

Week2: The Past Accomplishment of Christ's Work

The Work of Our Perfect Savior

Description: Though being fully God, Jesus Christ humbled himself by entering into world and becoming a man for the purpose of suffering and dying. This humiliation – from the exalted place of deity to the degraded place of a lowly man, a life of suffering and derision, and finally death on a cross – was the means by which Christ pleased his Father and purchased our salvation. And his work was validated by his resurrection.

Chapter 2:

- Was the cross God's A for saving sinners?
- How can the cross be both an act of sacrifice and a beautiful aroma to God?

Chapter 3

- Why did Christ have to be sinless to die for our sins?
- What does it mean when we say that, "Jesus learned obedience through what he suffered?"
- Why did Jesus have to suffer on earth?

Chapter 4

- How is Jesus death and resurrection connected?
- How do know that Jesus' death paid for our sins?

Chapter 43

- What is the good news of the gospel?
- Why are the witness of the resurrection important?
- Why do some people reject or ignore the good news of the gospel?
- How do we overcome Satanic "blindness?"

FIFTY REASONS WHY
JESUS CAME TO DIE

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TO PLEASE HIS HEAVENLY FATHER



*Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him;
he has put him to grief.*

Isaiah 53:10

*Christ loved us and gave himself up for us,
a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

Ephesians 5:2

Jesus did not wrestle his angry Father to the floor of heaven and take the whip out of his hand. He did not force him to be merciful to humanity. His death was not the begrudging consent of God to be lenient to sinners. No, what Jesus did when he suffered and died was the Father's idea. It was a breathtaking strategy, conceived even before creation, as God saw and planned the history of the world. That is why the Bible speaks of God's "purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began" (2 Timothy 1:9).

Already in the Jewish Scriptures the plan was unfolding. The prophet Isaiah foretold the sufferings of the Messiah, who was to take the place of sinners. He said that the Christ would be "smitten by God" in our place.

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for

our iniquities. . . . All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:4-6)

But what is most astonishing about this substitution of Christ for sinners is that it was God's idea. Christ did not intrude on God's plan to punish sinners. God planned for him to be there. One Old Testament prophet says, "It was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief" (Isaiah 53:10).

This explains the paradox of the New Testament. On the one hand, the suffering of Christ is an outpouring of God's wrath because of sin. But on the other hand, Christ's suffering is a beautiful act of submission and obedience to the will of the Father. So Christ cried from the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46). And yet the Bible says that the suffering of Christ was a fragrance to God. "Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Ephesians 5:2).

Oh, that we might worship the terrible wonder of the love of God! It is not sentimental. It is not simple. For our sake God did the impossible: He poured out his wrath on his own Son—the one whose submission made him infinitely unworthy to receive it. Yet the Son's very willingness to receive it was precious in God's sight. The wrath-bearer was infinitely loved.

TO LEARN OBEDIENCE AND BE PERFECTED



*Although he was a son, he learned obedience
through what he suffered.*

Hebrews 5:8

*For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist,
in bringing many sons to glory,
should make the founder of their salvation
perfect through suffering.*

Hebrews 2:10

The very book in the Bible that says Christ “learned obedience” through suffering, and that he was “made perfect” through suffering, also says that he was “without sin.” “In every respect [Christ] has been tempted as we are, *yet without sin*” (Hebrews 4:15).

This is the consistent teaching of the Bible. Christ was sinless. Although he was the divine Son of God, he was really human, with all our temptations and appetites and physical weaknesses. There was hunger (Matthew 21:18) and anger and grief (Mark 3:5) and pain (Matthew 17:12). But his heart was perfectly in love with God, and he acted consistently with that love: “He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth” (1 Peter 2:22).

Therefore, when the Bible says that Jesus “learned obedience through what he suffered,” it doesn’t mean that he learned to stop disobeying. It means that with each new trial he learned

in practice—and in pain—what it means to obey. When it says that he was “made perfect through suffering,” it doesn’t mean that he was gradually getting rid of defects. It means that he was gradually fulfilling the perfect righteousness that he had to have in order to save us.

