

THE REAL REASON CHRIST DIED

Galatians 1:1-5

By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. When I was in the ninth grade, I took a plane ride for the first time in my life. I went with my Dad to Washington D.C. While we were there, we passed by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Etched in a black granite wall are the names of 58,156 Americans who died in that war. So many lives lost, and yet many people have no idea why they died. They have no idea why America went to war in a small country 9,000 miles away.
2. The same could be said about the death of Christ. 2,000 years ago Jesus Christ died, but most people have no idea why, or what it means. Today we are going to learn the real reason Christ died.

II. CONTEXT

1. Today we are starting a new sermon series through the book of Galatians. Galatia was a Roman province in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey) where Paul started several churches on his first missionary journey. On his second missionary journey, he wrote them a letter to correct some doctrinal mistakes. This is probably the first book that Paul wrote in the Bible, about A.D. 51.

III. TEXT: Galatians 1:1-5

Paul, an apostle—not from men or by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead—2 and all the brothers who are with me:

To the churches of Galatia.

3 Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father. 5 To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

IV. FOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE DEATH OF CHRIST

1. Who died?

- i. **Galatians 1:3-4** “... our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins...”
- ii. Jesus died for us. Specifically, “our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- iii. Names are funny things. Sometimes they have meaning, sometimes they don’t. I had a friend in college with several daughters, and he loved the color turquoise so much that he named each one of his daughters after the color turquoise. Turquoisha, Turquisha, Turquasha. Your name might not mean very much, but each one of Christ’s names/titles tells us something very important about the one who died for us.

1. Lord: Lord is the Greek word *kurios* (pronounced kuh-ree-ahss). The word literally means master, or sir, or owner. It was a term of respect for a superior. The Bible that the Jews read in the first century was the Greek Old Testament. When God’s name, Yahweh, would come

up, it was translated as kurios, or in English, Lord. So, when Jesus is called Lord, it is pointing to His deity. He is Yahweh. He is God, the second person of the Triune Godhead. In the 90s AD, the Roman emperor Domitian claimed to be a god. Worse than that, he forced everyone in the empire to worship him. They had to come to the public square, burn incense, and say, "Caesar kurios," or Caesar is Lord. To do so was to acknowledge his deity. Christians refused to do, and as a result, they risked imprisonment, confiscation of property, banishment, and even death. Why? Christians know there is only one true God, and His name is Jesus. Jesus is Lord!

2. Jesus: This is the most common name for our Lord in the gospels, where He is called Jesus almost six hundred times. Do you remember where Jesus got His name? An angel appeared to Joseph to call him Jesus. Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua, which was a very common name for Jewish boys. There were at least five high priests by the name of Jesus, and in the works of Josephus there are about twenty people named Jesus, ten of whom lived at the same time as Jesus Christ. What does it mean? The Lord saves. That's fitting because Jesus came to save us (Mt 1:21).
 3. Christ: Christ is the Greek form of Messiah. It means anointed one. In the Old Testament it referred to prophets, priests, or kings, all of whom were anointed with oil, which symbolized their dedication to serve God. The OT prophets told of a future Messiah who would be the ultimate and eternal prophet, priest, and king; the kind to end all kings. A king from the family of David who would reign forever. When Jesus came, He claimed to be the Messiah (Jn 4:25-26). Calling Jesus "Christ" is a declaration that He is the Messiah. He is the fulfilment of all the OT promises – the eternal prophet, priest, and king.
- iv. Notice what it says of Christ: "who gave himself"
1. Some have criticized the gospel by arguing that it is the story of divine filicide. Filicide is when a parent murders their child. Doesn't the Bible say that God the Father killed God the Son? Or at least that He sacrificed Him? No. John 3:16 says that God "gave his one and only Son." Galatians 4:4 says that "God sent His Son." But the Father did not kill, or murder the Son. The Father did not force the Son to die for us; Jesus voluntarily died for us.
 2. Gal 1:4 He "gave Himself"
 3. **John 10:11** "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

4. **John 10:17-18** “This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life so that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own.”
5. Try to wrap your mind around us. Jesus didn’t merely rescue us; He rescued us by sacrificing His own life; He sacrificed His own life to rescue His enemies; and He sacrificed His own life in the worst possible way – crucifixion.
6. Why did Jesus do that for us? One word: Love.
 - a. **Ephesians 5:2** “and walk in love, as Christ also loved us and gave himself for us, a sacrificial and fragrant offering to God.”
 - b. Jesus loves you. How do I know? Because He died for you.
 - c. Think about how much we love our kids. We would do anything for them. We love them so much we take them to Chuckee Cheese’s, multiple times! Jesus loves you infinitely more than that. Our love is imperfect; His is perfect. Our love is finite; His is infinite.

