

WHY JESUS DIED

I Cor. 15:3-4

We have a most disheartening fact in this universe, and that is sin. The cause of all sorrow, the root of all sorrow, and of the dread of every man lies in the one word -- sin. It has destroyed the inner harmony of man's life and brought mental disorders, brought sickness, brought destruction, and all wars find their root in sin. It is like a tornado on the loose and gone wild. Like a gangster on the prowl. Like a roaring lion seeking its prey. It is always deadly and eating away at the souls of men.

Because of sin every stream of human life has been stained by sin, and crime, and every day has been blackened. Every cup has been tainted. Every roadway has been made dangerous. Every voyage has been perilous.

For ages men were lost in spiritual darkness, searching and questioning. Seeking some way out. They needed something or someone to lead them. Someone that could redeem them and someone that could unlock the prison doors.

From primitive man in the jungle to the mighty civilizations of Greece and Egypt and Rome - men have asked the question, how can I get out. How can I be better. What can I do. Which way can I turn. How can <sup>I</sup> get out of the net in which I find myself.

The Bible teaches that God was a God of love. He wanted to do something for man. He wanted to save man and free man from the curse of sin. How could God do it. God was a just God, he was righteous, he was holy.

Man deliberately disobeys God. Man had to die or God would have been a liar. He was banished from the presence of God, he deliberately chose the Devil's

way. God could not freely forgive him now. In the day that thou eateth thereof,  
thou shalt surely die.

There had to be some other way for man was helplessly lost and hopelessly  
involved. Man's very nature was inverted. He opposed God. Man even denied that  
God existed.

Even in the Garden of Eden, God gave a hint as to what he was thinking about  
and as to what might be done. He warned the Devil and warned the man - I will be  
enmity between thee and the woman. And between thy seed and her seed - it shall  
bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise his heel. And thou shall bruise his heel  
is a promise - something for man to hold on to. But someday a redeemer will come.  
A deliverer.

All through the Old Testament, God gave man the promise of salvation. If  
by faith he would believe in the coming redeemer. And he began to teach his people  
that man could only be saved by (substitution). Someone else had to pay the bill.

When man did eat of the fruit in the garden, he died. Suppose that God had  
said, Adam, you must have made a mistake. That was a slight error on your part. You  
are forgiven - please don't do it again. God would have been a liar. He would not  
have been holy, neither would he have been just.

Man, at that time, died Spiritually and physically. His iniquities had  
separated him from God. Man had to suffer - he had to pay for his sins. When Adam  
sinned, we all sinned. Wherefore as by one man, sin entered into the world. And  
death by sin - so death passed upon all men... for that all have sinned. Rom. 5:12.

The question, how can God be just and still justify the sinner. It must be remembered that the word "justify" means the clearance of the soul from guilt. Justification is far more than just forgiveness. Sin must be put away and made as though it had never been. Man must be restored.

For centuries men in their blindness have been trying to get back to Eden. They have tried many paths but they have all failed. Education is necessary - but education will not bring a man back to God. False religion - which men seek will keep men from present misery will not open the way to future glory. The United Nations will not be the way. All of these schemes or remedies must wait, for the Great Physician.

Man made an attempt at the tower of Babel. Men have failed on every occasion - they have tried to work without God.

How can God be just - that is true to himself and nature, and true to himself in holiness, and yet, justify the sinner. Because each man has to bear his own sins.

The only solution was for an innocent party that volunteered to die spiritually and physically as a substitution before God. The innocent party was to take man's judgment. Penalty and death.

But where was such an individual - certainly there was none on earth. For the Bible says, Rom. 3:23, all have sinned and there was only one possibility - God's own son.

The Bible teaches us that God is actually three persons. And this is a mystery that we will never be able to understand. But the second person of the

trinity is God's son, Jesus Christ. He was not a son of God - but he was the son of God. He was the eternal son of God. The Bible teaches that he had no beginning - he was never created. The Bible teaches that the Heavens were created by him. The stars. The birth of Jesus that we celebrate at Christmas time is not his beginning. The Bible teaches that he was before all things, and by him all things consist. Col. 1:15, 17.

Jesus said, of himself, I am Alpha and Omega - the beginning and the end. He, and he alone, had the power to bring man back to God but would not. He would have to be made in the likeness of man. He would have to humble himself and become obedient unto death.

Thanks be unto God, that is exactly what happened. Looking down from Heaven - he saw this planet - doomed, damned, and bound for Hell. He saw you and me struggling beneath our load of sin. He made his decision and the prince of princes and the Lord of Lords, came down from the skies in Judea that night while the stars sang - and he stepped out and became man.

