

WHY CHRIST DIED

1 CORINTHIANS 1:18-24 • TV-232A

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By
HENRY T. MAHAN

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1 Corinthians 1:18-24

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”

I would like for you to take your Bible and open it with me to the book of **1 Corinthians, chapter 1, and verse 18**. I am going to speak to you today on this subject: **“WHY DID CHRIST DIE ON THE CROSS or “WHY CHRIST DIED.”**

Everybody knows that Jesus Christ lived on the earth. All of you know that and it is an accepted fact. Everyone knows that He died on a Roman cross.

Here comes the question of all questions: if He is who He claimed to be, the eternal Son of God, if Jesus Christ is as He said, *“the alpha and the omega,”* why did He die on Calvary’s cross?

If He is the heir of all things, if He does in reality have all authority in heaven and earth, then why did He die on Calvary’s cross?

He said in **John 17**, *“I have all power over all flesh.”* If He is the Christ, the Messiah, the redeemer of His covenant people, why did He die on Calvary’s cross? Why did He die?

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According to the Apostle Paul, a person must take one of two positions in regard to the cross of Jesus Christ. Let me repeat that; according to the Apostle Paul, a person, (you or me), must take one of two positions in regard to the cross of Jesus Christ.

He gives us those two positions in that verse that I mentioned to you a moment ago in **1 Corinthians 1:18** in which Paul says; *“the preaching of the cross is to them who are perishing, foolishness, but unto us who are being saved, the cross of Christ is the power of God.”*

You have to take in reference to the cross of Jesus Christ, His death on Calvary’s tree. You have to take one of those two positions. You will take either the death of Jesus Christ on the cross as foolishness, sheer nonsense, or it is in reality, the very power and wisdom of God. Which is it to you?

Is His death on Calvary’s tree foolishness or is it the power and wisdom of God? You can’t get in the middle, now. Our Lord said, *“He that is not with me is against me. He that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.”* I know why the cross of Jesus Christ is foolishness to those who are perishing. It doesn’t matter if they are in the pulpit or in the pew; I do know why it is nonsense to them.

The cross of Jesus Christ, the death of the Son of God deals with the subject in which most people have no interest. It deals with a subject in which most people have no concern, and that is the punishment of sin. The cross of Christ and the death of Christ deals with the punishment of sin.

God must and will punish sin. This is what the Scripture says. The unbeliever cries, *“We be not sinners (we don’t need a sin-offering; we don’t need a sacrifice).”*

For those who are sinners, *“Christ is the power and the wisdom of God”* for in the death of Christ God punished our sins. That is what Isaiah wrote in **Isaiah chapter 53** when he said, *“He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was laid upon him and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray. We turned everyone to his own way and God hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”* So, do you see the difference?

The cross is foolishness to them who are perishing because it deals with the punishment of sin. *“It is the power and wisdom of God to those who believe”* because they realize their need of a sacrifice, a Redeemer, and a Saviour.

Then, the cross is foolishness (to the unbeliever) because it does not recognize human merit, or human works, to any degree. The cross drags our righteousness before the search-light of God’s holy law and exposes it for what it is.

I’m talking about guilt, filth, and filthy rags. In **Isaiah 64:6**, Isaiah says this; *“We all do fade as the leaf. We are an unclean thing.”* Even, *“our righteousness’s are filthy rags in God’s sight.”*

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The cross, literally, drags all of our sins, even the sins of our works, and the sins of our best deeds, the guilt and filth of our righteousness before the search-light of God's law, and exposes it for what it is, self-righteousness.

This pronounces us guilty. The natural religionist does not like that kind of language because he feels like he is holy. In Christ a believer is holy. Outside of Christ and in us, "*there is none good, no not one.*" There is none righteous and there is none that are holy but God.

The cross of Christ is foolishness because it has to do with the justice of God, the holiness and righteousness of God. In **Romans 3:26**, the Scripture says; "*Christ died that God may be just and the justifier of them that believe on Christ.*"

In order to pardon sin, God has to remain God. God is just, holy, and righteous. He cannot pardon sin at the expense of His justice. "*Shall not the judge of the earth do right?*" God cannot pardon sin at the expense of His holiness, "*God is holy.*"

The reason the average person looks upon the cross of Jesus Christ as foolishness is because he does not see "*the exceeding sinfulness of sin*" in his own sin.

He does not see the exceeding sinfulness, vanity, and evil, of our best deeds. Nor, does he see the necessity of honoring God's law and the necessity of satisfying God's justice. To him, "*the cross is foolishness,*" and that is all that he can say about it.

When you see that sin must be punished, then you see that our righteousness is not equal to the holiness that God demands. When you see that God's holy law is immutable, infinite, and unchangeable, then you see that it must be honored.

When you see the justice of God and that it must be satisfied, then you say that the cross of Christ is indeed "*the power of God and the wisdom of God.*" What do we mean by "*the power of God and the wisdom of God?*" Listen to me for a moment:

First of all: The cross of Christ, the death of the Son of God, is the power of God to judge and to defeat Satan. The cross of Christ is to judge and defeat the prince of this world and the forces of evil. Satan was judged and defeated at Calvary.