2. Why did He need to die?

- i. Every once in a while my boss will walk all the way down the hall to my office and then say, “Why did I come over here? I can’t remember.” And then he’ll just walk back to his office. I think a lot of Christians wonder that about Jesus. Jesus came all the way from heaven to earth to take on human flesh, and then all the way to the cross. Why? Why did Jesus die?
- ii. **Galatians 1:3-4** “... our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins...”
- iii. “for our sins”
- iv. The Greek word for “for” is *huper*. The famous theologian Karl Barth said that the single most important word in all of the Greek NT is the word *huper*, which is translated “in behalf of” (R.C. Sproul).
- v. To know why Jesus died, you need to understand two realities:
 1. The character of man:
 - a. All people are sinners (Rm 3:23). We have all disobeyed God. We have all done things God said we should not do, and we have failed to do things that God said we should do.
 - b. Most people admit they have sinned, but they aren’t sinners. They are not perfect, but they aren’t that bad.
 - c. The evangelist Ray Comfort is highly skilled at convincing people of their sinfulness. He simply goes through the ten commandments. Have you ever lied? Then you are a liar. Have you ever stolen anything? Then you are a thief. Have you ever lusted in your heart? Jesus calls that adultery. Have you ever lost your temper. Jesus said that’s the moral equivalent of murder. Have you ever taken God’s name in

vain? That's blasphemy. If you've done all those things, then you are a lying, thieving, adulterous, blaspheming, murderer.

d. The Bible also says that the punishment for sins is death, or eternal separation from God (Rm 6:23).

2. The character of God:

a. God is just, and He is the judge of the universe. One day every person must stand before God's throne to be judged. And God is perfectly just, which means He will never negotiate His justice. He cannot excuse sin. He cannot close His eyes to sin. He must punish it. Therefore, God must punish us for our sins.

b. At the same time, God is also loving (1 Jn 4:8). He doesn't want anyone to go to hell, but all to be saved (1 Tim 2:4; 2 Pt 3:9).

3. In order to satisfy His justice, and at the same time save mankind from eternal punishment, God sent His Son, Jesus, to be punished for us.

4. Since Jesus lived a perfect life, He could die for others since He didn't need to die for His own sins. Since He was divine, He could die for the sins of the whole world, and at the same time, rise again.

5. He was punished on behalf of us. He was punished in our place. He was our substitute. We deserved to die, but He died for us.

vi. The cross teaches us three things: How costly sin is, how sinful we are, and how loving God is. Sin is so costly that it required the death of God's Son to pay its penalty. We are sinful that we needed Christ to die for us. Jesus is so loving that He was willing to die for His enemies.

vii. I read the story of a man, a father named Michael. He would take his family out each week to see a movie or a sports event. When they got home, they would make a fire in the fireplace and have popcorn. During one of these evenings, his little son Billy was really misbehaving in the car on the way home, so he was punished by sending his son to his room while the rest of the family had popcorn. After the family had the fire going and the popcorn ready, Michael went to Billy's room and said, "You go out with the others. I'll stay here and take your punishment." That's what Jesus did for us. He took our punishment on the cross. (Craig Brian Larson, *750 Engaging Illustrations*.)

3. What was the purpose of His death?

i. What did He hope to accomplish?

ii. **Galatians 1:4** "who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age..."

iii. "To rescue us from the present evil age"

iv. The Bible says there are two different ages: this present age (Gal 1:4), and the age to come (Eph 1:21). They are separated by the return of Christ. Before

Christ comes back, we are living in this present age. When Christ comes, He will usher in the age to come.

- v. The Bible says there are two kinds of people. Children of the light, and children of this age (Lk 16:8). The children of the light are Christians, and the children of this age are those who reject Christ.
- vi. Why did Christ come to rescue us from the present age? Because it is evil. It is characterized by wickedness. The children of this age are dominated by sin, directed by Satan, and destined for eternal suffering.
 1. They are dominated by sin (Eph 2:1-2): The children of this age are dominated by sin – by pride, lust, jealousy, greed, anger, bitterness, addictions, etc. Sin is the first thing they think of in the morning, and the last thing they think of when they go to bed. Even when they realize that sin is ruining their lives, they cannot stop. The worst sinners are the ones who don't think they are sinful and deserve hell, because they see no need for a Savior. They are slaves of sin.
 2. They are directed by Satan. The Bible teaches that Satan is the god of this age (2 Cor 4:4), and he is guiding and directing the children of this age like a puppets to carry out his plans (Eph 2:1-2). People think that by rejecting God they are free, but they aren't. They are under Satan's control. Satan wants you to believe that he doesn't exist, but every once in a while he accidentally shows his face to anyone who has eyes to see. When? Whenever he guides someone to commit an act so evil that it is inexplicable, like a mass shooter who walks into an elementary school and kills a bunch of innocent children; like a mother who aborts her own child; like a person who has surgery to permanently mutilate his or her body so they look like the opposite sex; like the teenager who kills herself. These people aren't insane; they are under the influence of Satan.
 3. They are destined for eternal destruction.
 - a. That is, without Christ, the children of this age are headed for eternal separation from God in hell.
 - b. Many people hate the idea of an eternal hell, so they deny its existence. That's crazy. There are a lot of things that I hate, but that doesn't mean they aren't real. I hate cancer, but it's real.
 - c. Jesus spoke more about hell than heaven.
 - i. There are 1,830 verses that contain the words of Jesus. 13% deal with hell.
 - ii. The word hell (Gk. Gehenna) occurs in the NT twelve times; eleven of them come from the lips of Jesus.

