

# The Meaning Of The Cross

Based on a Sermon by Paul Washer

Many many preachers will spend a lot of time talking about the meaning of the cross but rarely put the emphasis where emphasis is due. The church by and large is missing the point about the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Theology is the study of God. But there is a huge difference between a theologian and a pop theologian. Pop stands for Popular. Pop music is music for the day. It is popular today but doesn't last very long. Pop theologians haven't done much study of the word of God but are more given to experiences, and teaching which usually deal more with anecdotes and stories and cute little sayings, than solid Scriptural teachings.

If someone tells you that the church, by and large, has missed the meaning of the cross, the first thing you need to ask them is this.. Why do you say that? The answer better be this...Not only have I found these things in the Bible, but history backs me up.

When someone teaches or preaches about the meaning of the Cross what is it you usually hear? Physical suffering. They will go into much detail about the terrible whipping and the crown of thorns, How the nails went through a certain part of the hand in order to support the body. How Jesus had to push himself up to get a lungful of air (Crucifixion caused you to die of suffocation). They talk about the Roman soldier thrusting the spear into Jesus' side and the water and blood flowing out of His side. And then they will tell you "by this we are saved".

Which should bring up the question of how it is possible that the physical suffering of Jesus, caused by men, somehow paid the penalty for our sins. It can not possibly work that way. How can our sins be paid for because the Romans and Jews rejected Jesus? Because they whipped and flogged Him?

God sent his son who lived a perfect life and then, according to the plan of God, they rejected Him, whipped Him etc and God looked at all Jesus' suffering at the hands of men and considered that to be payment for all our sins against Him.

**That is heresy. The deepest form of heresy. You can be wrong about a lot of things but if you are wrong about the cross you are in trouble.**

So what happened on that cross to cause God to forgive us of our sins? The first question is why was it necessary that **God in the flesh come to earth and die**. Why can't God just forgive us?

He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the righteous, Both of them alike are an abomination to Jehovah. Proverbs 17:15

Read that carefully... He who justifies the wicked is an abomination to the Lord.

So much of what you hear today, so many of the songs sung today are about God justifying the wicked. God justified us while were still sinners, he declared us to be right before Him and we praise God for that.

God's word says that if anyone declares the sinner to be right when he is not right is an abomination before Him. So if God declared you to be right when you were not right, if God simply forgives the wicked, He would become an abomination, according to His own word. He would become wicked. Imagine a judge sitting up there in his place on the bench, forgiving a murderer and letting him go. He would no longer be a just judge.

God is a just judge and God's justice demands he throw men in hell.

Therefore if God is a just God He cannot forgive... He must punish the wicked, that is the point of the whole Bible. All through the Old Testament we see animals dying. It is a symbol and type of the final and ultimate sacrifice.

Perhaps it is becoming a little more clear as to why God had to die. If he justifies the wicked person and declares the sinner to be righteous He, according to His own word, becomes an abomination. God can not simply forgive.

The law... God's law demands that the sinner has to die.

God simply cannot wink at it and say 'okay we will let him slide this time'.

If HE does that HE will be wrong, He will be unjust and contrary to His own Word. Remember what happened to Satan when he rebelled against God. He was swiftly thrown out of Heaven. So if God were to simply forgive men's sins, Satan would probably lose no time reminding God of His unfairness... Perhaps a conversation like this would take place...

Remember when we sinned against you. You were just then weren't you? You cast all of us out of Heaven. These men sin against you and You let them go. Guess you are more like me than you know.

See the problem?

Now the only way that God can forgive sinful men is if God who made the law and God who demands satisfaction...comes down Himself and pays the penalty.

The ONLY way the law of God can be satisfied is BY God.

If Jesus is not God, then sit and weep because everyone is going to hell.. What was done on that cross...two thousand years ago on a blood soaked hill called Calvary, was not enough.

God made the law, God has to satisfy the law. It has to be God. Only HE can pay the price. God, in order to forgive the wicked and still be just, has to DIE in the place of the wicked. This is the ONLY way He can forgive.

SO how does He die. What is it about the Son of God's death that leads to our forgiveness? How does His death satisfy the law?

When some one says they have been saved, the question to be asked is saved from what? Many people will say from sin. This is simply not true! Sin was an act you did. Sin isn't going to throw you in hell. You have sinned, but sin is not a living being that's going to judge you then throw you into hell.

What you have been saved from is not a what, it is a Who.

Much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him. Romans 5:9.

You have been saved from God. God is the judge of all the universe. YOU have sinned and made yourself an enemy of God. So when you stand before Him, He will judge you and throw you into hell.

A lot of people today seem to believe that God will not throw anyone into hell. It is entirely possible that their theology comes from the back of a Christian T-shirt or bumper sticker, because it is not in the Bible.

Jesus said...

But I will show you whom you should fear: fear Him who after He kills, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him! Luke 12:4-5.

This God of ours is not politically correct.

Have you ever heard the term enemy of God?

Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God. James 4:4

Contemporary Christianity interprets it differently from historical Christianity. Preachers today will often tell us that when the Bible uses the expression 'enemy of God', it means when WE were in rebellion against God, WE were against God. What it doesn't mean is that God was ever against us, that God was our enemy. We are holding a gun against God and He wants us to put it down so we can become friends.

This is simply not true. All throughout historical Christianity, when it says 'Enemy of God' it means...not only are you God's enemy holding your gun on Him, God was your enemy holding His gun on you. You put your gun down...all well and good, but He still has his sights trained on you. You are a criminal, you have broken the law and you deserve to die. You can surrender and put your gun down but you are still going to die. Not only are you still His enemy, He is your enemy.