Second, the cross is the power of God to put away all sin and iniquity. Sin is difficult to put away. Iniquity is difficult to put away. All the sacrifices on Jewish altars through 3,000 years could not put sin away.

All the tears that have ever been shed, all the repentance, all the decisions, Feast Days, Holy Days, sacrifices and blood offerings could not put away sin. Sin can only be put away by the blood of the Son of God. "*He appeared in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*"

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Sin is a stain that is deeper than any cleansing agent can reach except for the blood of Christ. His death is the power of God, not only to judge and defeat Satan and the forces of evil but to put them where they can do no more harm.

His blood is sufficient to cleanse us from every sin, every stain, and every transgression. It is the power of God to put away sin.

The death of Christ is the power of God over sin, over death, over the grave, and over hell. My friend; death has a claim on us because of sin. The grave has a claim on our bodies. God said, *“Dust thou art, to dust thou shalt return.”*

Hell has a claim on us because of our guilt. The death of Christ is the power of God to reconcile the world unto Himself and to overcome the power of death, the power of the grave, and the claims and power of hell.

The death of Christ is the power of God to bring in everlasting righteousness and to establish His Kingdom, where *“nothing shall enter in that worketh or maketh alive.”*

One of these days God’s grand design in redemption is going to be fulfilled. *“Heaven and earth shall melt with a fervent heat.”* God says; *“We look for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.”*

There will be no more sin, no more iniquity, no more death, no more disease, no more darkness, no more tears and no more sorrow. That was accomplished by the death of Christ; His death is the power of God to bring in everlasting righteousness.

His death is the power of God to make men new creatures and conform all whom He saves to the image of His divine Son. The cross is not only *“the power of God”* but it is *“the wisdom of God.”*

In the cross of Christ we see the wisdom of God in honoring His unchangeable, infinite, holy, law. In the death of Christ we see the wisdom of God in satisfying His unbending justice and holiness.

In the death of Christ we see the wisdom of God to answer all problems relating to the salvation of sinners. There is no problem and there is no obstacle either in heaven, earth, or hell that is not met with and dealt with. There is nothing that is not answered fully and completely in the death of Jesus Christ.

**“Alas, and did my Saviour bleed
And did my Sovereign die?
Would He devote that sacred head?
For such a worm as I?”**

**Well might the sun in darkness hide
And shut His glories in
When Christ the Mighty Maker died**

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For man the creature's sin."

I see in the death of Christ the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ; I see in that ignominious, hateful, humiliating, agony on Calvary, the power of God and the wisdom of God.

**"There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood, (plunged by the grace of God)
Lose all their guilty stains."**

For His death *"is the power of God unto salvation."*

In **Lamentations 1 verse 12**, the prophet Jeremiah when he was speaking of Christ on the cross, said; *"Is it nothing to you? What is it to you all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrows like unto my sorrow which is done to me, wherewith, the Lord God hath afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger."*

What is it to you? Is it a pack of foolishness? Is it nonsense, sheer nonsense? Well, it is if you don't see the *"exceeding sinfulness of sin."* It is nonsense if you don't see the emptiness, corruption, and pollution of our best deeds and our own righteousness.

If you don't see the justice, holiness, and majesty of a holy God, which cannot be compromised, which must be dealt with in honesty and truth. Yes, to you the death of Jesus Christ is and will remain utter nonsense. But, to them who are being saved by the grace of God, the death of the Son of God is *"the power of God and the wisdom of God."*

I'm going to give you five reasons why Christ died and I am going to give them to you from the Scripture. If you care to, you can take some notes or you can jot down from the Scripture. Here are five reasons from the Scripture why Christ died:

First of all: *"He died that the Scriptures might be fulfilled."*

In **John 19:28** it says; *"Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, said; I thirst."* After He had received the vinegar He bowed His head and said; *"It is finished and gave up the ghost."* He said, *"I thirst that the Scriptures might be fulfilled."*

1 Corinthians 15: 1 through 3 says, *"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. He was buried and rose again according to the Scriptures."* What Scriptures are we talking about? We are talking about the Old Testament Scriptures, **Genesis through Malachi**; all 39 books of the Old Testament.

When our Lord Jesus Christ was teaching His disciples in order that they might understand the Scriptures, it is recorded in **Luke 24:44**; *"These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled."*

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He died that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. *“All things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, (the first five books of the Bible), in the prophets, (major and minor prophets), in the psalms concerning Me.”*

“Then He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures.” He said, *“Thus it is written and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to die and to be raised again the third day according to the Scriptures.”* He died that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.

You see, the trail of blood that ended at Calvary began in the Garden of Eden when God slew the first animal and shed its blood to cover the nakedness of fallen men. Do you see that? The first blood that was shed was to cover sin.

All the way through the Scriptures, Abel sacrificed the lamb. Abraham sacrificed the lamb. There was the Passover Lamb, which was slain in Egypt. There were the atoning sacrifices, which were offered in the tabernacle.

This entire trail of blood from the Garden of Eden to the cross, ended at the cross. This trail of blood is declaring that God’s lamb will come and die and that will be the end of the shedding of blood.

