

Vintage Jesus 6

What Did Jesus' Death Accomplish on the Cross?

Lecture

- Well let me start by saying thank you. I am a bit of a nerd. I like to study and I like chasing rabbit trails and questions. And so anyone who helps me by allowing me to teach, I just love you, I appreciate you. I just felt a lot of gratitude in my heart coming to teach today and just grateful that anyone cares. And we're gonna talk about my favorite person today, His name is Jesus. And we're gonna talk about one of the most important subjects in all of human history and all of Christian theology, and that is what did Jesus' death accomplish on the cross? So we're gonna do a deep dive into the crucifixion of Jesus. Next week, we'll jump into the resurrection of Jesus. And by way of introduction, wherever we invest tends to reveal to us what is important to us. And so for most of us, most of our time goes where? It goes to work so we can make money. And then most of our money goes to our home. Percentage wise, usually the largest portion of your budget goes to your house. So if somebody wants to look at your schedule, they would say, "Work must matter to you." And if they look at their budget, then you would have to say that your home matters to you because where you invest, that tends to reveal the priorities that you have. Well that being said, when it comes to the Bible, there are four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, written about Jesus' life. Only two of the four actually tell us anything about His birth. All four, tell us about His resurrection. In those four Gospels, they cover the time from His birth all the way through His Ascension and return to heaven. He lived roughly about 33 years. Yet, of all that could have been said, a third of the four Gospels devote their attention to the last week of Jesus. So think about that. Two thirds of His life is everything except for the last week. One third of all the Gospel material is just the final week of Jesus. If you think of it like a film, it would be sort of a panoramic scope and the story moves along and then everything slows down and the camera pans in and the focus is on the last week of Jesus, that's where all the attention goes. John's Gospel, I believe the last Gospel written, half of the entire Gospel, half of the whole Gospel, is just the last week of Jesus. So everything up until the middle of the Gospel covers all but the last week. And in John 12:28, Jesus reports saying this, "It was for this very reason that I came to this hour." What Jesus is saying is, "Everything in My entire life "and ministry is now leading up to this point, "this point in human history." And when it comes to the death of Jesus, the crucifixion of Jesus, throughout the history of the world, it's elicited a lot of various strong responses from people. I'll give you some examples. In the second century, there was a painting that was found and it shows the head of a man with a jackass' head and he is a worshipping a crucified man. And the caption underneath it says, "Alexamenos worships his god." That's what they thought of Jesus. Anybody who worships Jesus is worshipping that kind of person. Mahatma Gandhi, I don't know if you've heard of him, he said, "Jesus' death on the cross "was a great example to the world, "but there was anything like a mysterious "or miraculous virtue in it? "My heart could not accept." When we get into the crucifixion of Jesus, a number of things were done for us. One of them was setting an example for us how to endure suffering and injustice. And that is certainly one thing that Jesus did, but it's not the only thing that Jesus did. And what Gandhi says is, "I think Jesus is a great example, "but I don't think His death on the cross "did anything for me. "It wasn't substitutionary. "It didn't secure any forgiveness of sin "or salvation for me, but what a great example "of a social, political liberator." And you just need to know that that same false spirit that takes some of what Jesus did, but not all that Jesus did and tries to co-opt Jesus for social, moral, and political movements is very much popular today. Jesus Christ is

not just our example, He's our substitute, and He's our Savior. That's where we're gonna go tonight. In addition, the Mujahideen Shura Council led by Al Qaeda, those who are extreme, radical Islamists tend to see Christians as worshipers of the cross. And they said that worshipers of the cross, and then they spoke of us saying, "We shall break the cross. "You have no choice, but Islam or death." And so for Muslims, they will refer to us pejoratively as worshipers of the cross. We don't worship the cross, we worship the One who died on the cross in our place, for our sins. And what's interesting is they are saying, "If you worship the one who died on the cross, "then we will put you to death." And our answer is "That's fine, He defeated death. "You can't scare me." In addition, the great theologian Madonna, when she finished her... I don't know what's so funny. She finished her Confessions tour. She went on a Confessions tour. She was Catholic-ish, very Catholic-ish. Her Confessions tour was based on that sort of Catholic concept of going to the confessional and confessing your sins to the priest. She went on her tour, where she would end each of her concerts, and if you were there, Jesus died for that too. She says that she was laid on a disco cross to end each of her concerts on the tour for the Confessions tour and she says, "I believe in my heart that if Jesus were alive today, "He would be doing the same thing, "wearing His underwear, going on tour, "and laying on a disco cross in a stadium." Sure, that's exactly what Jesus would be doing 'cause that was the whole point of the cross. Martin Luther King, Jr., he said, "In that dramatic scene "on Calvary's hill, three men were crucified. "We must never forget that all three were crucified "for the same crime, the crime of extremism. "Two were extremists for immorality "and thus fell below their environment. "The other, Jesus Christ, was an extremist "for love, truth, and goodness. "Love, truth, and goodness." Jesus' death, we celebrate every Good Friday, His resurrection, we remember every Easter Sunday, and when it comes to the death of Jesus, it is the most important, significant series of events, the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, in the history of the world, and it is the foundation of Christianity. If Jesus didn't die, our sins are not forgiven, and if Jesus didn't rise, death is not defeated. So unless these two historical events happened, Christianity truly is nothing to be trusted in and it's an absolute failure at its core because it's established in historical fact. So let me back up, I'm gonna answer a succession of questions and then if you've got questions, save them for the end. The first one is how did God prepare His people for Jesus' death? This massive, significant death, sending Jesus into the world to die in our place for our sins, being so important, it would make sense that God would prepare His people. Anytime there's a new movie or a product coming out, the advertisers go into overdrive to let us know, "Hey, don't miss it, here's what's coming." God did this same thing through prophets and through Scripture and through various elements of worship, all of which were to prepare everyone for the coming of Jesus. Looking back on this, Hebrews 2:17, and Hebrews is a book of the Bible in the New Testament written for Jewish people showing that all of the Old Testament was fulfilled in Jesus and all of it was foreshadowing the coming of Jesus for this reason. "He, Jesus, had to be made like His brothers," so God became a man like us, "in every way, "in order that He might become a merciful "and faithful High Priest in service to God, "that He might make," and there's the key word, "atonement," at one ment, it's a reconciling act, "atonement for the sins," that's the problem, "of the people." And so the way it would work in the old covenant, the center of their worship was a place, the temple. In it was the presence of God and their people would go to be in God's presence and to worship God. And they would go there to deal with their sin problem. And the way they would do with their sin problem is they would confess their sins, they would have an animal that would serve as a substitute and a sacrifice to have its blood shed and to die in their place for their sins, and it was to be offered by a priest, in fact, the high priest. And the high