And yes, it does say in the Bible that God loves us.. But We tend to assume at once that "love" means what it does to us in modern times -- in this case, a mushy sentimentality that never says a harsh word and never steps on the toes of others. but conceptually, it is certainly possible to love one's enemies, and yet also attack them; and the same for one's disciples or allies. Never forget that Jesus calls the Pharisees names, and Peter "Satan". Paul wished emasculation on his Galatian opponents (Gal. 5) and shames the Galatians with his rhetoric.

God says things in the Bible like I will hate them, I will come against them, I will fight them. I will raise up a standard. This God of the 21st century is a lot different from the Biblical one and a lot different from the one that has been preached for the last 2000 years.

Consider these verses (among many others) from Nahum and Jeremiah and Micah and Paul..

Jehovah is a jealous God and avengeth; Jehovah avengeth and is full of wrath; Jehovah taketh vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies. Nahum 1:2

And I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation. Jeremiah 21

And I will execute vengeance in anger and wrath upon the nations which hearkened not. Micah 5:15

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hinder the truth in unrighteousness; Romans 1:18

Then shall Jehovah go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. Zechariah 14:3

Remember what Amos said:

“... prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.” Amos 4:12

The Book of Revelation tells us

“...and they say to the mountains and to the rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?” Revelation 6:16-17

He is not coming back with an apologetic look saying “I wanted to save you but I am sorry but now you are just going to have to go to hell”. No. He is coming back sword in hand, in fury, to fight someone.

The problem you have to see here is punishment. We have broken God’s law and deserve to be punished. But from where does that punishment come? We have grown up being told that if you sin and something happens to you, that is not God, but natural consequences similar to the law of gravity. Jump off the roof and you are going to get hurt. You sin and you are going to get hurt. It’s not God doing it, it’s just the way things are. This is not true. God talks all the time of coming in judgment against people’s sin. Constantly. Read the Bible.

And I will set my face against them; they shall go forth from the fire, but the fire shall devour them; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah, when I set my face against them. Ezekiel 15:7

Therefore thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will set my face against you for evil, even to cut off all Judah. Jeremiah 44:11

And the soul that turneth unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto the wizards, to play the harlot after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people. Leviticus 20:6

So we realize we have to be saved from God and His punishment, but how is that punishment to be done away with? When Jesus was dying on the cross it was not the nails in His hand, or the crown of thorns or the Roman spears that save you. The suffering that men heaped upon Jesus is not that which pays for the crime. God did not look on that suffering and okay Good Enough!. What paid for your sin is written in Isaiah 53:10 and 12

Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand. Isaiah 53:10 and 12

Usually when you hear a sermon or preaching on Isaiah 53, it usually centers around verses 3,4,5, and six, which talk about the suffering heaped on Jesus by men. Very rarely do you hear about Isaiah 53:10.

“It pleased the Lord to crush Him.”

Isaiah goes on to say..

"...[He] was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors." Isaiah 53:12

How is it that that cross saves you? Because Jesus bore on the cross all the sin that God hates. The sin of all God’s people, from the first man ever saved on the face of the earth to the last man ever saved on the

face of the earth was placed on His son.. the sins of all of God's people. Everything that should be poured out on sinful creatures throughout eternity, God throws down on His only begotten Son in a matter of moments. Crushes Him under the weight of His own justice.

Would you kill your son for someone? I am sorry .. I couldn't. Yet God takes His perfectly innocent son and crushed Him under the weight of His own justice.

When Jesus said "let this cup pass from me", people think it's because He did not want to go to the Cross. They usually imagine it was the physical agony that He did not want to go through. Consider this...there have been martyrs who have been burned at the stake and while they were burning they have lifted their hands and praised God. Does anyone imagine they are greater than our Lord Jesus? There have been Christians who have been crucified, burned, fed to the lions and many of those sang out with joy while the nails were being pounded in. Are any of them greater than Our Lord Jesus? Is it conceivable that Jesus would cower from a punishment that even some of His followers were able to endure with fortitude and praise. Is Jesus weaker than them?

No, Jesus wasn't thinking about nails in His hand, about spears and crowns of thorns or Roman soldiers. He was thinking about the fact that He had never been out of the Father's bosom. That He had never been separated from His Father and now the Father was about to turn His face away from His Son. The Father did not turn His face away because He did not want to see His son suffering, He turned His face away because His son had become detestable. Which is why Matthew 27:46 tells us..

"About the ninth hour [3:00 PM] Jesus cried out [quoting Psalm 22:1] with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, Lama sabachthani?' that is 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?'"

You and I deserved to be crushed with the hammer of justice, to be crushed under God's wrath. But in order to save us He was crushed under His own wrath. That is what the Cross is. That is what it means. If you ever fully realize what happened that day, it will affect you for the rest of your life. You will never be able to get away from it.

And if the day comes that you stand before this Holy God who is about to pass judgment on you without having your sins paid for by His Son, then be afraid, be very afraid, as the wrath which made Jesus say 'let this cup pass from me' is about to descend on your shoulders.

Remember that when you hear about Jesus dying for you, you know now that it is more than just some whips. While one cannot possibly depreciate the physical suffering it was nothing compared to the Son of God being crushed by His own Father. Comparatively those whips were nothing. And when He cried out "It is Finished" that meant 'Paid In Full'. If you are a Christian, God can never pour out His wrath on you. It is impossible because His son drank it. It does not exist anymore. There is no more punishment left for you. But if you are not a Christian you don't even want to know what awaits you...

Why did Jesus die on a Roman cross? He died for the sins of ungodly mankind, to save us from the wrath of God, and to make peace between us and God. "Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ..." Romans 5:1

[http://www.inplainsite.org/html/meaning\\_of\\_the\\_cross.html](http://www.inplainsite.org/html/meaning_of_the_cross.html)