himself to be crucified? He had great power. He said to one of His disciples who sought to defend Him with a sword, *“Put up your sword; I could call upon My Father and He will send legions of angels to my aid.”*

But, He did allow Himself to be crucified. Everyone knows that and they know that He hung on that cross and died. He was taken down from the cross and was buried. My question today is, why did Jesus Christ die on the cross?

Did He die to show us something or to teach us something? Did He die to set an example? He didn't die from human weakness; I do know that. He had all power for He said; *“I have all power in heaven and in earth.”*

What held Him to the cross? Why did He suffer and die? Why did He subject Himself to such humiliation and such persecution and mockery? Why did He suffer, and bleed and die on a cruel, Roman tree? Why, why?

I'm going to let the Scriptures speak for us. I have five Scriptures that answer this question plainly, clearly, easily and can be understood. Why did Jesus Christ die on the cross?

Here is the first one: If you would like to, turn in your Bible or jot down the Scriptures and read them later. Now watch this. Here is my question: Why did Jesus Christ die on the cross? Why did He subject Himself to this horrible, horrible, death, even the death of the cross?"

Romans 14:9 says, *"To this end, (for this reason, to accomplish this objective), Christ, both died and rose and revived that He might be Lord of the dead and the living."* Why did He die on the cross? Paul said He died on the cross for this reason, *"that He might be Lord of the dead and the living."*

Now, Jesus Christ is Lord of heaven and earth because He died on the cross. He is Lord by decree; He is Lord by divine decree. In John 3:35, it says; *"The Father loveth the Son and the Father hath given all things into the hand of the Son."* That is by decree, by God's purpose, decree and design. *"He hath given all things into the hands of the Son."*

In Matthew 28:18, our Lord Himself said that, *"All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth."* In John 17, He said; *"Thou hast given me authority, power over all flesh."* In Acts 2:36, Peter said to the people at Pentecost; *"God hath made this same Jesus whom you crucified, Lord and Christ."*

In other words, by God Almighty's decree, by God Almighty's eternal design, divine design and purpose, He made Christ Lord. Here, the apostle Paul says, *"He is Lord by death,"* He earned the crown rights; He bought the crown rights, He bought the universe over which He reigns.

Now listen to this in Philippians 2:5-6, Paul, in verse 5 says; *"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet made Himself of no reputation, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: Yet, made Himself of no reputation and took upon Himself the form of a servant and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."*

Because of this submission, because of this awful price, because of this subjection to the will of the Father, *"Wherefore, God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name*

which is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven, earth, and under the earth: And every tongue should declare that Jesus Christ is Lord” (Phil 2:9-10).

In other words, He is Lord by decree, He is Lord by eternal design, and He is Lord by death. He bought the Kingdom. He bought the crown rights. The question is not my friend, “Will you make Jesus your Lord?” God has already beaten you to it; Jesus Christ is Lord. He bought that right; *“He died that He might be Lord.”*

You see; back in eternity past, the Father made Him the Surety of an everlasting Covenant. In that Covenant was included this obligation, this responsibility, that Christ had to redeem His people with His blood.

When He died on that cross, He bought the Kingdom; He bought the crown rights and He bought and earned the right to be every man’s Lord. *“God hath made Him Lord.”* The issue is not, will you recognize His Lordship; the question is when will you recognize His Lordship? He is Lord. Peter summed it up on Pentecost by saying, *“God hath made this same Jesus who you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”*

Why did Christ die? This is what I am asking. He was born in Bethlehem. He lived a perfect life on this earth fulfilling the righteousness of God. He had all authority and power; He is the God-man Mediator.

God didn’t become man and man didn’t become God. Almighty God was clothed in the likeness of human flesh. The Lord Jesus Christ inhabited a body in which the Father had prepared for Him but He was still God. He was man, but He was still God.

Yet, He subjected Himself to a humiliating, awful, ignominious, terrible death and I ask why? Paul said first, that He did it *“so that He might be Lord,”* to fulfill that Covenant and to fulfill His Surety and to fulfill His responsibility, to buy the crown rights of the Kingdom which must be purchased by blood. Only the King could do it.

Second; In Romans 3:24, 25, and 26, the Scripture says; *“Being freely justified by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, (a mercy seat, atonement by blood, a propitiation), through faith in His blood to declare God’s Righteousness in order that God may be just and justifier of all that believe in Jesus.”*

“God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, (and set Him forth to be a propitiation, set Him forth to be a substitute, set Him forth to be a slain lamb, set

Him forth to be an atonement on the mercy seat, set Him forth to be crucified, in order that God); *might be just and the justifier of them that believe in Jesus.*” That is what we are asking and why we are asking it.