priest was the foreshadowing of Jesus, the temple was the foreshadowing of Jesus. He comes and His body is the temple, He says. Jesus is the great High Priest, He is the one who mediates between us and God. God is holy, we are unholy. Jesus comes to bring our sin to God and to bring God's righteousness to us, He's the High Priest. And all of this would get done at the temple, through the priesthood, through the sacrificial system, and the big day of the year was called Yom Kippur. Have you heard of that? Got Jewish friends? Yom Kippur means the Day of Atonement, this very word. They held it as such a sacred day that the Jews simply called it "The Day." So for us, let's say that perhaps in our calendar year, for most people in the Western world, what's the big holiday? It's Christmas is the big one. But the Jewish people, the Day of Atonement was the big day. Everybody off work, everybody go, offer your sacrifice for your sin. Blood is flowing from the temple. The priest is interceding. And the way that it would work is the priest would actually do two things. Two young, healthy goats were chosen as substitutes. The first was the sacrifice and what the priest would do, would lay hands over that animal and would claim or confess the sins of the people. And then would literally take a knife, slit the throat of the animal, and it would painfully bleed to death. All of that to show that sin requires death as the payment and that a substitute would come to shed blood so that sinners could be forgiven. There was a second goat called the scapegoat. You ever heard of the scapegoat? How many of you that was your little brother? Every time he did something, you blamed it on your little brother. The scapegoat is the one who would also confess the sins of the people over, but unlike it dying, as the substitute would, the scapegoat would be sent away. So the sins of the people would be confessed and then it would be released. And history records, sometimes the people would chase it out of town showing that God forgives sin and He takes it away. He forgives sin and He takes it away. And so the atonement, Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, all of it was to prepare for Jesus who comes to forgive sin through the shedding of His blood and takes it away and takes it away. And so all of that was foreshadowing and preparing for the coming of Jesus. We don't have a temple today because we have Jesus. We don't have a high priest today because we have Jesus. We don't have a sacrificial system today because we have Jesus and Jesus fulfills everything. That's the big idea in the whole book of Hebrews. Everything that they were longing for is fulfilled ultimately in Him. Well then Jesus does come and then the question is, did Jesus promise Good Friday, the day that He died, and Easter Sunday, the day that He rose? Repeatedly throughout His ministry, I could give you example after example after example after example, just give you one. Jesus told them, "Here's how I'm gonna die "and then three days later I will rise." He just told them. Now like us, they somehow forgot or overlooked or disbelieved. And if you've got kids, you know how this works. You tell them something, that doesn't automatically mean that they got it. But Jesus did tell us, this was all prophetic. Matthew 16:21, "From that time, Jesus began "to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem," He knows exactly where He's gonna die. "He must suffer many things," exactly what's gonna happen to Him. "From the elders and chief priests and scribes," those are religious leaders who oppose Him. So hear me in this, man-made, human tradition and religion opposes Jesus, it opposes Jesus. "And be killed," He's not gonna just suffer or be incarcerated, He's gonna die. "And then on the third day," what, "He's gonna rise." We'll get into that all in the next session. But He promised us and He prophesied for us, "I'm gonna go here. "These people are gonna oppose me. "They're gonna physically harm me. "And then they're gonna kill me. "And then I'm gonna kill death." He told us exactly what was gonna happen. Next question. How was Jesus killed? Isaiah was written about 700 years before Jesus walked the earth. And what I love about God, and there's a really good parenting lesson here. God's a Father who tells His kids what's gonna

happen so that they can be ready. Sometimes as parents, we don't tell kids what's going to happen and then we're frustrated that they're not ready. Well, we didn't get them ready by telling them what was going to happen. God's a Father, 700 years in advance, He's telling them here's exactly what's gonna happen so we could be ready. "He," speaking of Jesus, and from Isaiah 40 to 66, the whole theme of the end of Isaiah is Jesus as the Suffering Servant. "He was despised, rejected by men, a man of," what, "sorrows." I mean, God enters the world and just sees all the brokenness, all the rebellion, all the self-destruction, and all the pain. And it's sorrowful for Him. The shortest verse in the entire New Testament is that "Jesus wept." "And familiar with suffering," He suffered through His whole life and it all sort of escalated and culminated in His crucifixion. "Like one from whom men hide their faces, "He was despised, we esteemed Him not." People didn't hold Jesus in high regard or honor. In fact, they disregarded and dishonored Him. Many still do. "Surely He took up our infirmities, carried our sorrows," He came to pick up the mess we have made and pick up the mess that we are. "Yet we looked at His suffering and His sorrow, "we considered him stricken by God and afflicted." People looked at Jesus and said, "He's got a hard life. "God must be punishing Him, He must be a bad man." No, He's actually a loving man. And all the pain that He's enduring is the pain that we have caused and He's carrying it out of love for us. He goes on to say, "Behold, my servant," that's Jesus, "shall act wisely," everything He does is right. "He shall be high and lifted up." What is that? That's the cross. "And exalted, exalted." He's talking here about the crucifixion of Jesus. "As many were astonished at you, "His appearance was so marred and beyond human semblance, "and His form beyond that of the children of mankind, "so shall He sprinkle many nations." It says Jesus was rejected and despised, He had a lot of grief and sorrow, His life was not going to be easy. He was going to be high and lifted up and exalted, yet when you looked at Him, you wouldn't even recognize Him. It says that He would be marred beyond human likeness. And we'll get into the details of crucifixion, but if you would have seen Jesus after His scourging and His beating while He is being crucified, if you knew Him, you wouldn't recognize Him because His body was beaten beyond recognition. I'm a big MMA cage fighting fan. Not personally, I like to watch it, wouldn't get in the ring. But every once in a while, there's somebody who undertakes such a beating that the end of the fight, when they go to raise the hand of the winner, if you were to put the before and after photo, you wouldn't even know it was the same person. They don't even look the same. Just the swelling and the bleeding and the damage, that's what happened to Jesus. And it was all foreshadowed here by the prophet Isaiah. And the sprinkling of many nations is the language of atonement and shedding of blood for the forgiveness of sin. The Jewish people would have caught all of this language. So yes, He tells us in advance how Jesus is going to die, and then I want to get into the details of how Jesus was killed. And this will be a deep, lengthy examination and explanation of the greatest suffering that anyone has possibly ever endured. And for me, the reason that this is important is I believe that sometimes when we explain what Jesus has done, we don't fully give weight and gravitas to the significance of His suffering. And people will say this, "Jesus loves you and He died for all your sins." True. But if you slow down and explain that, they'll understand how much He loved them and what great price He paid so that we could be forgiven. And sometimes we don't understand the details of crucifixion because we don't see it. Occasionally in our world, there will be a crucifixion. I've got some historical examples for you. The Nazis crucified Jews in Dachau with bayonets, knives, through the legs, shoulders, throat, and testicles. They tended to impale people who were still alive on the backs of barns and such. Pol Pot, the dictator, crucified many people in Cambodia. Today in places like Sudan where there are radical Islamists, they will crucify people and some Christians are being