That’s what he said at his baptism. He didn’t need to be baptized because he was a sinner. Rather, he explained to John the Baptist, “Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15).

The point is this: *If the Son of God had gone from incarnation to the cross without a life of temptation and pain to test his righteousness and his love, he would not be a suitable Savior for fallen man.* His suffering not only absorbed the wrath of God. It also fulfilled his true humanity and made him able to call us brothers and sisters (Hebrews 2:17).

TO ACHIEVE HIS OWN
RESURRECTION FROM
THE DEAD



*Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead
our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep,
by the blood of the eternal covenant,
equip you with everything good that you may do his will.*

Hebrews 13:20-21

The death of Christ did not merely precede his resurrection—it was the price that obtained it. That’s why Hebrews 13:20 says that God brought him from the dead “by the blood of the eternal covenant.”

The “blood of the . . . covenant” is the blood of Jesus. As he said, “This is my blood of the covenant” (Matthew 26:28). When the Bible speaks of the blood of Jesus, it refers to his death. No salvation would be accomplished by the mere bleeding of Jesus. His bleeding *to death* is what makes his blood-shedding crucial.

Now what is the relationship between this shedding of Jesus’ blood and the resurrection? The Bible says he was raised not just *after* the blood-shedding, but *by* it. This means that what the death of Christ accomplished was so full and so perfect that the resurrection was the *reward* and *vindication* of Christ’s achievement in death.

The wrath of God was satisfied with the suffering and death

of Jesus. The holy curse against sin was fully absorbed. The obedience of Christ was completed to the fullest measure. The price of forgiveness was totally paid. The righteousness of God was completely vindicated. All that was left to accomplish was the public declaration of God's endorsement. This he gave by raising Jesus from the dead.

When the Bible says, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:17), the point is not that the resurrection is the price paid for our sins. The point is that the resurrection proves that the death of Jesus is an all-sufficient price. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, then his death was a failure, God did not vindicate his sin-bearing achievement, and we are still in our sins.

But in fact "Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father" (Romans 6:4). The success of his suffering and death was vindicated. And if we put our trust in Christ, we are *not* still in our sins. For "*by* the blood of the eternal covenant," the Great Shepherd has been raised and lives forever.

TO UNLEASH THE POWER OF GOD IN THE GOSPEL



*The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing,
but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*

1 Corinthians 1:18

*I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is
the power of God for salvation to everyone
who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

Romans 1:16

Gospel means good news. It's news before it's theology. News is the reporting that something significant has happened. *Good* news is the announcement that something has happened that will make people happy. The gospel is the best news, because what it reports can make people happy forever.

What the gospel reports is the death and resurrection of Christ. The apostle Paul makes the news quality of the gospel plain:

I would remind you . . . of the gospel . . . that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day . . . and that he . . . appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive. (1 Corinthians 15:1-7)

The heart of the gospel is that “Christ died for our sins . . . was buried . . . was raised . . . and appeared to more than five hundred

people.” The fact that he says many of these witnesses are still alive shows how factual the gospel is. He meant that his readers could find some witnesses and query them. The gospel is news about facts. And the facts were testable. There were witnesses of Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection life.

The tragic thing is that, for many, this good news seems foolish. Paul said, “The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (1 Corinthians 1:18). This is the power that Christ died to unleash. “The gospel . . . is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16).

Why is the death of Christ not seen as good news by all? We must see it as true and good before we can believe it. So the question is: Why do some see it as true and good and others don’t? One answer is given in 2 Corinthians 4:4, “The god of this world [Satan] has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.” Besides that, sinful human nature itself is dead to true spiritual reality. “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him” (1 Corinthians 2:14).

If anyone is going to see the gospel as true and good, satanic blindness and natural deadness must be overcome by the power of God. This is why the Bible says that even though the gospel is foolishness to many, yet “to those who are called . . . Christ [is] the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:24). This “calling” is the merciful act of God to remove natural deadness and satanic blindness, so that we see Christ as true and good. This merciful act is itself a blood-bought gift of Christ. Look to him, and pray that God would enable you to see and embrace the gospel of Christ.