

WHY DID JESUS HAVE TO BE CRUCIFIED?

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INTRODUCTION:

A. Throughout the world, today is a day many people have set aside to celebrate what is called Easter:

1. Originally Easter was celebrated two days after “Good Friday” regardless of what day of the week it fell on → In 325 A.D. Roman emperor Constantine decided that Easter must be celebrated only on Sunday, the day Christ arose. It would fall on the first Sunday after the full moon after the spring equinox – It could fall anywhere from March 22nd to April 25th.
2. Easter means different things to different people → Time to give gifts, to give treats, hide & hunt eggs, have family gatherings, buy new clothes, attend church, or to hold a special service
3. Before we are really ready to celebrate His resurrection, we must know, appreciate, and respond appropriately to His death! Only then will His resurrection hold meaning for us!

B. This morning I would like us to look at the question, “Why did Jesus have to be crucified?”

1. Immediately we think of answers like, “To pay the penalty for our sins” or “To give us forgiveness of our sins” or “To put an end to the old law so He could bring in the new” – All good answers
2. But let’s think deeper for a moment → The death on the cross was a most painful and humiliating way to die! And it was God’s only Son who was sacrificed for us! **(Mark 15:16-39)**
3. If God is all powerful & all knowing could He not have come up with another plan to spare Jesus of this great suffering?” The answer seems to be YES! So why did Jesus have to be crucified?
4. We may never fully understand the answer... While men may come up with other plans that may sound good, we see God’s great wisdom in the path He chose! There are some things that we can only have and fully appreciate because Jesus, the Son of God, was crucified for us!

I. WHAT JESUS’ CRUCIFIXION SHOWS US:

A. By God’s only Son being crucified, we learn the great depth to which God loves us:

1. Because God chose such a great price, it speaks of the matchless depth of His love! **(John 3:14-16)**
 - a. What if God had chosen to save us simply by speaking a word, having us perform some incredible act, or building some monument for us to look upon? That certainly would show He loved us but it just doesn’t show the same degree of love does it!
 - b. It has often been pointed out that this passage illuminates the great height, width, and depth of God’s love for us! He SO the WORLD that He GAVE His only begotten Son!
 - c. One asked the Lord, “How much do you love me?” The Lord stretched out His arms & said, “This much!” → When we survey the wondrous cross we see God’s wondrous love!
 - d. We call this His SACRIFICE → We understand sacrifice means you’re giving up something of great value! Love caused Him to give up the greatest thing of all for our salvation!
2. It’s hard for us to understand a Father giving up His Son, but we have a real life example in the case of Abraham and Isaac **(Genesis 22:1-2)**
 - a. The coincidences can’t be overlooked here... I can’t believe it was incidental at all!
 - b. He says first take your son, then your only son, & finally your only son whom you love!
With each phrase God increased intensity... Can you imagine the pain Abraham felt?
 - c. While this was a test of Abraham’s faith, when God saw Abraham going through with this sacrifice, He had to be looking ahead to what He’d do with His own Son whom He loved!
3. The crucifixion of Jesus shows us that God’s love for us is powerful and steadfast! **(Romans 5:5-10)**
4. Now, when we think about the great love the cross shows God has for us, what is our appropriate

response? To love Him and serve Him! **(1 John 3:1; 2 Cor 5:14-15)**

5. But not only that, but through the crucifixion of Jesus we also learn great lessons about our love for others! Focusing on the cross teaches us what it means to love! **(1 John 3:16-18; 4:7-12)**

B. By Jesus' crucifixion we gain a greater appreciation of how much God hates sin and desires fellowship:

1. To understand this, we have to see the great problem sin creates between us & God: **(Isa 59:1-2)**
 - a. Before sin enters the picture we enjoy great close fellowship with God... But because God is holy and cannot be in fellowship with sin, when we sin we destroy that fellowship!
 - b. The problem is not God's fault → A lot of time people want to blame God for their sin, the loss of fellowship, & the ruin sin brings into their life – But it was us who chose to sin!
 - c. The cross of Jesus is about paying the penalty for our sins so fellowship could be restored!
2. By choosing such an excruciating path to deal without sins, God leaves no doubt in our minds how terrible sin is, how much He hates it, and how much it costs! **(Hebrews 1:3, 9; Isaiah 53)**
 - a. What if God chose to save us by having Jesus come to this world and write a song to be sung to grant us salvation – Would that really have shown us the seriousness of sin?
 - b. As Jesus made purification for our sins He was displaying two things concerning God's nature... God loves righteousness & hates wickedness... It was for these that He died!
 - c. Isaiah captures the pain of the cross with picturesque words hundreds of years before crucifixion was even practiced! Uses words of a beating, describes Him as being wounded, crushed, scourged, and killed → This horrible death was due to our sins!
 - d. When we see the cross we ought to be impressed thinking, "My sins did that!" Could there be a more powerful way for God to display the cost and destructiveness of sin?
3. This extremely difficult path also teaches us how much God values our fellowship! **(Col 1:19-22)**
 - a. Think about the pain of the cross – It's as if the Lord is saying, "I want fellowship with you again so much that I will give you the most valuable thing I have to restore it!"
 - b. Notice what God's purpose in Christ was according to this verse – Reconciling the world back to Himself → Reconcile is simply to bring two estranged parties back together
 - c. How much does it mean for us to have fellowship with God? It was worth the pain and agony of the cross! Of Jesus giving His life and God watching His Son die!
4. So when we survey the wondrous cross it should cause us to hate sin whether it is in the lives of others or ourselves – The cross shows how terrible sin is! **(Titus 2:11-14)**
5. When we think about the way Jesus was crucified, it also should cause us to treasure the fellowship with God that His sacrifice restored! **(1 John 1:3-7)**

C. Finally, because Jesus was crucified, we are given a figure for our spiritual regeneration:

1. Before Jesus was crucified, He spoke about how we'd all have to face the cross! **(Mt 16:21, 24-25)**
 - a. Jesus had just began to reveal more and more to His apostles about how His mission was to be crucified, to die on the cross, and to be resurrected → It was shocking to them!
 - b. In fact, it's in this context that Peter says, "Far be it from you Lord" and Jesus responds, "Get behind me, Satan!" They could not accept it that Jesus would be crucified!
 - c. Jesus says that not only would He have to face the cross, but in a spiritual sense all of them would have to face the cross as well! Any who wants to follow must do what He did!
2. The NT abounds with this imagery of our undergoing a spiritual crucifixion **(Gal 2:20; 2 Tim 2:11)**
3. Taking up our cross might remain a spiritual mystery, except that we are given a detailed description about how baptism does this **(Romans 6:1-6)**

4. Our comparison to the crucifixion of Jesus does not end there... Because we have been crucified with Him, we also are to live like Him! **(Romans 6:9-11)**
5. While one might think God could have chosen another path to secure our salvation, only the crucifixion of Jesus provides this parallel so we could be united with Him!

CONCLUSION: Maybe we could think of another way to give us forgiveness than for God to have to sacrifice His only Son and for Jesus to have to be crucified... But now maybe we can better appreciate God's wisdom! **(Rom 11:33-36)**