crucified in the persecuted church. The Bible just simply tells us things like "Jesus was scourged" or it tells us that He was crucified, it doesn't give us a lot of details. I believe the reason is that the original audience knew exactly what was being talked about because crucifixion was done commonly, openly, and publicly in the ancient world. It was state-sponsored terror. The whole point of crucifixion was the government using someone as a negative example to send fear and terror into the hearts of those who would follow in their example or believe their instruction. It is similar in our day to an Islamic beheading on the internet. When a radical jihadist beheads somebody on the internet, what are they doing? They're letting everybody know that there will be consequence and punishment for those who believe or behave in the way of that individual. Crucifixion was state-sponsored terror. It was much like a beheading on the internet today. Many people were crucified in around 4 A.D., Jesus may have been a little boy at that time. There was a mass uprising in Israel and the Romans had a mass public crucifixion of Jews to make an example of them. He may have seen that as a boy. On the day that Spartacus fell in battle, there was 120 mile stretch of Roman highway, kind of the precursor to our freeway system, and those who were defeated in battle, they crucified 6,000 men in one day along the shoulder of 120 mile stretch of highway. Imagine you're traveling as a family, you're probably on foot or the back of a beast, you are not going fast. Six thousand crucified men, you're hearing them scream. you're hearing their families cry, you're watching them bleed out and twitch. The ancient world saw this and as a result, when it says that Jesus was scourged and crucified, we'll get into the details, but I believe that the original hearers, they knew exactly what that meant 'cause if you see that, you never forget it. So for the Christian, there's an old hymn that says that the cross is the emblem of suffering and shame. That's accurate. The cross was chosen as the symbol, the icon, for Christianity, it is believed, by the early church father Tertullian. Early on, the Christians had some choices. Do we use the rainbow from Noah's day? That got stolen. Do we use the dove which was God the Holy Spirit descending upon Jesus in the form of a dove at His baptism? All the hippies stole that. People can't even come up with their own branding, that's how bad this world is. They rip off God's branding. And so what it ended up being was a decision that the cross would be the symbol of Christian faith. And it was believed that Christians around the early church time of Tertullian started making the sign of the cross, started putting the cross on their homes, wearing crosses around their neck. We've been to Greece, Israel, and Turkey as a family a few times, and one of the ancient cities that was excavated was Ephesus and it was a major thoroughfare where Christianity really spread through the leadership of Paul and others. And they've excavated the city and the old marble streets, sometimes they have crosses etched in them or ancient homes that they have excavated in the archeological digs, have crosses on them. We asked the archeological professors that we contracted to be with us and they said, well, this was the way of saying, if you just landed in town, maybe on a ship or the back of a beast, when you look down and be like, "Oh, Christians are here," that was the symbol. And if you had a cross outside of your home, if you went knocked on the door, you could say, "Hey, I'm a Christian, I'm new to town." And they would say, "Welcome brother, sister" and they would treat you as family and you could go stay there. That's how Christians took care of one another was under the sign and the symbol of the cross. The way that crucifixion began, it was invented by the Persians in about 800 B.C. When it says in the psalms that he would be pierced, that was predating crucifixion. So not only is the psalmist predicting the crucifixion of Jesus, he's predicting the invention of crucifixion. The Persians, they started by impaling. They would take basically a long spear, essentially. They would sharpen the edge of the pole and then they would run it through a man's body, through his

midsection, and then they would have a hole dug and then they would drop the impaling pole into the hole and then the man would literally be skewered alive and he would be in that position until he bled out and died or dehydrated. Crucifixion was invented by the Persians and then it was perfected by the Romans prior to the crucifixion of Jesus. The Roman empire was a large and vast one and they would overtake different people groups and nations and religions and cultures in an effort to create social order, they found the most painful way to die, crucifixion, and they did it publicly to enforce by rule of might because there was no such thing as rule of law. So they're the ones that added the crossbar, they're the ones that out of the crossbar, and then the Roman soldiers who were just very cruel and sadistic, they would have competitions to see what they could add to crucifixion to maximize the pain and suffering. So by the time Jesus comes along, it is the most horrific way to die. In fact, we've invented a word to explain the pain of it, and excruciating, that word excruciating, literally means from the cross. It was such a level of suffering that a word was invented to describe it. And the way you would die through crucifixion, it was painfully slow death by asphyxiation. Did a lot of medical research on this for another book I wrote, and the way it would work is they would nail you to the cross through the most sensitive nerve centers, probably the wrist or hands and feet, and then your body would slouch on the cross and so carbon monoxide would fill your lungs and you would start to pass out. It was asphyxiation. So then what you would do, you would go out of consciousness and then you'd push yourself up through your impaled feet, your nailed feet, get some more air in your lungs and go in and out of consciousness. Some people could hang on the cross, go in and out of consciousness, for up to nine days, historical records indicate. Dehydrated, incontinent, imagine a climate, like Arizona where we are, no food, no water, no medical attention, crucified, in and out of consciousness for nine days. I mean, it was a horrific way to die. And what they would do then is if they wanted to hasten someone's death, they would break their legs so they couldn't push themselves up to get air into their lungs. Jesus' legs were never broken, He died rather quickly because of the beating that He took previously, and it was to fulfill the Old Testament prophecy that none of His bones would be broken, none of His bones would be broken. Well, the story of the crucifixion of Jesus is one where He was crucified openly, publicly, and shamefully. This wasn't done privately. They would do this in places of shopping like a market. They would do this in busy intersections where people would travel. This would literally be like, you're going to the mall and you'd go around the corner to the play area, and there's a dude crucified. You go into the grocery store and just before you turn the corner to walk in, there's a guy crucified at the entrance. This was very public and very painful. It is believed that most men were crucified at eye level so your enemies could look you in the eye. And on the rare occasion that a woman was crucified, they would turn her around because they did not want to see her face. Everyone considered crucifixion the most horrific way to die. There was a Jewish historian named Josephus, he called it and I quote, "The most wretched of deaths." Roman citizens couldn't be crucified and Cicero, the ancient Roman satirist, he said that "Romans shouldn't even discuss or mention the cross "because it was too barbarous for those people." And then in Deuteronomy, I think it's 21:22 and 23, I'll check my notes, it is. It says, "If a man is hung on a tree, he is," what? "Cursed by God." Galatians, Paul quotes that. So whether it was the Jews, the Romans, or it was the Scriptures themselves, everybody knew that's the worst way to die. There's nothing worse than that. And so what we did, we did the worst thing to the best man, Jesus Christ. Well, the story of Jesus' crucifixion is the night before His death, He knows He's going to die, and He begins in the Garden of Gethsemane. I've been there, it's a historical place, it really does exist. And He is up all night with a bit of anxiety, wrestling through the will of the