- d. **Matthew 10:28** “Don’t fear those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul; rather, fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”
- vii. Christ died to rescue us from all of this. Because Christ died for us, we can be rescued from this present evil age. When you make the decision to turn from sins and trust in Christ as your Lord and Savior, Jesus immediately saves you from the domination of sin, the direction of Satan, and the destiny of hell. He gives you the power to overcome sin. He guards you from Satan so that he can’t control you. And He guarantees you a home in heaven.

4. How should we respond to His death?

- i. **Galatians 1:5** “To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.”
- ii. Paul is doing two things here: 1) He is glorifying God, and 2) He is inviting his readers to glorify God.
- iii. Why? This is the proper response to death of Christ.
- iv. What does it mean to glorify God?
 - 1. To give Him the credit.
 - a. Acts 12 tells the strange story of King Herod. He delivered a speech to the people of Tyre and Sidon, and they began to shout, “It’s the voice of a god and not a man!” At once an angel struck him, and he was eaten by worms and died. Why? The text says because “he did not give the glory to God.” Instead of saying, “All my abilities come from God; He deserves all the praise,” he accepted the praise.
 - b. To glorify God is to give Him the credit for everything good in your life. It is to point to His greatness, not your own. It is seek His fame and His praise, and not your own. It is to boast in Christ Jesus, and not in yourself.
 - c. To glorify God is to say,
 - i. I am only going to heaven because of Jesus, who died for me. If God gave me what I deserved, it would be hell. I am saved by the grace of God through the death of Christ.
 - ii. I am only able to avoid sin because of Jesus.
 - iii. I am only able to do acts of kindness and charity because Jesus enables me.
 - iv. I am only able to succeed at anything because Jesus empowers me.
 - 2. To give Him praise (Lk 18:43).
 - a. **Luke 18:43** “Instantly he could see, and he began to follow him, glorifying God. All the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.”

- i. In this passage, Jesus healed a blind man. How did the blind man respond? By glorifying God. By praising God.
 - b. Through His death, Christ has done something for us that is infinitely greater than physical healing; He has given us forgiveness, and freedom from sin and Satan, and eternal life! How should we respond? We should praise Him. We should sing to Him at the top of our lungs. We should cheer for Him. And we should never stop, no matter how long we have been saved.
- 3. To live in a way that pleases Him by reflecting His moral character (1 Cor 10:31).
 - a. **1 Corinthians 10:31** “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.”
 - i. This verse is saying that in everything we do, we should do it to please God by reflecting His moral character – even in something as unimportant as eating and drinking. Just as God is loving, and holy, and truthful, and patient, we should live the same way.
 - b. Why should we live to please God? Out of gratitude for the cross. We don’t strive to please God so that He will forgive us and let us into heaven. We can never please God as much as He deserves. And no matter how much good we do, we still deserve to be punished for the bad. It is like a convicted murderer. Even if you promise to do only good things the rest of your life, you still deserve punishment for your crime. We can never please God so much to deserve heaven. We deserve punishment, and wrath, and justice. But Jesus paid it all! Because of His death and resurrection we are saved. Out of gratitude we live to please Him in all we do, because that’s what He deserves.
 - c. If you don’t have a deep desire to please God, it’s because you don’t understand and believe that Jesus died to save you.
 - d. In the movie Saving Private Ryan, Captain Miller is sent on a special mission to find Private Ryan and rescue him from the war after it was learned that three of his brothers had already been killed in the war. To save Private Ryan, Captain Miller and his small team risked their lives, and some of them died, even Captain Miller. As Captain Miller was shot, bleeding, and dying, he told Private Ryan, “Earn this! Earn this!” What did he mean? He wanted Private Ryan to show his gratitude by

living his life in a way that honored the soldiers who gave their lives for him.

- e. That's what it means to glorify God. You can never earn heaven. You can never pay God back for the cross. But out of gratitude you can live every day to please and honor God for what He's given you.

V. CONCLUSION

1. Why did Jesus die? To rescue us from this present evil age. To save us from the dominion of sin, the direction of Satan, and the destiny of hell.
2. And all of this is a free gift.
3. How do you receive it? A, B, C.
 - i. Admit you are a sinner, in need of a Savior.
 - ii. Believe in Jesus' death for your sins and resurrection.
 - iii. Call on Him to be the Savior and boss of your life.