

Atonement

Basic Theology Training

What is sacrifice?//

Why did Jesus have to die?//

What happened for me on the cross?//



New Horizons
COMMUNITY CHURCH

Pause and Breathe

Before you begin, pause. Take a deep breath. As Ryan invited the congregation on Good Friday, step into a place of deep reflection. Ask the Holy Spirit to meet you in this moment, to help you truly grasp the weight of Christ's sacrifice and the beauty of God's love.

Why This Sermon Matters

This Good Friday message is not a lighthearted moment; it is a sobering, soul-searching encounter with the core of our faith: the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Ryan leads us to wrestle with who God is, who we are, and why the cross was necessary. This is not a time for shallow answers but for deep contemplation, gratitude, and awe.

Major Themes and Reflections

The Nature of God: Creator, Holy, Just

Ryan opens by drawing our attention to God's greatness: the One who made all things, knows all things, and has always existed. This God made us in His image, giving us freedom and purpose. But as image bearers, we fell into sin, and now stand in need of His justice and purification.

Reflect: Where do you resist pondering God's greatness because it feels overwhelming or uncomfortable?

Psalm 139:13-14, Genesis 1:28, Isaiah 43:7, Deuteronomy 32:4

Humanity's Fall and the Wrath of God

Sin broke creation. Humanity, meant to be custodians of God's world, chose rebellion. Ryan reminds us that God's wrath isn't random anger; it is holy justice, purification, the necessary setting-right of all that is wrong.

Reflect: How does understanding God's wrath as just and necessary (rather than cruel) shift your view of sin?

Romans 3:10-12, Ephesians 5:6, Romans 1:18, Psalm 75:8, Isaiah 51:17, Jeremiah 25:15

The Cup of Wrath and the Garden of Gethsemane

Ryan draws out the powerful image of the "cup" of God's wrath seen throughout Scripture. Jesus, in the Garden of Gethsemane, pleads with the Father to let the cup pass — yet surrenders to drink it fully for our sake.

Reflect: What does it mean to you that Jesus drank the cup meant for you, down to the dregs?

Matthew 26:36-46

The Betrayal, Suffering, and Crucifixion

Ryan walks through the heartbreak of Judas' betrayal, Peter's denial, the unjust trial, and Jesus' brutal execution. He emphasizes that Jesus bore the shame, isolation, and physical torment not because He deserved it, but because He was taking our place.

Reflect: How does imagining Jesus' suffering — fully naked, fully exposed, fully shamed — deepen your gratitude for what He endured?

Matthew 26:47-75, Matthew 27:15-51

Propitiation: Jesus Satisfies God's Justice

At the cross, Jesus became the perfect offering. Ryan teaches that this is propitiation: Jesus absorbing God's wrath, satisfying divine justice, so that we might drink from the cup of grace.

Reflect: How does it change your daily posture toward God to know that Jesus finished the wrath meant for you?

2 Corinthians 5:21, Luke 22:19-20

Dig Deeper Questions

- Where do you most need to pause and reflect on the weight of Jesus' sacrifice?
- How does the biblical image of the "cup" shape your understanding of both God's wrath and God's grace?
- In what ways have you underestimated the cost Jesus paid on your behalf?
- How might reflecting on Jesus' shame and isolation help you face your own seasons of suffering?
- What would it look like to live with deep gratitude for propitiation — that Jesus absorbed God's wrath so you could walk in grace?

Recommended Next Steps

Read Isaiah 53 and meditate on the Suffering Servant.

Read Romans 5-8 and reflect on justification and peace with God.

Engage with the We Believe materials from the Church of God, Anderson.

Set aside intentional time this weekend to sit quietly before God, confess sin, and thank Jesus for His sacrifice.

Final Thought

Ryan closed by reminding us that because Jesus drank the cup of wrath, we can drink from the cup of grace. Good Friday is not the end; it is the doorway into Easter. Let your heart sit in the weight of this moment — but do so with the hope of resurrection already on the horizon.

Small Group Questions

- Why was the atonement necessary, and how does it address the problem of sin?

📖 Read Isaiah 53:4-6 — How does this prophecy describe what Christ accomplished on the cross?

- How is Jesus' atoning work different from the Old Testament sacrificial system?

📖 Read Hebrews 10:1-14 — What does this passage say about the once-for-all nature of Christ's sacrifice?

- How does the atonement reveal both God's justice and His love?

📖 Read Romans 5:6-11 — What does this teach us about God's heart toward sinners?

- How should Christ's atonement impact how we see ourselves and others, especially those who have wronged us?
- How can we live in light of the atonement, not just as a doctrine we affirm but as a daily reality?