Father that He would go to die on the cross. And it says that He is sweating like drops of blood. Medical experts will tell you that this is only possible for people who are under incredible and unprecedented, exceedingly rare psychological duress and distress. His friends fall asleep, they're not supporting Him. Judas shows up with a mob that he has organized of religious and political leaders, he's empowered by Satan himself. They arrest Jesus in the middle of the night. And you need to know that this was architected well in advance. The Jewish leaders and the Roman political leaders, they did not work together; they were enemies, not allies. For Judas to pull this coalition together, he had been architecting and organizing this for a very long time. For him to have legal right to come and see Jesus arrested meant that it was something that was in motion for a while. The fact they did it in the middle of the night, that was just part of the secrecy and the coverup. And it says then that they covered Jesus' eyes and a mob of angry men beat Him. We don't know how long that went. But let's say you're a guy who's got a blindfold on or they put a bag over your head, not unlike a terrorist situation, and there's a mob of guys around you and everyone is just taking a shot. Some are jealous, some are angry, some are demonic. How many men wouldn't even make it through that beating? After that it says that they took Jesus and they had Him scourged, that's all it says. The way that would work, usually you'd have maybe a large stone or a pole. You would tie and affix a man's arms above him so that his back in his legs and his buttocks were exposed. On each side would stand a Roman soldier and they would have something called a flagrum or a cat of nine tails, it was a handle. Leather strips would come from the end. At the end, there would be balls made out of metal or stone to tenderize the flesh and then there were hooks to dig in. And on each side they would take turns whipping the man. He was stripped nearly naked. They would make sure that the hooks were deep and then they would rip the flesh off the man's body. And history reports outside of the Bible that occasionally a rib would literally just come flying off a man's body. Now you're looking at deep trauma, you're looking at the process of death has begun, significant damage to the deep tissue and internal organs. And many, many, many men died just from the scourging, they never made it to the cross. As if that wasn't enough, after they took Jesus and scourged Him near death, what they then do is they put a crown of thorns on Him to mock Him. In addition to that, they give Him a crossbar to carry. This was roughly hewn timber and it would have had blood and sweat and tears from other men who had been crucified on it. He was forced to carry it on His back. What condition is His back in? There's nothing left. He's dehydrated, He's exhausted, He's been up all night. He got beaten, for we don't know how long, by an angry mob of men. Isaiah says, "Now He is marred beyond human likeness," we can't even tell who He is. He has been scourged to an inch of His life and now He is forced to carry a crossbar on His back to His place of crucifixion and He carries it through town. If you go to Israel to the old town of Jerusalem, it's surrounded by a city and everything is packed inside. I've been there a few times and they'll call this the Via Dolorosa, The Way of the Cross. And what there is, it's these narrow ancient corridors, there's a shop here and a shop here and a shop here, and everybody's living within the city walls. Well, what they would do with a man like Jesus when they wanted to make sure that everyone knew what He was going to suffer, He was forced to carry His cross through the old town by the shops where all the women are getting groceries and children are out with their mothers. This would literally, in our day, this would be like going to the mall or the grocery store, and a guy has to carry his cross through the mall or the grocery store. His family and friends are following and they are devastated because this now brings shame on the family, and in Eastern culture, you do not want to bring shame on the family. Jesus, though He's strong and healthy, He trips a few times and He has trouble carrying the cross, He's in the death process. The medical doctors who

have examined this say that this would cause a deep chest contusion. If you fall, with maybe a 100 pound crossbar on your back, they would say that it's the equivalent of a head-on car crash where the driver is thrown into the steering wheel, no airbag deploys, there is no seat belt, deep chest contusion, you're in the process of developing a heart attack, and if you don't get medical attention, you're gonna die quickly. So Jesus gets some help from Joseph of Arimathea, a disciple, is a little more quiet, helps Him. Or is it Simon? Simon helps Him. Joseph of Arimathea gave Him the tomb, thank you. And He gets some help carrying His cross to the place of crucifixion. And then He's a carpenter and they nail Him through the hands and the feet. They lift Him up. They drop the cross with the crossbar, into the hole, His body is shaking involuntarily and violently. He is bleeding, He is sweating, He is struggling, He is dying, and He's probably eye to eye. Who's there? His mom. And surrounding are people who are cheering and jeering and placing bets and making fun. And at that point, some men would spit on the crowd, some would curse out the crowd, some would urinate on the crowd, some would become incontinent so that at the base of the cross was feces and urine and blood and tears dripping off the man's body. So that's what it means when it says Jesus was crucified, crucified. And then what happens is from the cross, Jesus gives us what is called the seven last words. Now just think about this. You're a grown man, young, healthy, strong, never did anything wrong. Everyone who testified against you, lied. Judas who had you arrested, he'd been stealing from you and ripping you off for three years. The crowd that is there is mocking you, jeering you, making fun of you. Your mother is bawling and beside herself. Question, what would you say? Here's what Jesus said. These are His seven final words from the cross. Luke 23:34, "Father," so He talks to the Father. Jesus' favorite title for God is Father, favorite title for God is Father, He's the Son of God. What's His first word? "Forgive." That's supernatural, amen? Forgive who? "Them." He's praying for the people that are murdering Him. And then He is going to die to answer His own prayer that they could be forgiven. "Father, forgive them, they don't know what they're doing." Luke 23:43, He's crucified between two men. So Jesus' first word is forgiveness. Here's what I need to tell you about Jesus, He always starts with forgiveness. Your relationship with Jesus, He will start with forgiveness. That's where He starts. Every other religion, forgiveness is at the finish line. With Jesus, it's at the starting line. You don't work toward your forgiveness. You work from His forgiveness. That's the grace of God. He's crucified with two men. What's interesting, three men died that day, only one man got a world religion. Why did the other two men not get a world religion? They stayed dead. We'll get into that next week. But what He does, one man next to Him does not come to faith and is making demands of Him. The other man does come to faith and acknowledges that he deserves death, but he's asking for forgiveness. Jesus looks at that man, "I tell you the truth, "today you will be with Me in paradise." Here's what's amazing, there's only three guys and Jesus is still evangelizing right to the end. Here's what I'm telling you, as long as there's breath in the lungs of someone you know, talk to them about Jesus. I mean if Jesus can close the guy on the cross, there's hope up until the end. There just is. There's hope up until the end. As long as they're breathing, keep trying. "Today," if you're gonna die that day, "you're gonna be with Me," where? Paradise. There are some who would say that Jesus died and went to hell. No He didn't. Where'd He go? Paradise. Nobody has ever said paradise/hell, those are different. Those are different. So He's gonna die and go to paradise, that's where the saints who had faith were until heaven was opened. And He tells him, "You know what, "you're gonna be with Me in paradise." This is where we know that we're saved by grace, not by works, because up until this point, what has this man worked for? He's worked for hell. What he says is, "I deserve to die, "but Jesus I'm asking for forgiveness." So Jesus gives him grace. Then John 19:26