The Lord Jesus Christ died, secondly, to enable a holy, righteous and just God to be holy, righteous and just and yet forgive sinners, and yet show His mercy and His love.

Now, the Lord declared in Isaiah 45:21; *“I am a just God and a Saviour.”* Have you ever read this before? I believe that all of you are familiar with verse 22, it says; *“Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else.”*

In verse 21, it identifies this one to whom you are to look, this one who redeems us. The Scripture says, *“I am a just God and a Saviour.”* Can He be both? I will show you how; the answer is through Christ and Him crucified.

You see; God is holy and righteous. His Law is set; His Law is sure and His Law is unchanging. He said, *“I am the Lord; I change not.”* Once that holy, immaculate, spotless Law was given; it is unchanging and unbending. Someone said, “You may break a commandment but you will never bend one; God will never bend one.”

“Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things written in the book of the Law to do them.” This is the conflict I have with people who are teaching, preaching, believing or practicing salvation by works. Works are not good enough. Your works have to be perfect if you are going to be saved by works.

Your obedience has to be as good as God if you are to be saved by obedience. The Scripture says, *“Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things written in the book of the Law to do them.”* God is not going to change or bend His Law. His Law is set and it is sure. His Law is unchanging and is rigid; it offers no mercy.

God is just and holy; He not only will punish sin but God must punish sin. It is not a question of will He punish sin. He must punish sin if He is going to stay God. *“Shall not the Judge of the earth do right? God will by no means clear the guilty.”* You might ask where I find that. You can find it in Exodus 34; *“God will by no means clear the guilty.”*

“Well, wait a minute preacher!” God is Just, God is holy and God is righteous. You might say, “God is love, preacher.” You are exactly right! We thank Him for that. He is mercy and He is love. However, He cannot manifest His love at the expense of His holiness.

He cannot manifest an active mercy toward you and violate His Law anymore than the judge down at the county courthouse or down at the Supreme Court can compromise the Law and let you go free if you are guilty. If you are guilty you have to pay.

If you are guilty of breaking the Law of God you have to pay. If you are guilty of sinning against God you have to pay. *“The soul that sinneth shall surely die.”* God said, *“Be sure your sins will find you out. Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death.”*

So, you see; God cannot manifest love and mercy at the expense of justice and righteousness. That is why Christ came and that is why He died. He died that we might not die. He died so that we wouldn't have to die.

Our Lord came down here without sin, perfectly, without sin. Our sins were laid on Him. He died as a substitute. In Christ burying our sins in His body on the tree and dying in our place, you see God's justice met Christ on the cross and God's justice afflicted Him and God's justice slew Him. God's justice exacted from Him all that was required of me.

Therefore, God's mercy could be demonstrated. God's grace and love could be shown because He had a substitute. You see; in Psalm 85:10, it says; *“Mercy and truth are met together.”* Mercy and truth; do you mean that there is mercy for sinners and yet truth for sinners?

It says, *“Righteousness and peace have kissed one another.”* Do you mean that the righteous, justice of God, can kiss and give peace to guilty sinners? It can in Christ if He will bear their sins and pay their debt and die in their place. If you can learn two words, learn the words substitute and satisfaction, Christ died.

All right, here is the third reason why He died: He died first of all to buy the crown rights, in order that *“He might be Lord of the dead and the living.”* He died that God Almighty might be *“just and Justifier.”*

Thirdly: In Isaiah 53: verses 4 and 5 it says; *“Surely, He hath born our griefs and carried our sorrows. Yet, we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But, He was wounded for our transgressions.”*

Why is He hanging there? We see Him smitten of God. We see Him stricken. We see Him carrying griefs and sorrows but they are ours and not His. *“He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace is upon Him. By His stripes we are healed.”* That is what I am saying, Christ died thirdly, as our Substitute.

My friends; I want you to listen carefully and please listen carefully; there is so little Gospel being preached today. There is a lot of cheerleading, money-raising, and building of great empires but there is very little Gospel or good news for sinners and glad tidings for the guilty being preached or mercy for the miserable.

From Genesis 3:15, which says; *“I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”* The seed of woman shall bruise the serpent’s head. This is talking about Christ, the seed of woman, the virgin-born Son destroying the serpent, Satan’s head, and his government.

From that point, at the very beginning in Genesis 3:15, right after Adam and Eve sinned, all the way through this Bible to Revelation, when it talks about the *“Lamb slain before the foundation of the world,”* Jesus Christ in His death and the shedding of His blood is set forth as a sin-offering. Christ died as a sin-offering, as a sacrifice to God. *“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.”*

You see; every lamb of the Old Testament, which were thousands from Abel’s lamb all the way through the Passover and the Atonement including the lambs that were slain throughout hundreds and thousands of years, every one of those lambs is a picture of Christ. He was our Lamb and our Substitute.

