



STUDY TOOLS

Sunday, May 4, 2025

Teaching Title: Why did Jesus Have to Die?

Key Scripture: Romans 5:6–11

CEDAR VALLEY

5-DAY READING PLAN WITH QUESTIONS:

Monday: Leviticus 16

Tuesday: Romans 5

Wednesday: 1 John 1–2:2

Thursday: Colossians 2

Friday: 2 Corinthians 5:11–6:21

1. What does this passage tell you about God?
2. What does this passage tell you about people?
3. If this is God's word, what do I need to do?
4. What's your takeaway?
5. Who would you tell?

MEMORY TOPIC:

Why did Jesus die?

MEMORY VERSE:

Romans 5:6 NLT

When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners.

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION:

Introduction:

Many of us know that Jesus died for us. But why did He die? Couldn't He have just have forgiven us? Why was death necessary to achieve our salvation? These are the very questions the apostle Paul addresses in his letter to the church in Rome. For Paul, the crucifixion of Jesus was a sacrifice motivated by the love and holiness of God. Jesus became human, just like us, and experienced death so that we could be restored. Forgiveness isn't simply about overlooking sin—God's holiness demands justice, and Jesus absorbed the cost on our behalf. His death has given us right standing with God and set us free from condemnation. The American church has often held an incomplete understanding of the cross. Some people wear a cross necklace without really knowing what it signifies. Others believe Jesus had to die because God was angry with us. But it was God's love for humanity, along with His holiness, that brought us back into friendship with Him. Where sin separated, love restored.

Questions:

Icebreaker—If someone had asked you, "Why did Jesus have to die?" what would your answer have been before hearing this message?

1. Read Romans 5:6–11 as a group. How does Paul describe our condition before Christ died for us? What does "utterly helpless" mean to you personally?
2. Why do you think it's significant that "Christ came at just the right time" (Romans 5:6b)?
3. How does God's holiness help explain why forgiveness required the death of Jesus?
4. According to verse 8, God showed His love by sending Christ to die while we were still sinners. How does that challenge or deepen your understanding of God's love?
5. Romans 5:9 uses powerful courtroom language (see Notes). You have been acquitted from all guilt and

are no longer condemned! If God doesn't condemn us, why do we so often condemn ourselves? Why is it so hard to forgive ourselves?

6. In Romans 5:10, Paul shifts from a courtroom metaphor to a relational one by talking about reconciliation (see Notes). What does it mean to you that God has made us His "friends" through Jesus?
7. Is there an area of your life where you're still living under condemnation, even though Jesus has declared you free? How can the group support you in that?

Notes | Question #5

Romans 5:9(a) "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."

The Greek word for "made right" is *dikaioó* (dik-ah-yo'-o). It means "to declare or pronounce someone as righteous. In a legal sense, it refers to the act of acquitting or vindicating someone, declaring them free from guilt or blame. In the New Testament, it is often used in the context of God's act of declaring a sinner righteous through faith in Jesus Christ. This justification is not based on the individual's own merit but on the righteousness of Christ imputed to them."

Question #6

Romans 5:10 "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."

The Greek word for "reconcile" is *katallassó* (kat-al-las'-so). It means "to reconcile or to restore a relationship to a state of harmony. In the New Testament, it is used to describe the restoration of the relationship between God and humanity through Jesus Christ. This reconciliation involves a change from enmity to friendship, emphasizing the removal of the barrier of sin and the establishment of peace."

Digging Deeper

—For a helpful article about "Why Did Jesus Have to Die?" please read the following article by the Bible Project: <https://bibleproject.com/articles/why-did-jesus-have-to-die-a-question-worth-unpacking/>

—What does atonement mean? How do we understand the meaning of Jesus' death? Here is an excerpt from *Engaging Theology* by Ben Blackwell and R. L. Hatchett (page 197-198).

"God's holy love drives His action in salvation: in His holiness He takes sin seriously, and in His love, He goes to the furthest extent to resolve our problem. God set the stage for restoring the world in the Old Testament, but the decisive and transformative event in this history of salvation is the death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah... The key theological term that describes this is atonement, initially popularized by the first major English translator of the Bible, William Tyndale. This term points to the reconciliation of humans once separated from God by sin who now can become "at one" with Him again. While there is a great unity in the Christian tradition about the identity of Jesus, there is diversity in the tradition about why Jesus had to die to bring salvation and how His death and resurrection achieved salvation for the world.

This diversity comes from the plethora of metaphors and images the Bible uses to describe the Christ event (His incarnation, death, and resurrection). Over time theologians have come to speak of different "models of the atonement" to describe these various perspectives... no one picture captures the fullness of the restoring work of Christ and the Spirit, so these are like different facets of a gem. Here are some examples:

Christ the Victor model: Christ's death and resurrection are an assault on humanity's evil captor Satan, and he is defeated by Jesus's resurrection from the dead, which empties Satan's power over death (Romans 5:11–21; 1 Cor. 15:20-28; Col. 2:13–15).

Ransom model: Satan has kidnapped humans, and Jesus's death on the cross is the ransom paid to redeem them from their captor (Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45; 1 Tim. 2:5–6).

Satisfaction model: Humans created an infinite offense against God's honor... Jesus, the God-man, offered himself to restore God's honor (Isa 52:13–53:12; John 1:29)."