through 27, this one wrecks me. It wrecked me as a son and now that I see Grace with our three sons, this one crushes me. Jesus is on the cross, He's thinking about people murdering Him, He's thinking about the guy dying, and He's thinking about His mother. You know what He's not thinking about? Himself. He's a servant serving everyone, He's not selfish. How many of us at that moment, we would want to defend ourselves? "Let me tell you my side of the story. "In fact, I know the sins of all the people "who are crucifying me. "Tony's got a girlfriend, Tommy's got a boyfriend. "Since we're all just here, "let me tell you what's going on." He doesn't. He doesn't talk about anyone negatively, He's serving and ministering to everyone that He possibly can. And He looks over and there's His mom. How many of you moms, there's your boy, your firstborn son. He's dying right in front of you while everyone is cheering and jeering. "Dear woman," and it's a term of affection, "here is your son, here is your mother." Who does He assign to look after His mother? John the beloved, His best friend, the one whom Jesus loved. At this point, there is no indication that Jesus' brothers and sisters were saved, they were believers, so He's assigning John to tend to His mother. I love the fact that Jesus isn't a momma's boy, but He loves His mom and He cares for His mom. And then He says, John 19:28, "I am thirsty." Some of you may have heard this, for some of you it'll be maybe new. When I first heard that in the Bible, I read it, I remember I was in college in my dorm as a 19 year old kid. And it says then that they took a sponge at the end of the stick, they sopped it in wine vinegar and they put it to His lips. And I thought, as a 19 year old kid in college, "Well, that was nice. "At least they gave Him some comfort, "they gave Him some refreshment as He was dying." And I thought that all the way up until some decades later, Grace and I and the five kids, we took one of our tours, I've been there a few times, but Greece, Israel, and Turkey hired some archeologists and professors of history and brought them with us. And we were down in the archeological dig in the ancient city of Ephesus where the book of Ephesians was written regarding. And they had excavated an ancient, sort of, public restroom. It was a big restroom made out of marble and there's all these seats, and I thought, "Well that's weird." So they're kind of telling us the story and underneath was sort of an aqueduct system that would flush everything away. And so there was the seat, like we would have, except it was marble, and then underneath, there was a big hole underneath the seat, that's weird. So I asked the archeologists and the professor of history from the university that we contracted, I asked, "What's that for?" 'Cause I'm just weird and curious and so I'll even ask about a bathroom in Turkey, I don't care. I wanted to figure it out. And he's like, "Oh, that's where the slave "would wipe the person who had gone to the restroom." I said, "Really, how'd they do that?" He said, "Well, they'd have a sponge, "and they'd put it on the end of the stick "and then they would sop it in antiseptic "and then they would scrub the person with it." This came to mind. I asked him, I said, "Okay, so in the ancient world, "that was their toilet paper?" he said, "Yeah." I said, "So when a Roman soldier would go out "into the field, was that part of their field kit?" He said, "Yeah, that's how they would do it. "They would go to the bathroom. "They would put their sponge on the end of the stick. "They would sop it in wine vinegar as an antiseptic "and then they would use it as their toilet paper." That's what we shoved in Jesus mouth. And look at what He said so far. "Forgive them. "I'll bring you to paradise. "Please look after my mom." He's not declaring war, He's loving and serving. Yet Him praying for forgiveness elicited the response where the soldier shoved his sponge in Jesus' mouth which means the next three things that Jesus says, He says with the taste of a soldier's bowel movement on His lips. To me, it just shows this is the incredible love of God and the incredible depravity of humanity. Here we see how wicked humanity is and how loving God is. Matthew 27:46, "My God, My God. "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" He quotes Psalm 22:1. Jesus is

doing ministry. He quotes Psalm 22:1, and in that moment, theologians will tell you that God the Father and God the Holy Spirit turned their back on Jesus. For all of eternity, one God in three persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, they had perfect and unbroken union and communion. At that moment, Jesus took your place and puts you in His place. And so the theologians will say that God the Father and God the Spirit, they turned their back on the Son, that that intimacy, that warmth, that fellowship was broken. Some people when they see Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane sweating drops of blood, they think He was really scared to die on the cross. Actually, what was the worst experience for Jesus on the cross was not physical, it was spiritual and emotional and relational. Jesus could endure anything, but the one thing that He was going to suffer most from is the severing of His intimate, warm relationship with the Father whom He had just prayed to and the Spirit who had always empowered His earthly ministry. "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" We'll get into it, but this is the concept of what the theologians will call substitutionary atonement, that He took our place and put us in His place. I'll explain that to you when we get into the nine things that Jesus accomplished for us on the cross. But in that moment, our sin went on Jesus and He took your place, my place, our place, and He endured the wrath of God. The wrath of God is exactly what Jesus Christ endured in this moment. "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" And then John 19:30, He declares in a loud voice, "It is finished." Jesus didn't need to go to hell, it is finished. He didn't need to do anything more, it is finished. The work of forgiveness of sin through substitutionary atonement. He substituted Himself so that our sins can be atoned for, was finished. This is where any religion that adds anything to the finished work of Jesus is demonic. And what false religious teaching always wants to do is say Jesus plus something else. So there's a book of the New Testament called Galatians and theirs was Jesus plus circumcision. For some it's Jesus plus speaking in tongues or it's Jesus plus the right theological system or Jesus plus being baptized. It's just Jesus. We're saved by Jesus' works, not our works, and not our works plus Jesus' works, just Jesus' works. And what Jesus is saying here, the work is finished, now all we need to do is trust in Him by faith. 'Cause some people will say things like, "Well, you're not saved by works." Yes, you are. Whose works? Jesus' works. Let me just tell you, this was work. I like to say we're saved by works, but not our works, His works. So when the Bible uses the language of grace, it means that we didn't have to do the work, but the work was done by Him, but the work was still done. And then Luke 23:46, "Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit." Their relationship is reconciled and reunited and ultimately the restoration of the relationship between the Father, Son, and Spirit occurs at this moment. They're back into union and communion. These are Jesus' seven final words from the cross. What do you think about those? Forgiveness. "I'll take you to paradise." "Somebody look after my mom." "I'm really suffering and you're gonna add to it," "God, You're now pouring out your wrath "on your Son, Father." "I've experienced all of this, the work is finished." "The relationship is restored." Want to give you now, fairly briefly, nine things that Jesus did for you on the cross. And what happens in almost every theological system, people pick one or two and then ignore the rest. And for us to fully appreciate everything that Jesus did, let me give you a fairly lengthy, fairly comprehensive list of things that He accomplished, and I'll roll through these fairly quickly. Jesus defeated death and the demonic so you could live free. Colossians 2:13 through 15, "When you were dead," so when you were dead in your sins. People will say, "Well, you need to choose God." Dead people don't make decisions. If you are spiritually dead, then any decision that is made needs to be made for you. You're spiritually "dead in your sins "and the uncircumcision of your sinful nature." Not only are we spiritually dead apart from Christ, our nature chooses evil, it chooses sin, it chooses death. "God made you

