

Why Did Jesus Need to Die?

Romans 3:21-26

(Grace – April 18, 2010)

I. Introduction

Although the season of Lent and Easter is behind us, I have felt compelled to spend a little more time focusing on the death of resurrection of Jesus Christ and the implications of that in our lives.

Let's begin with the question, "Why did Jesus need to die?"

In 2003, over one million British television viewers were shocked as they watched professional knife thrower Jayde Hanson "nick" the head of his female assistant. ... A spokeswoman for the live television show commented: "You don't really expect that kind of thing from a world record-holder."

The 23-year-old Hanson began his career by throwing his mother's kitchen knives when he was 10. He had been attempting to repeat the pace of his world record-breaking effort of 120 knives thrown in two minutes. "In 11 years of performing, I've only hit my assistant on five occasions," he told a local newspaper recently.

Like Hanson, no matter how much we strive for perfection, we too will miss the mark.

"Knife Thrower Slices Assistant on Live TV," (4-10-03); submitted by Jerry De Luca, Montreal West, Quebec

And this is the point – all of us have missed the mark. The Bible calls this sin and says this about our sin:

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
(Romans 6:23)

Now we may be tempted to say (as many do) that we are pretty good people – we have not murdered anybody. Haven't you?

"You're familiar with the command to the ancients, 'Do not murder.' 22 I'm telling you that anyone who is so much as angry with a brother or sister is guilty of murder." (Matthew 5:21-22, The Message)

The point is we are all guilty of sin. Even the best person, if they have not believed in Jesus, are guilty of that sin.

"The world's sin is that it refuses to believe in me." (John 16:9, NLT)

But the point of all this talk of guilt and sin is to bring us to the cross.

The cross lies at the heart of what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

"For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (1 Corinthians 2:2, NRSV)

Issue: What is the difference between the death of Jesus and the death of Socrates (a philosopher), one of the martyrs, or a war hero?

What did the death of Jesus achieve?

II. Why Did Jesus Need to Die?

A. The Problem

As I mentioned already, *“For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard.”* (Romans 3:23, NLT)

This has disastrous consequences in our lives.

1. **Pollution** of sin

“And then he [Jesus] added, ‘It is what comes from inside that defiles you. 21 For from within, out of a person's heart, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, 22 adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. 23 All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you.’” (Mark 7:20-23, NLT)

Defile: **1.** to make foul or dirty; pollute; **2.** to tarnish or sully the brightness of; taint; corrupt; **3.** to damage or sully (someone's good name, reputation, etc.)

2. **Power** of sin

“Jesus replied, ‘I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave of sin.’” (John 8:34, NLT)

3. **Penalty** of sin

“Work hard for sin your whole life and your pension is death. But God's gift is real life, eternal life, delivered by Jesus, our Master.” (Romans 6:23, The Message)

4. **Partition** of sin

“Listen! The Lord's arm is not too weak to save you, nor is his ear too deaf to hear you call. 2 It's your sins that have cut you off from God. Because of your sins, he has turned away and will not listen anymore.” (Isaiah 59:1-2, NLT)

B. The Solution

How can we, who are deeply unholy and unrighteous, be reconciled with God, who is gloriously holy and righteous? How can God express simultaneously His holiness, which demands justice (wrath) and His love, which longs to forgive and be reconciled to us?

All of this is brought together in Christ.

“He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed.” (1 Peter 2:24, NLT)

1. The **self-substitution** of God

“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Corinthians 5:21, NIV)

“Christ redeemed us from that self-defeating, cursed life by absorbing it completely into himself. Do you remember the Scripture that says, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’? That is what happened when Jesus was nailed to the Cross: He became a curse, and at the same time dissolved the curse.” (Galatians 3:13, The Message)

2. The **agony** of the cross

“He was looked down on and passed over, a man who suffered, who knew pain firsthand. One look at him and people turned away. We looked down on him, thought he was scum. 4 But the fact is, it was our pains he carried — our disfigurements, all the things wrong with us. We thought he brought it on himself, that God was punishing him for his own failures. 5 But it was our sins that did that to him, that ripped and tore and crushed him — our sins! He took the punishment, and that made us whole. Through his bruises we get healed.” (Isaiah 53:3-5, The Message)

C. The Result

“But now God has shown us a different way to heaven — not by ‘being good enough’ and trying to keep his laws, but by a new way (though not new, really, for the Scriptures told about it long ago). Now God says he will accept and acquit us — declare us ‘not guilty’ — if we trust Jesus Christ to take away our sins. And we all can be saved in this same way, by coming to Christ, no matter who we are or what we have been like. 23 Yes, all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious ideal; 24 yet now God declares us ‘not guilty’ of offending him if we trust in Jesus Christ, who in his kindness freely takes away our sins. 25 For God sent Christ Jesus to take the punishment for our sins and to end all God's anger against us. He used Christ's blood and our faith as the means of saving us from his wrath. In this way he was being entirely fair, even though he did not punish those who sinned in former times. For he was looking forward to the time when Christ would come and take away those sins. 26 And now in these days also he can receive sinners in this same way because Jesus took away their sins. But isn't this unfair for God to let criminals go free, and say that they are innocent? No, for he does it on the basis of their trust in Jesus who took away their sins.” (Romans 3:21-26, TLB)

Four images

1. The **Temple**

“He [Jesus] came as High Priest of this better system that we now have. He went into that greater, perfect tabernacle in heaven, not made by men nor part of this world, 12 and once for all took blood into that inner room, the Holy of Holies, and sprinkled it on the mercy seat; but it was not the blood of goats and calves. No, he took his own blood, and with it he, by himself, made sure of our eternal salvation. 13 And if under the old system the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of young cows could cleanse men's bodies from sin, 14 just think how much more surely the blood of Christ will transform our lives and hearts.” (Hebrews 9:11-14, TLB)

Hallelujah, the pollution of sin is removed through this “Temple” sacrifice!

“Under the old system, the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a young cow could cleanse people's bodies from ceremonial impurity. 14 Just think how much more the blood of Christ will

purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins.” (Hebrews 9:13-14, NLT)

2. The Marketplace

We “*are justified [made right with God] freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*” (Romans 3:24, NIV)

Redeem: To recover ownership of by paying a specified sum.

“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.” (1 Peter 1:18-19, NIV)

With this redemption the power of sin is broken in your life!

3. The Law Court

As mentioned earlier we are “justified freely by his grace.” (Romans 3:24)

The penalty for our sin has been paid for!

4. The Home

“So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family. 20 Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself.” (Ephesians 2:19-20, NLT)

While our sin separated us from God, God destroyed that wall of separation through the death of Jesus on the cross.

“This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. 22 Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.” (Colossians 1:21-22, NLT)

III. Application

“We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:6, NIV)

God has done all this for you and me.

[Call to Salvation and to a response as Christians]