

Why Did Jesus Have to Die?

Romans 3:21-26

March 20, 2016

Introduction

Today is Palm Sunday, in which we remember that Jesus came into Jerusalem as a King, riding on a donkey. Yet a few days later, Jesus is condemned as a criminal and is sentenced to die on the cross. Jesus dying on the cross is central to the gospel. Without the cross, there can be no resurrection. Without the cross, there can be no salvation. History climaxed at the cross. However, the world sees the cross as foolishness.

1 Corinthians 1:18 *For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*

Jesus dying on the cross does not make sense to many people in this world today. People often ask why Jesus had to die on the cross. Why was His death necessary? To the world, it seems that Jesus suffered some form of child abuse. Paul gives us an answer.

Romans 3:21-26 *But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, 26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

I. The Righteousness of God (21-24)

- But now
 - The glorious good news—it is finally the explanation of **Romans 1:16-17**

16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."*
 - **Romans 1:18-3:20** is all about the bad news, that all men and women are guilty of sin
 - They cannot save themselves by being good and moral
 - They cannot save themselves by knowing the Law as the Jews
- Apart from the Law
 - Law = legalism, rules; God's moral law
 - The Law has only one purpose—to reveal to us our sins
 - It cannot save us—it can only condemn us
 - The Law is to show us how we cannot meet its demands
- Is revealed
 - Through faith in Christ Jesus
 - This faith is not new (revealed to us in the OT)

Genesis 15:6 *And he (Abraham) believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.*

- Righteousness of God received by faith in Christ Jesus
 - Not the righteousness of man

Romans 4:5 *However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.*

- We are not made right through our own efforts
 - Works is something we do
 - Faith is something that God does and you believe and accept it
- Faith in the person of Christ and His work
- Those who believe
 - Righteousness of God given to all who believe (through faith)

Acts 13:39 *and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.*

Galatians 2:16 *knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.*

- It is never any good things we could offer
- No difference
 - Between a murderer or a good citizen
 - Between a rapist or a philanthropist
 - All have sinned and fall short of God's glory
- God can save anybody
 - Think Prodigal Son
 - Think Paul

1 Timothy 1:15 *Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.*

- Being justified
 - Meaning of justified—declared righteous and being made righteous
 - Does not mean “just-as-if-I’ve-never-sinned” because God does not play games in pretending that you did not sin
 - God makes you righteous through Christ
 - Christ Jesus is the perfect One and perfectly righteous
 - When He died, He died sinless, yet taking on our sins
 - In exchange, our sins are laid on Him and we receive His perfect righteousness
 - God sees us in Christ as perfect
 - Declared innocent and being made innocent
 - Opposite of condemnation (declared guilty)

Romans 8:1 *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*

- Freely by His grace
 - Grace = undeserved love given to the guilty
 - Costs us nothing

- Redemption in Christ Jesus
 - Salvation for us is always free
 - Costly for God
 - Redeem = to buy something
 - Redemption = to pay a price
 - The idea of redemption is to pay for a slave to give him freedom
 - Jesus Christ paid for us
 - The price?

II. Why Jesus Had to Die (25-26)

- Righteousness of God
 - Holy perfection
 - Without sin
 - He cannot be around sin

Habakkuk 1:13 *Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; You cannot tolerate wrong.*

- How can God be reconciled with man if man cannot be with God?
- God required death as payment for those who sin against Him
 - And every man has sinned against Him (**Romans 3:10-18**)

Romans 6:23a *For the wages of sin is death.*

Ezekiel 18:20 *The soul who sins shall die.*

- God could not forgive us without dealing with justice (sins against Him)
- Justice required penalty—and it had to be paid
- The Law accuses us of sin and we cannot pay ourselves out of debt
 - We deserve our punishment against God
- God sent Jesus to be the sacrifice
 - His blood means death
 - Propitiation
 - Covering (in OT it means the Mercy Seat on the Ark of Covenant)
 - During Day of Atonement, High Priest would sprinkle blood on the Mercy Seat (**Leviticus 16:11-15**)
 - This was to appease God's wrath against sin
 - God sent Jesus to die so that Jesus would appease His wrath against sin
 - He became the Mercy Seat (see **Leviticus 16**)
 - We are redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ
 - He paid the price that we were supposed to pay by His death
 - The cross
 - God's righteousness has to be done through the cross
 - Penalty had to be paid
 - Penalty was death
 - Our penalty was paid in the death of Jesus Christ on the cross

2 Corinthians 5:21 *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

- Demonstration of God's righteousness

- Jesus died for God first and foremost to demonstrate God's righteousness
- The gospel issue
 - How can God, who is infinitely holy, come to sinful man without violating His justice?
 - God in past (before the cross) has passed over sin
 - By overlooking sin in the past
 - Both the Jews and the Gentiles

Acts 17:30-31 *In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now He commands all people everywhere to repent. 31 For He has set a day when He will judge the world with justice by the man He has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising Him from the dead.*

- The charge is that if God is holy and just, then how is He forgiving sins in the past?
 - How is justice being done?
 - This is like a murderer before the judge and the judge forgives him of all charges
- The answer is found in the cross—why Jesus had to die
 - Jesus' death on the cross satisfies God's justice
 - Jesus' death on the cross also reveals His mercy

Romans 5:8 *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

- Through Jesus we receive pardon and salvation
- He might be just and justifier
 - He is just—someone had to die to pay for the wages of sin
 - He sent Jesus to die in our place
 - He is the justifier
 - He makes men right with Him through faith in Christ Jesus

Coram Deo

This is the most amazing thing about the grace of God. He did it all so that we can be the righteousness of God through Christ Jesus. He sent His Son to die on the cross so that we may have life. But before He could satisfy what we needed, He had to satisfy Himself first. This is extraordinary because He went through great lengths to satisfy His own nature so that He will be able to forgive His people.