He came to reveal God to men. He, it is, that told us that God loved us and was interested in our lives. He partook of flesh and blood in order that he might die. Heb. 2:14. He was manifested to take away our sins. I John 3:5. And Christ came into the world to give his life a ransom for many. Matt. 20:28. He came to die - the shadow of his death unlike a curtain over all of his 33 years. The night Jesus was born, Satan trembled. He sought to slay him before he was born. He tried to slay him as soon as he was born. Herod orders the slaughter of all the children. With one purpose - to make certain of the death of Jesus. All the days of his life, on earth, he never once committed a sin. He is the only man that ever lived that was sinless. He could stand in front of me and say, which of you convinceth me

of sin.

Jesus lived a humble life. A life of no reputation. A carpenter, gathered with a group of humble fisherman. He taught as one with authority. People said, never a man spoke like this man.

The Lord Jesus cured the sick, the lame, the blind. He healed the leper and raised the dead. He cast out demons - he quieted the elements. He stilled the storm. He stood before Pilate. He approached his cross with dignity and with calm. He had a mission - and he had come to accomplish it.

His death was prophesied thousands of years before. First, we have seen in the Garden of Eden. And then in the story of Abraham - we were able to see the death of the lamb that was slain. Every time blood was shed on the Jewish altar it represented the lamb of God.

Jesus said, he had power to lay down his life and the Good Shepherd would give his life to the sheep.

He suffered as no man ever suffered before. He went to the Garden of Gethsemane - he was handled in a rough way, by brutal soldiers. He - Pilate tried to save him from the priests, and the people clamored for his blood, and the multitude. And the nails were put in his hands and the spikes through his feet and the crown of thorns upon his brow. And they mocked him and cried - you have saved others, now save yourself.

Sometimes people ask why Christ died so quickly. In six hours on the cross, while other victims on the cross sometimes lived two or three days. He was beat and exhausted. He had been physically depleted. And when Christ died, he died

voluntarily. He chose the exact moment when he expired.

He hung naked between Heaven and earth. They had pulled his beard until his face bled. They had spat on his face until his face was running with the spittal of angry men. He voiced neither complaint. He suffered. And he said, I thirst. The blood was being exacted - God demands death. Either for the sinner or a substitute. Christ was a substitute.

The angry shouting - the multitudes. The spikes never held him. It was the cords of love and bound him tight. For you and for me. He bore our sins in his own body upon the tree.

Many men before him had died - many men had become martyrs. The awful suffering of Jesus Christ was his spiritual death. He reached the final issue of sin - he went to the depths of sorrow, and God turned his back and hid his face - and he cried, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.

He was alone in the supreme hour of mankind's history - that Christ uttered these words. How it was accomplished in the depths of the darkness - man will never know.

He bore my sins in his body, upon the tree. He stood where I should have stood. The pains of Hell that were my portion were heaped on him. And I am able to go to Heaven.

Now the cross of Christ, when we think about why Christ died, we see three things.

First, a description of the depths of man's sin. Now we need not to blame the people of that day for Christ's death and for putting him on the cross. You and I are just as guilty. It was not the people, the Roman soldiers, that put him on the cross. It was your sins and my sins that made it necessary for him to volunteer his death.

Second, he died on the cross that we might see the overwhelming love of God. If ever you should doubt the love of God, take a long deep look at the cross and you will find the expression of God's love.

Third, in the cross, you will see the only way of salvation. He said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father, but by me. There is no possibility of being saved of sin and Hell except by identifying yourself with Christ and the cross. If there had been any other way to save you, he would have found it. If, it had been by reformation, or by good moral living - Jesus never would have died. A substitute had to take your place.

Cannot I be saved by living by the Golden Rule. Or following the example of Jesus. Even if you could be saved by living the life that Jesus taught you would still be a sinner. For Jesus taught that from the time you were born until the time you die, you have failed. You have transgressed. You have disobeyed. You have sinned. Therefore, what are you going to do about that sin. One thing to do - bring it to the cross.

King Charles the Fifth was loaned a large sum of money by a merchant. The note came due that the King was bankrupt and unable to pay. The merchant gave a

great banquet for the King. When all the guests were seated and before the food was brought in, the merchant had a large platter placed on the table before him and a fire lighted on it. And then taking the note out of his pocket, he held it into the flames until it was burned to ashes. The King threw his arms around his benefactor and wept.

Just so, we have all been mortgaged to God. The debt was due but we were unable to pay. And 2,000 years ago God invited the world to the Gospel feast, and in the presence of the cross God held your sins and mine - until everyone of them were consumed.

