

Sermon Notes. Why did Jesus Christ die on the cross?

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John 18-19. Three key themes.

1. Jesus **willingly went to the cross**, his death. He saw it as the ‘cup of suffering’ given to him by his heavenly Father.
2. **Jesus declared his mission ‘finished’**, accomplished on the cross.
3. **Jesus really died** and was buried.

A. Exploring the three themes.

1. **Jesus willingly went to the cross.** There is a paradox here – **going to the cross was an act of obedience by Jesus, it was the Father’s will**, yet those who crucified him are accountable for their evil actions. We cannot fully explain this paradox, but it is a reminder to us that **God works in and through human actions, even evil ones.** God remains sovereign even though people are responsible for their choices.
2. **John makes it clear that Jesus’ cry, ‘It is finished’ is a cry of completion**, his mission is concluded – ‘For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in him **shall not perish but have eternal life**’ (Jn. 3:16).
3. **Jesus really died.** He died and was buried, yet he also conquered death. This is confirmed by his resurrection from the dead. Jesus called **Emmanuel (Mt. 1:24), God with us, died that we might live (Rm.5:15ff, 6:1-10;).**

B. What does the cross achieve? Jesus Christ died - for us

- i. **Jesus dies on our behalf, as our representative** (Jn. 6: 51, ‘I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I give for the life of the world’.)
 - ii. **Jesus’ death on the cross is a victory over sin** as John the Baptist had prophesied about him, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world’ (Jn. 1:29). In the OT the lamb was sacrificed as a sin offering to symbolise the people’s penitence, and God’s forgiveness and removal of the penalty of sin, death. The lamb died ‘in their place’- ‘bearing their sin’. **Jesus, as the Lamb of God, dies in our place. Instead of our paying the penalty of sin, death and separation from God, Jesus dies for us (in our place).** So Jesus willingly receives the punishment we deserve and we receive pardon as we repent and put our trust in him (Jn. 3:16-18); Acts 2:38ff; 1 Jn. 4:10).
 - iii. **Jesus’ death is a victory over satan.** Jesus foretold, ‘the prince of this world will be driven out’ (i.e. he is no longer the ‘prince’ or ‘ruler’ of this world). His power over humans, seen in their sinful behaviour, is broken because they can receive forgiveness for their sins, and live a new life in fellowship with God. **Jesus having been ‘lifted up’ (on the cross) now rules so he can draw all men to himself** (Jn. 3:14-15; 12:32-34).
 - iv. **Believing in Jesus**, who died for us, enables us to become **children of God** (Jn. 1:12). Through Jesus’ death on the cross (Jn. 3:17) salvation is offered to all who believe in him. Instead of separation from God and its consequence, death (see Gen 3) those who believe in Jesus are given permanent fellowship with God, that is eternal life (Jn. 3:14-15). Jesus’ death for our sin shows God’s love for His world (Jn. 16-18; Rm.5:8)
- Reflection/Response.** The cross tells us: Sin is serious; God’s love is amazing; Salvation which comes from Jesus’ death is a free gift received by faith. What does God want from us? How do we show are gratitude for all that Jesus has done for us on the cross? How do we respond to the common view that living a ‘good life’ will earn us eternal life?