God said, when they took the lamb and slew it in Egypt and put the blood on the doorpost and lentil, God said; *“When I see the blood I will pass over you.”* Paul said, *“Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.”* Christ is the Passover.

When He was born in Bethlehem, God said to Joseph; *“I shall call His name Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins,”* with a sin-offering. In Luke 19:10, the Scripture says; *“The Son of man has come to seek and to save the lost.”*

In 1 Timothy 1:15, it says; *“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,”* with a sin offering. 1 Peter 1:18 says, *“We are redeemed, not with silver and gold from our vain conversation received by tradition from our fathers but with the precious blood of Christ as a Lamb without spot or blemish,”* a Lamb slain.

So, Christ died as a sin-offering, as a substitute. *“By one sacrifice He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.”* I’m talking about Jesus Christ our Lord. He came into this world and died as a sin-offering.

You can go back through the Old Testament and you will see the high priest putting his hands on the head of the bullock, on the ram and confessing the sins of the people. Then, they take that lamb and slay it, roast its body with fire, catch the blood in a basin and take it into the Holy of Holies and put it on the mercy seat before the Shechinah glory of God.

All of that is done in waiting for the coming of the Lamb of God. When John the Baptist the fore-runner of Christ saw him at Jordan that day, said to the people; *“Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.”* This was done as a sin-offering and a sacrifice.

I am telling you, I know that we are getting awfully nice today and awfully dignified. Take the blood out of the pulpit and you take the saving power and the gospel away. *“Without the shedding of blood there is no remission.”*

Let’s not get so modern and so liberal and so dignified that we don’t sing:

“What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.”

There is power in the blood and without the shedding of blood there is no remission. *“When I see the blood, I will pass over you.”* God Almighty has set that forth in His Word. You can’t change it. It is the *“blood of Christ that cleanseth us from all sin.”*

Fourthly: In 2 Corinthians 5:19, *“God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.”* Colossians 1:20 says, *“And having made peace through the blood of His cross.”* Why did Christ die? He died to reconcile us to God, to make peace with God; *“having made peace with God through the blood of His cross to reconcile all things to Himself.”*

Here is what I am saying and what Paul is saying there, the Lord Jesus Christ in His death made peace between us and an angry God. I know that it is not popular today; I know it is not. I know that everyone wants to hear about the love of God. No one wants to hear about the wrath of God or the judgment of God.

My friends; we are neglecting the Scriptures if we don’t tell the truth about God. Listen to Romans 1:18, *“The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and all unrighteousness in men.”* God’s what? I’m talking about God’s wrath.

In Psalm 7:11, the Scripture says; *“God is angry with the wicked every day.”* John 3:36 says, *“He that believeth not the Son shall not see life but the wrath of God abideth on Him.”*

The old-timers knew something about judgment and God's wrath; we are going to have to get back to God's Word if I'm going to preach the God of the Bible.

You see; this is the reason that men are compromising the death of Christ, the blood of Christ and the sacrifice of Christ because if God is all love and all mercy and no judgment or righteousness or wrath, we don't need a Substitute. We won't need a sin-offering or blood atonement.

Christ died to remove the wrath of God from believers. Paul said in Romans 5:1, *"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God."* I thought we had peace all along; no, no! Christ is our peace-offering. He is our Substitute and sacrifice. By taking the wrath of God upon Himself, He removed the wrath of God from us. That is why He died.

Fifthly: In closing, it says in Revelation 5: 9 and 10 it shows you why Christ died. *"Thou art worthy to take the Book and to open the seals thereof, for Thou was slain and has redeemed us to God by Thy blood."* This is the song of the redeemed in Glory.

That is why Christ worthy to open the Book. That is why He has the right to open the Book, because He was slain and redeemed us by His blood *"out of every kindred, tongue, people and nation. You have made us, (by your blood, because you were slain), you have made us unto our God, kings, and priests. We shall reign on the earth."*

You are not a king and a priest before God because of something that you have done or because of something you have given or earned. Christ was slain and shed His blood. Out of every kindred, tongue, tribe, nation, kingdom and people all over this globe through all generations, our Lord bought a people.

He redeemed that which was lost. He restored all that we lost in Adam. He enriched us with *"an inheritance undefiled that fadeth not away. He translated us into the Kingdom of God."* He has made us kings who will reign with Him and priests to offer unto God spiritual sacrifices. He died that we might live!