alive with Christ." So who made you alive? God did. Just like Jesus goes to a dude named Lazarus who's in the tomb, John's Gospel in the King James says, "he stinketh," I mean, he's been dead for a while. And Jesus shows up and John does not choose to resurrect, be alive, and follow Jesus. Jesus chooses that John would come alive and follow Him. And so ultimately... Sorry, that Lazarus would. And so in John's Gospel, the record is "Lazarus, come forth!" and he does. Lazarus is dead, Jesus makes him alive, calls him by name. That's a little window of how salvation works. We're dead, He calls us by name, makes us alive, so we can follow Him. We're all saved like Lazarus was brought forth from death. What happened to him physically happens to us spiritually. He made us alive with Christ. He made us alive with Christ. Not only that, He forgave us how much of our sins? All of them, that's really good news 'cause if Jesus only took care of the sins until you become a Christian and He didn't take care of the sins after you become a Christian, there's no assurance of eternity, there's no real ultimate forgiveness of sin and eternal life. "Having canceled the written code with its regulations "that was against us and stood opposed to us, "He took it away, nailing it to the cross." What he's saying is this that there was a list of the charges against Jesus on His physical cross, that He says He's the King of the Jews. There was also a spiritual list with all of your sins. And so in context here, its when Satan and demons looked at you, they said, "You know what? "Here's the list. "Here's all the sins, they've committed. "Sins of co-mission, bad things. "Sins of omission, didn't do the right thing. "Thought, word, deed, motive, here's all their sin." And Satan would say, "You belong to me. "I own you. "Here's the record, here's the deal agreement. "You sin, you belong to me. "Here's all the sins, you belong to me." But that record of all of your sin was spiritually nailed to the cross of Jesus Christ. And when He died, He died for you, and He paid that debt and He set you free so you would belong to God and be alive, not belong to Satan and have eternal death. This is amazing. Jesus paid the ultimate price for your debt to God. 1 Peter 1:18 and 19, "You know that it was not "with perishable things, such as silver or gold "that you were redeemed from the empty way of life "handed down to you from your forefathers, "but with the precious blood of Christ, "a lamb without blemish or defect." This is using kind of the language of debt and banking. We all have debts. Every month you're like, "Here they are." And they tell you, "Here's how much you owe now "and then here's your total debt, here's your mortgage." Oh gosh. Spiritually, sin is debt to God. Either the sinner pays the debt back in hell or heaven comes down with Jesus and pays the debt for us. And what he says is the most valuable thing we have is not silver or gold, but it's Jesus because Jesus purchases something that silver and gold cannot purchase, that's the forgiveness of sin and eternal life. So how would you feel if somebody came to you and said, "Could you please total up your debt? "Car, credit, mortgage?" "Yeah, okay, here's my total." "Okay, now add to that all the expenses you will have "for the rest of your life." "Okay, here they are." And they said, "Okay, I'd like to just pay for that." For the Christian, spiritually, that's what Jesus did. He paid the debt past, present, and future. Jesus was cursed so you could be blessed. Galatians 3:13 quotes Deuteronomy, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law "by becoming a curse for us; for it is written," he quotes Deuteronomy, "'Cursed is everyone who hung "on a tree.'" So you were cursed and Jesus was blessed and then Jesus went to the cross and He traded places with you so now you are blessed and He is cursed. That's exactly what He did. He took your place and put you in His place, that's what He did for you on the cross. Number four, Jesus became unrighteous so you could become righteous. This is one of my favorite scriptures in the whole Bible, "God made Him who knew no sin to become sin "so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." Martin Luther, the Protestant reformer, called this the great exchange. Jesus is righteous, we are unrighteous. And Jesus says, "I love you

so much, "I'll trade places with you. "I will give you my righteousness "and I will take your unrighteousness." And all of this happens spiritually on the cross in God's accounting. What that means it means is this, and this is so critically important. You're not just forgiven, you're also made righteous. 'Cause if all Jesus did was forgive you, now you're up to zero and you got to work really hard to be righteous. Jesus doesn't just forgive you, He makes you righteous. So here's the key, you don't live for your righteousness, you live from His righteousness. This is very different, that's what the Bible says, "Let us live up to what we have already attained." God declares you positionally righteous in Christ and then practically He sends you the Holy Spirit so that you can live up to the status that Jesus has secured for you. So you need to know this, and I just feel inclined in the spirit to share this, some of you have forgiven people, but you still do not see them as righteous in Christ. And I don't know who this is for, just comes to mind as I'm standing here. I believe that for some of you, this is for your marriage, I believe that's the word that the Spirit of the Lord is giving to me right now. But you look at your spouse and you say, "Well, Jesus died for you so you're forgiven, "but you're not righteous. "You're still sick and disgusting and frustrating "and disappointing." And if Jesus sees them as righteous, He wants you to see them as righteous to encourage them to live up to the righteousness that He declares them to be. Because this is what we often do with people, we forgive them but we refuse to see them as righteous in Christ. How many of you are glad that God doesn't look at you and say, "You're forgiven, but unrighteous." But He looks at you and says, "You're forgiven in Christ "and righteous, therefore live up to the position "that He has attained for you." We need to be very careful with one another that we don't just forgive, but we allow people to be seen as God sees them as righteous in Christ. What that means is not just a fresh, clean start, but a brand new person. Jesus endured God's wrath so you could experience God's grace. God's wrath is something that people don't like to talk about, it's not very popular. There's lots of topical sermon series, not many of them are on the wrath of God. The love of God, way more popular than the wrath of God. But the number one attribute of God in the Bible, most frequently mentioned, is holiness which elicits God's wrath. Here's how he says in Romans 5, "For if," Romans 5:9, "Since we now have been justified," that's legal standing in the presence of God, "by His blood," that's the cross, "how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath "through Him?" Some people will say you're saved from sin, yes. You're saved from death, yes. You're saved from hell, yes. You're saved from Satan, yes. Ultimately you're saved from God. The Bible says it's a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God. You are saved by God, you are saved from God, you are saved for God. And the wrath of God means that God in His holiness and justice will deal with sin in a way that is holy and just and there's only two options. The sinner goes to hell to pay whatever crime they have committed and their total offense against God or Jesus goes to the cross and He endures the wrath of God for them. You need to know that on the cross, Jesus Christ endured the wrath of God so that you could experience the grace of God. You need to know that. A lot of times we'll tell people, "God loves you, "God loves you, God loves you." That is true, but if you don't receive Jesus, you don't get God's love, all you get it's God's wrath. And if you receive Jesus, He endures the wrath and He gives the love. And where this is, you can't tell somebody about the good news of God's love until you tell them what we would consider the bad news about God's wrath. And we'll tell people all the time, "You need to be saved!" From what? From the wrath of God. Not just a low self-esteem, not just a lack of achieving your full potential, not just your negative emotions or depressed state, the wrath of God. And once you know what you're saved from and who you're saved by and what you're saved for, your attitude of gratitude increases exponentially Jesus was rejected by the Father so

