

JCI #185 June 2017

Why the Cross?

Why did God require the cross?

Why did God send Jesus to die on it?

1 Corinthians 2:2

For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Paul's statement regarding the single focus of his preaching is loud and clear. The gospel is all about Jesus Christ: Who He is and what He did on the cross. The gospel message is Only Jesus! Only the cross!

Paul kept his message focused on the cross. Why? Because the cross is absolutely necessary for rescuing sinners from eternal condemnation, giving them forgiveness from their sins, and sparing them from God's holy wrath.

Why did God require the cross? Why was the cross necessary for God to forgive us? Some will argue that they forgive others who have done them wrong without demanding a price to be paid. Doesn't love mean we overlook sin and wrong out of love for the wrong doer? ***Isn't love enough?***

Horizontal relationships between two sinful human beings are different from the vertical relationship between an all-holy Creator-Judge and a sinful creature-criminal. Humans are indeed free to choose to overlook sin and forgive without justice. However, the all-holy Creator and Judge of the universe cannot and will not overlook sin and reject justice to extend forgiveness. If He did so, He would be completely unqualified to bring justice to an evil world and would deny His very nature in doing so.

The cross was necessary because God is just.

We do not naturally think in terms of complete holiness. To us sinners, sin is normal. Therefore, to us sinners, sin is not a big deal. To us sinners, eternal punishment as the just judgment for sin is irrational. But that is precisely because we are completely corrupted by sin. Our consciences are corrupt. Our morals are corrupt. Our standards are corrupt. Our expectations are corrupt. Our self-knowledge is corrupt. Therefore, when we sit in judgement on the All Holy Judge of the Universe and reject His justice, we simply display the depth of our inner corruption and rebellion and demonstrate why we deserve His just wrath.

The cross was necessary because God is righteous and holy.

He created a perfect world originally sinless and holy, with Adam and Eve who possessed innocent and pure hearts. God could walk with them and live with them because they were righteous in their innocence. But sin brought the judgment of death and also the stain and corruption of human nature that separates man from God. God is absolutely pure, righteous, and separate from all evil, and therefore could not allow evil in His presence.

God creates, evil destroys. God is pure, evil defiles. God and evil cannot co-exist together. Therefore, sinful man was banished from Eden, the garden of God's presence.

This banishment would last until sin would be justly punished and finally removed from His presence. ***Therefore, the cross!*** At the cross Jesus, the sinless One, became the sinner's substitute, taking our sins upon Himself and the punishment those sins justly deserved. By His cross, Jesus fulfilled the righteous standard, the just penalty for sin, and fully met all that perfect justice required. Through the cross, God can freely forgive condemned sinners who come to Him by faith in His Son and His finished work on the cross. God does not overlook or condone sin. God overtook and condemned sin by placing it on His Son who died to meet the full requirement of eternal justice.

Now that we have seen the necessity of the cross, we are ready to answer the second question:

Why did God send Jesus to die on the cross?

While question is simple to answer, it is profoundly impossible to comprehend.

The answer is: Love!

God so loved the world (you), that He gave up His only Son (Jesus dying on the cross), that whoever will believe in Him (fully trust Him for forgiveness and eternal life), will not perish (suffer the just punishment of everlasting hell for their sins) but have everlasting life (in God's presence in a sinless new creation forever.) John 3:16 with added explanatory phrases

Justice required the cross. Love provided it.

If God were not infinitely just, the cross would not be necessary.

If God were not infinitely loving, the cross would not have been provided.

God could have, with perfect justice, condemned and sent every human being to hell. No voice could be raised against that righteous sentence.

If God did not love us beyond explanation, He would never have sent His only beloved Son to take our place and suffer the judgment of holy wrath to save us when we didn't even want saving! We rejected God. God willingly sent His Son to die for us. We murdered the Son of God, The Son of God willingly allowed Himself to be killed in our place. We did nothing but evil. God did nothing but good to rescue us from our just condemnation. Oh the wonder of God's great salvation!

God's justice required the cross.

God's love provided it.

God's longsuffering waits for sinners to repent and believe in the crucified, risen Savior.

God's grace sends us to tell the world this focused message: Jesus Christ and Him crucified!

May our hearts tremble before God's holiness, overflow before His love, rejoice before His grace, and beat with the message to a lost world... Jesus saves!

Self-Check

1) Has my heart grown calloused to the glory of the gospel? Have I become used to sin, and indifferent to holiness? Do I need revival?

2) Who do I know that needs to hear this glorious gospel? How will I tell them? When will I tell them?

For Further Study

Revelation 20:11-15 Job 34:12 Psalm 9:7-8 Colossians 3:25 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9

Ephesians 3:17-19 1 Peter 2:24 Hebrews 2:8-9 Galatians 3:13 2 Cor 5:21 Hebrews 9:28

Revelation 21-22

Remember, you are very special to us and we pray for you.

Living with leaving in view.... John 9:4 Ron & Val

Seeing The Invisible,
embracing The Unapproachable,
declaring The Unexplainable,
changed by The Immutable,
running after The Irresistible
with inexhaustible joy
in our inexpressible sorrows,
spending our time on eternity,
owning nothing yet possessing everything
that matters and lasts.
We are Pilgrims in Paradox.
Welcome to THE JOURNEY