

# THE GOSPEL

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## GOD'S GREAT RESCUE



### WEEK 4: AT THE CROSS

The gospel is good news, not just for the perfect life Jesus lived on our behalf but also because of the brutal death he suffered in our place. In fact, his death is what we celebrate and what he commanded us to remember. This is because his death changed everything, and it should dramatically impact our lives in the here-and-now.

#### **1. AT THE CROSS, JESUS IS DECLARED GUILTY SO THAT WE CAN BE DECLARED INNOCENT**

- Read Isaiah 53:6 & 2 Corinthians 5:21

At Jesus' trial, he was falsely accused and sentenced to death. He had done nothing wrong, but in order for God to lay all of our sin on him, so that he could die in our place and receive the punishment we deserved, he had to allow him to be killed at the hands of men. In doing so, God placed all the sin of mankind on him. He took the full weight of humanity's sin into his body and felt the crushing weight of God's judgment on himself, in order that he could gift us his own righteousness. On the cross he willingly exchanged his obedience for our rebellion.

- ❖ Q: What was the great exchange that happened on the cross?
- ❖ Q: How does Christ's death allow God to declare us innocent?

#### **2. AT THE CROSS, JESUS IS PUNISHED SO THAT WE NEVER HAVE TO BE**

- Read Romans 6:23, Hebrews 9:22, Hebrews 10:4, Romans 3:23-25, 1 John 4:10, Romans 5:6-9

Our shock at the brutal death of Christ reveals our lack of understanding of how truly vile sin is. We know from Genesis 2:17 and Romans 6:23 that God viewed sin so seriously that the only just punishment for it would be our death. We see in the Old Testament that God allowed his people to sacrifice an animal, in order to substitute that life for their own. Justice demands a life for sin. However, the book of Hebrews tells us that the blood of animals was insufficient to deal with the sin of man. This is why God had to come in the form of a man, in order to pay the necessary price for sin. Because he was perfectly obedient, God's justice was fully satisfied in his death. The punishment that was laid on him was therefore enough to pay the price for all sin. Therefore, we as believers need not fear God's punishment. God punished Christ fully on our behalf.

- ❖ Q: Why did Jesus have to come and die, if animals were sacrificed to atone for sins? (See Hebrews 1-:4).
- ❖ Q: Why is it so encouraging for us to know that our sin has been dealt with once and for all?
- ❖ Q: Why is it incorrect for us to think that, when bad circumstances arrive in our lives, God is punishing us?

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### 3. AT THE CROSS, JESUS IS SHAMED SO THAT OUR SHAME IS REMOVED

- Hebrews 12:2 & 1 John 1:7-9

One of the great consequences for our sin is the shame that it brings. We live with the fear of regret and of exposure for how bad we have been, or how badly someone has treated us.

Christ did not only deal with the punishment for sin, he also dealt with the associated shame. Not only did he experience the shame of the type of death he faced, but in facing death he put shame to rest as well. This means that even though we may feel the sense of shame that sin brings, we need no longer hold onto it, because he has washed us clean from that as well.

- ❖ Q: Why are we, as believers, also healed of our shame, and not just the sin that caused it?
- ❖ Q: How do you think we, as believers, are to respond to the desire to hide and pretend to be better than we are (due to our sense of shame)?

### 4. AT THE CROSS, JESUS IS HATED SO THAT WE CAN KNOW THE LOVE OF GOD

- John 3:16

The word love has become so diluted and transient. We tend to associate it with how we feel at any given point. But this is not the kind of love that God has poured out on us. God loved us so much that he chose to lay his own life down for us. On this basis, no matter what is happening in our lives currently, we cannot dispute his love for us. The cross marks the fierceness of his love for us and that can never be moved.

- ❖ Q: Why is the cross the proof that God loves us, regardless of what we are facing in our lives at any given point in time?
- ❖ *Personal Reflection* Q: Is the cross the place you draw your mind to when you are struggling to understand God's love? Explain.

### 5. AT THE CROSS, JESUS IS ALONE SO THAT WE CAN KNOW THAT WE NEVER ARE

- Read Matthew 27:46 & Hebrews 12:3

Jesus experienced abandonment at the cross. Many mocked him, others rejected him, and even most of his close friends left him, because they were afraid. But the worse pain for him would have been at the time when God the Father turned his face away from him. He endured the full experience of loneliness, and yet he did it willingly for our sake.

- ❖ Q: Why does it help us to know that Jesus fully understands the human experiences of betrayal, abandonment, physical and emotional agony and even the process of death?

### 6. AT THE CROSS, JESUS DIES, SO THAT WE CAN EXPERIENCE DEATH'S DEFEAT

- Read Hebrews 9:27 & 1 Corinthians 15:53-55

Though death is the great leveller and our greatest enemy, for those who believe, the sting of death has been removed.

- ❖ Q: Even though we are all appointed to die physically, why has death lost its sting for we who believe?