The Bible says, Heb. 9:22, without shedding of blood - is no remission. There are many people who do not like this. They say do I understand that God demands blood. I cannot understand why Christ had to die for me. Today the idea of the shed blood of Christ, may become old-fashioned, and out-of-date. But it is the very heart of Christianity. And at the heart of Christianity is blood atonement. This is the actual symbol of the death of Christ.

First the Bible teaches that the blood redeems. I Peter 1:18-19 - for as much as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold from your vain conversation - received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. Christ died on the cross to bring me out from under the law.

Second, the blood brings us nigh. Eph. 2:13. But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

We were strangers - having no hope and without God in the world. And Jesus came and brought us nigh unto God.

Third, the blood makes peace. Col. 1:20. And having made peace through the blood of his cross by him to reconcile all things unto himself, by him, I say - whether they be things in earth or things in Heaven. The world will never know peace until it finds it in the cross of Jesus Christ.

Four, the blood justifies. Rom. 5:9. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from the wrath through him. It changes men's standing before God. The forgiven sinner is not like the discharged prisoner who has served out his term and may be discharged but he loses some of the rights of his citizenship. The repentant sinner pardoned through the blood of Christ, his full citizenship regained. And who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect - it is God that justified. It is Christ that died. And is risen again. And he also makes intercession for us. Rom. 8:33-34.

Fifth, the blood cleanses. I John 1:7. But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another. And the blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanses us from all sin. The key word in this verse is all. Not part of our sins but all of them.

The story is told in London - there was a large gathering of people invited to be guests, to a concert. Caesar Milan, a famous preacher was there. A young lady played and sang charmingly and everyone was delighted. Very gracious and yet boldly, the preacher went up to her after the music had ceased, and said, I thought as I listened to you tonight - how tremendously the call of Christ would be benefited if your talents were dedicated to his cause. You know, young lady, you are as much a sinner in the sight of God as a drunkard or a harlot on the street. But I am glad to tell you that the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, can cleanse from all sin. The young lady snapped out a rebuke for his presumption to which he replied, lady, I mean no offense - I pray God's spirit will convict you. They all returned to their

homes. The young woman retired but could not sleep. The face of the preacher appeared before her. His words rang through her mind. At 2 o'clock in the morning, she sprang out of her bed - took a pencil and paper, and with tears dripping from her face, Charlotte Elliott wrote that famous poem.

Just as I am without one plea  
But that thy blood was shed for me  
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee  
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

Just as I am, and waiting not  
To rid my soul of one dark blot,  
To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot,  
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

But this is not the end. We do not leave Christ hanging on the cross with the blood streaming down. He was taken down and layed carefully away in a tomb. And a big stone was rolled at the entrance and soldiers guarded it all day Saturday. And then two men had already started their way to Ammaius. It was early on the first Easter morning - Mary, Mary Magdalene, and Salome made their way to the tomb to anoint the dead body. They were startled to find the tomb empty. Because they said, we seek Jesus of Nazareth and the angel gave them the news - he is not here. Upon that fact, hangs the entire plan of redemption. And that is why Jesus died. For as Jonah was 3 days and 3 nights in the whale - so shall the son of man be 3 days and 3 nights in the heart of the earth - as he predicted - he arose.

There is more evidence that Jesus arose from the dead, than there is that Julius Caesar ever lived. Alexander the Great died at the age of 33. And why people overlook this fact, the trouble with people is this -- they do not want to believe. Their spiritual vision is blinded. The resurrection meant that Christ was God - a very God. He was what he claimed to be. Christ was deity.

Second, it meant that Christ had accepted his atoning work on the cross. Which was necessary to our salvation.

Third, it assured mankind of a righteous judgment.

Fourth, it guaranteed that our bodies would also be raised in the end. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.

The Christian, his body may go into the grave - but it is going to be raised on the great resurrection morning. And death will be swallowed up in victory. And as a result of the resurrection of Christ, death is gone. And Christ has the key to death.

Fifth, this will mean that death is abolished. The power of death has been broken and removed. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death - I will fear no evil. For thou art with me.

Paul looks forward to death with great anticipation. As a result of the resurrection - for to me to live is Christ. And to die is gain.

That is why Jesus died. Face to face with Christ, my Saviour. Face to face, what will it be. When with rapture, I behold him. Jesus Christ, who died

for me. Face to face, shall I behold him. Far beyond the starry sky. Face to  
face in all his glory. I shall see him by and by.