you could be reconciled by the Father. "For if when we were God's," what? Where do we start? If you don't know that we're sinners, you don't really know that we need a Savior. If you don't know how bad we are, you don't know how good Jesus is. If you don't know how big the problem is, you're not really grateful for how big the solution is. And the goal of talking about sin is not to make you feel bad, but make you appreciate Jesus and hate sin. Because if our sin killed Jesus and we love Him, we need to hate the thing that killed Him. "We were God's enemies, we were reconciled to Him "through the death of His Son." The only way to be reconciled to God is through the death of His Son. "How much more having been reconciled, "shall we be saved through His life? "Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God "through our Lord Jesus Christ "in whom we have now received reconciliation." What he's saying is this, "I was an enemy of God and I was rejected by God "and then the Son of God died for me "so that I could be reconciled to God." Some people will ask weird questions like, "Well, if we know that Jesus loves us "and He forgives us no matter what we do, "then why shouldn't we just keep sinning?" Answer? We love Him. We love Him. If my sin already killed Him and He loved me and saved me, why would I not hate the thing that killed the One that I love? I don't worship God because I'm afraid of hell, I worship God because I love Him. My wife Grace is here. I met her on March 12th, 1988. I've been faithful to her everyday since. You know why? I love her. And the relationship means the world to me. Somebody comes along and says, "Well, if you commit adultery, would she forgive you?" Look, I don't know. Here's what I know, I value the relationship. And I want to have a loving, healthy, unified, joyful, life-giving relationship with the person on planet earth who means the very most to me. My wife amended that so that's good. We're in good condition. And when he realized, "I was God's enemy "and then He loved me and He forgave me "and He wants a relationship with me." Well then why would I choose sin? Now we do sin, but we should hate sin because sin killed the One we love. And He died so that He could take away the sin so that He could have a relationship with us. I'll just tell you this, if somebody is willing to die to be your friend, you should appreciate that. And if they come back to hang out with you after you killed them, my hope would be that their affection for you would change your behavior going forward. I'm on a rabbit trail, you're welcome. Number seven. Jesus was shamed so that you could be unashamed. Our first parents were naked without shame, shame comes as a result of sin. We've all felt shame. There are there things in our past that Satan is gonna haunt us with. You're like, "I can't believe I said that. "I can't believe I did that. "That is so embarrassing. "That's disgusting. "I don't know what I was thinking. "I hope nobody finds out. "Oh they did." We've all got this right? "Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, "looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, "who for the joy that was set before Him," it wasn't joyful for Jesus to be on the cross, but it was joyful for Jesus to see what He would accomplish through the cross. This is why we don't have joy in our suffering, but we have joy in what God uses our suffering to accomplish. "Despising," what, "the shame." We all struggle because of sin also with shame. So here's what Jesus does, He not only forgives the sin, He also takes the shame. And we tend not to do this very well for each other. Let's say somebody does something that we find sinful and shameful. We'll say, "I forgive you," but we're gonna bring it up again. We're gonna rub their nose in it. We're gonna remind them. We're gonna use that as our go-to in an argument. "Well, I mean, yeah, I did forgive you, "but you did steal, you were an adulterer, "you did cuss me out, you were a jerk to your mom," whatever it is. And what that is is, "I've forgiven you, "but I'm gonna keep putting the shame on you. "You need to carry it." What Jesus does, He takes the sin and the shame. That's why if you're a Christian and you're still wearing all the shame of something you have said or done in your past, you may feel like

you're being holy and righteous, but you're not 'cause One already wore the shame, you don't need to wear it. You don't need to wear it. You get to actually live your life without the burden of the shame of your past. It's free and it's liberating. Number eight, Jesus became unclean to make you clean. 1 John 1:7 through 9, "If we walk in the light," that's inviting safe people in to say, "Okay, here's who I really am "and here's where I'm really at." "As He is in the light," Jesus is the light of the world, he's talking about living in that light. "We have fellowship," that's friendship or relationship, "with one another and the blood of Jesus," there's the cross, "His Son purifies us from," how much sin? "All." Many of you believe that for others, but not for yourself. Many of you preach a gospel that you do not preach to yourself. You'll look at somebody and say, "Jesus died for all your sins." If I looked at you and said, "Did Jesus die for all your sins?" "Yeah, but boy there's this one thing "that I really feel bad about and I really have regret "and remorse for." You need to not only preach the gospel to them, you need to receive the gospel for you. It's all your sin. And we all just need to be honest and say, "I got sin." All sin. "If we claim to be without sin..." "Anything I can pray for you, "anything you're struggling about?" "No, I'm doing great!" Liar. Liar. No, "We claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves." The worst deception is self-deception and the truth is not in us. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, "will forgive us our sins and purify us," from how much unrighteousness? All of it. You see what he's saying? Over and over He's saying, "Jesus forgives you and makes you righteous. "Jesus forgives you and makes you clean." What he's saying here is that not only does Jesus take the sin and take the shame, He also takes the filth of the sin that causes the shame. I'm gonna go a little over for time, but this is to me, one of the most important, but neglected doctrines in the entire Bible. It's the doctrine of expiation is what the theologians will call it, and it's making clean. Many Christians know that they are forgiven, but they still think that they're dirty. In the language of the Bible, they're defiled, unclean. Let me give you some really painful examples from years ago. When I first started ministry, I was in my twenties dealing largely with college kids, punk rockers, and homeless kids. I mean, it was a rough bunch, major drug addiction and sexual abuse in their past. And there was this one girl, we thought she'd met Jesus, but she had some very self-destructive, disgusting behaviors with men, won't get into details. And I remember as a pastor met with her and an older couple that was mentoring her and females that were investing in her, and I just looked at her and I kind of felt like a dad, even though I wasn't old enough at the time, that's why I liked being a little older in ministry today. And I said, Why? "Why do you keep doing this?" And she said, and I quote, I'll never forget, I couldn't stop crying. She said, "I'm a dirty girl so I do dirty things." And I looked at her, I said, "Who told you that?" She said, "My grandpa did." He would come in and abuse her and she would be crying and she would ask grandpa, "Why do you do this to me?" He would say, "You're a dirty girl "so I make you do dirty things." That was demonic. And what he did is he put an identity on her of defiled and unclean and dirty. And even though now she's a grown woman, she still sees herself as unclean. And I looked at her and I said, "Jesus forgives you "and He makes you clean." She said, "I know that Jesus forgives me, "but I'm still dirty." This is important. The first person that I can remember off of memory in the Bible that is called defiled is a woman named Dinah. I think it's in Genesis 34, she was a rape victim, says that she was defiled. What do assault victims, sexual assault victims do after they've been assaulted? What's the first thing that they tend to do? Take a shower. Why? They feel dirty. Now they can get their body clean, but only Jesus can get the soul clean. There are a whole lot of people walking around with shame and there's a whole lot of people walking around with unrighteousness and there's a whole lot of people walking around feeling dirty who do believe in Jesus and believe that they're forgiven, but don't know all that He

