

Why Did Jesus Let Himself Be Murdered?

Message 2 of 3 in the series: "Investigating Easter"

A. Jesus knew in advance that he would suffer and die on a cross at the hands of wicked people.

"...Jesus began to tell them that the Son of Man must suffer many terrible things and be rejected by the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but three days later he would rise from the dead. As he talked about this openly with his disciples, Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him for saying such things. Jesus turned around and looked at his disciples, then reprimanded Peter. 'Get away from me, Satan!' he said. 'You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God's.'" Mark 8:31-33 (NLT)

B. Jesus willingly allowed himself to be murdered because it was the only way He could satisfy God's perfect love and perfect justice at the same time.

1. God is perfect in justice and always does what is right.

"I will proclaim the name of the Lord; how glorious is our God! He is the Rock; his deeds are perfect. Everything he does is just and fair. He is a faithful God who does no wrong; how just and upright he is!"
Deuteronomy 32:3-4 (NLT)

"The Lord gives righteousness and justice to all who are treated unfairly." Psalm 103:6 (NLT)

2. God is perfect in love and is always merciful and kind.

"The Lord is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love... his unfailing love toward those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth."

Psalm 103:8, 11 (NLT)

"God is love." 1 John 4:8b (NLT)

3. At the cross, Jesus satisfied God's perfect justice by paying for our sins in full, **AND** he satisfied God's perfect love by taking our place.

"But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation. For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God."

Romans 5:8-11(NLT)

"Unfailing love and truth have met together. Righteousness and peace have kissed!" Psalm 85:10 (NLT)

4. Jesus' primary reason for becoming human was to die in our place.

"Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die... it was necessary for him to be made in every respect like us, his brothers and sisters, so that he could be our merciful and faithful High Priest before God. Then he could offer a sacrifice that would take away the sins of the people." Hebrews 2:14a, 17 (NLT)

"...Jesus said, 'It is finished.' With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit." John 19:30 (NIV)

5. Nails didn't hold Jesus on the cross; only His great love for us kept Him there.

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep... No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again." John 10:11, 18a (NLT)

"Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?" Matthew 26:53 (NIV)

C. We need to willingly respond to Jesus' great sacrifice of love.

1. We need to believe in Jesus and willingly surrender our lives to Him.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." John 3:16 (NRSV)

2. We need to willingly love others the same way Jesus loved us.

“...make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross.” Philippians 2:2-8 (NLT)

3. We need to willingly tell the whole world of Jesus' great love for us.

“For Christ's love compels us... We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.”

2 Corinthians 5:14a, 20 (NIV)

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Connect Group Discussion Questions:

1. It's easy to find posts on social media that say things like “God loves people. He doesn't judge anybody for anything.” Why do you think such posts are popular?
2. Discuss why it was necessary for Jesus to suffer and die on the cross.
 - God is perfect in justice and always does what is right. (Deuteronomy 32:3-4, Psalm 103:6, Isaiah 45:21)
 - God is perfect in love and is always merciful and kind. (Psalm 103:8-11, 145:8-9, 1 John 4:8)
 - At the cross, Jesus satisfied God's perfect justice by paying for our sins in full, **AND** he satisfied God's perfect love by taking our place. (Romans 5:8-11, 6:23, 1 Peter 3:18, Psalm 95:10)
3. Read Mark 8:27-33. Why do you think Jesus responded to Peter the way He did? How do you think Peter felt after his conversation with Jesus?
4. Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-20. How often do you think of yourself as an ambassador for Jesus?
5. Is it really possible for us to have the same attitude towards others as Jesus has towards us? (see Philippians 2:2-8,13)
6. What did Jesus mean when he said, “It is finished!” just before he died? (see John 19:30, Romans 3:21-24, Hebrews 10:11-14)
7. Discuss the following quotations:

“Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?” Jesus in Matthew 26:53

“It costs God nothing, so far as we know, to create nice things: but to convert rebellious wills cost Him crucifixion.” C.S. Lewis

“Jesus' death was seen by Jesus himself...as the ultimate means by which God's kingdom was established. The crucifixion was the shocking answer to the prayer that God's kingdom would come on earth as in heaven.” N.T. Wright

“Nobody's perfect. The only one that ever was, was crucified.” Loretta Lynn