John the Baptist said, *“Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.”* In **Hebrews 10:12**, it talks about all of the blood sacrifices in the tabernacle by the priest. It says in **verse 12**; *“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sin forever, sat down on the right hand of God. For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.”* His blood makes atonement for the soul.

Second: Why did Christ die?

Christ died to redeem us from sin, all sin. It says in **Titus 2:14**; *“He gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”*

1 John 1:7 says, *“The blood of Jesus Christ God’s Son cleanseth us from all sin.”* In **1 Peter, chapter 1:18**, the Scripture says; *“For as much as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold but with the precious blood of Christ as a lamb without spot or blemish.”*

What am I preaching? I am preaching that God will pardon sin. I am preaching that God will forgive sin but only on the merit of Christ’s sacrifice and Christ’s blood.

“Jesus Christ hath appeared in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.”
How?

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**“Would you be free from the burden of sin?
There is power in the blood,
Would you o’er evil a victory win?
There is power in the blood.”**

“Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.” I am telling you as plainly as the Scripture declares it and God says it; *“It is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul. I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls.”*

“Without the shedding of blood there is no remission.” A bloodless religion is a Christ-less religion and a Christ-less religion is a religion that offers no hope and no salvation. *“It is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul.”* Christ died to redeem us, to put away our sins.

Third: *“Christ died that God may be just and justifier.”*

This is what it says in **Romans 3:25**. I want you to look at it; *“Whom God hath set forth.”* I’m talking about Christ. God ordained Him, God predestinated Him, God foreordained Him, God appointed Him. God set Him forth and sent Him *“in the fullness of time, to be propitiation,”* a mercy seat or sin-offering.

God sent Him to be a sin-offering *“through faith in His blood, to declare God’s righteousness, that God may be just and justifier of them that believe in Jesus Christ.”*

Let me put that as plain and simple as I can. God is forever, eternally, unchangeably, infinitely, holy. He is so indescribably holy, so unapproachably holy, that you can’t even imagine His holiness.

Man is sinful, unchangeably so. *“Can the Ethiopian change his skin? Can the leper change his spots? Neither can you do good that are accustomed to doing evil.”*

“There is none that seeketh the Lord. There is none that understandeth.” We are unchangeably evil. *“The heart is desperately wicked and is deceitful above all things; who can know it?”*

In order that God may be just and justify sinners like us, something has to take place between God and the sinner. Something has to take place in order that God’s law might be satisfied or honored and God’s justice might be fulfilled.

The only way (which there is no other way) is for us to have a substitute, an acceptable substitute, a God-honored substitute, a God-ordained substitute and a God-appointed substitute.

He cannot just be a man, which is full of sin. He cannot just be God who can never suffer. God can’t suffer and man cannot satisfy. He must be the God-man. God became a man and as God, He satisfied all that was required in infinite holiness.

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As man, He suffered under the penalty of death and the agony of the cross. He died; Christ must die; there is no other way.

Christ did not die as an example. He did not die as a martyr or a reformer; He died as a Substitute, a sacrificial sin-offering.

Fourth: Why did Christ die?

“He died that He might be Lord.” In **Romans 14:9** it says; *“To this end (for this cause), Christ both died and rose and revived that He might Lord both of the dead and the living.”* This is what the Scripture teaches; He died, was buried and rose again, that He might be the absolute, immutable Lord of the dead and the living.

Christ our Lord died to fulfill Scripture. Christ our Lord died to redeem us from sin. Christ our Lord died which enabled God to be *“just and justifier.”*

Christ our Lord, when He died, bought the whole creation; He bought the world, the whole world, because of His death, *“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 hell. And every tongue shall confess that He is Lord.”*

He said in **Matthew 28**; *“All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”* He bought it. In **John 17**, He says; *“I have power over all flesh.”* It says here, *“He is the Lord of the dead and the living.”*

You can make that believers and unbelievers, dead believers and living believers. *“He is the Lord of the dead and the living. He died that He might be Lord.”*

He bought the universe. *“God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name above every name that in all things Christ might have the preeminence.”*

**“All hail the power of Jesus’ name
Let angels prostrate fall,
Bring forth the royal diadem
And crown Him Lord of all.”**

You would be wise to take seriously what I am talking about because He is Lord.

Fifth; Christ died that He might show forth, eternally, the riches of His grace, *“that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace and his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”*

This is the grand design of God in redemption. God is going to honor the Son. Christ is going to have the preeminence. The Father is going to honor the Son. He will honor those who honor the Son.

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The Father is going to put Satan and all evil forces and evil men where they can do no more harm. You can call it “hell,” you can call it “everlasting condemnation.” You can call it “everlasting darkness,” but it is “*where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.*”

Almighty God is going to put all evil men where they can do no more harm. Almighty God is going to have a new heaven and a new earth. He is going to populate that new heaven and new earth with people “*out of every tribe, kindred, nation, and tongue, under heaven.*”

They are all going to be “*conformed perfectly to the image of Jesus Christ.*” All of that was accomplished in the death of His Son; “*It is the power and the wisdom of God!*”