did for them in addition to the forgiveness. Some years ago, there was a man who found out that his wife had committed adultery on him. And it was way years prior in the marriage, then they both got saved, and some things worked itself out. And she finally, as she was growing in a relationship with Christ, she just felt like she needed to confess this sin to her husband because it was just, emotionally it was just wrecking her, it was her secret. And he, once he found out, he got in the car and drove away. And she was beside herself wondering, "What does this mean?" And he came back and he bought her something white and he put it on her and he said, "Well, we belong to Jesus now and I choose to see you "as He does." He forgives sin and He cleanses from unrighteousness. God's people in the Bible, what color do they wear? White, why did they get to wear white? Because they're made clean and righteous, it all goes together. Why does a woman get to wear white on her wedding day? Because in Christ, she's clean and righteous. Now what if she's been unclean and done some things that are unrighteous, does she still get to wear white? Yes, because the cleansing and the righteousness is from Jesus Christ. This is why in the Old Testament, people would undergo ceremonial washings before they would go up to the temple to worship and they would put on white. And you would see tens, maybe hundreds of thousands of people all walking up a mountain together singing and they're all wearing white. Why is that? Because Jesus not only forgives you, He makes you righteous and He makes you clean. And if you're hearing this, this is one of the most powerful, liberating things in all the world. Because oftentimes what happens is, in secular counseling, what we'll just tell people is, "Well, you need to forgive yourself "and you need to love yourself." I have something far better than that, God loves you, God forgives you, and He makes you righteous and He makes you clean. And if you know that, you now are empowered by the Holy Spirit to live out of your new identity in Christ into the fullness of who He created you to be and to the full intention that Jesus intends for you to be. Let me say this, if you belong to Jesus Christ, you are not just forgiven, you are clean. If you belong to Jesus Christ, you're not just forgiven, you're righteous. If you belong to Jesus Christ, you're not forgiven just wearing absolutely soiled garments, you are forgiven wearing His robes of righteousness, fullness of white and fullness of forgiveness and fullness of cleansing and fullness of righteousness. It says in Revelation that when Jesus comes back that there'll be a wedding and it says that "Fine linen, bright and clean, was given his bride to wear," that's the church. At the end, all of God's people are going to be forgiven, clean, and righteous in the presence of Jesus because of His work, together forever. And I'm just telling you, so many people walk around and they feel like "I'm forgiven, but I'm damaged. "I'm forgiven, but I'm dirty. "I'm forgiven, but I'm unclean. "I'm forgiven, but I'm disgusting." In Christ, you're not. It's not what you've done, it's what He's done, and what He's done can start to change what you do. That's the hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And then he closes with this, Jesus was hated so you could be loved. "God demonstrates His own love for us in this, "while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." I'll just close with this and I'll take a few questions. I know this is a little heavy, but we're talking about the murder of God. And I'll skip the next text, but I do want to show the final image slide. What happens oftentimes is people are like, "We should not preach on sin. "We should not preach on holiness. "We should not preach on the wrath of God. "We should not preach on the blood. "We should not preach on the cross. "We just need to tell people about the love of God." What does the Bible say? The cross is where we see the love of God. You can't preach the love of God without the cross of Jesus. "God demonstrates His love for us in this "we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "No greater love does anyone have done this, "then they would lay down their life for their friend." "It is not that we have loved God, but that God has loved us "and has given His Son as a propitiation for our sins." Anytime the Bible is

talking about God's love, it goes to Jesus' cross. And for people to say, "Well, we shouldn't talk about that, "we should talk about Jesus' love." For God, He's like, "You know that I love you "because of what I did for you." Love is sometimes what we feel, sometimes what we do, but ultimately love with Jesus is ultimately seeing, not only what He said, but what He did. He didn't just say that He loved us, He showed this, that He loved us. He didn't just have an emotional affection toward us, He had practical action for us. So here's what I want you to know. Anytime you may think as a Christian, if you are a believer, you wonder "God, do You love me?" Start thinking about Jesus' cross. Yes, I'm loved. Anyone that would do that to have a relationship with me, really loves me. Anyone who would do that to have a relationship with me really loves me. So don't let the foolish, sort of weak and/or false teaching say, "It's not about the wrath of God, "it's about the love of God. "It's not about the holiness of God, "it's about the love of God. "It's not about the justice of God, "it's about the love of God. "It's not about how bad we are, it's about how good God is." And at the cross what we see is both. At the cross, we see how bad we are; and at the cross, we see how good God is. And we see how God's love is ultimately the strongest force at work in the world and it was the love of God through the cross of Jesus Christ that overcame Satan, sin, death, hell, the wrath of God, and the curse, and our entire hope is in the love of God through the death of Jesus in our place for our sins. This is why there's a cross on churches. This is why we wear a cross. This is why the cross is the symbol of our faith. And for people who don't know Jesus, they would say that's a really weird symbol. No, the person who loved me the most, showed me the most love, and it's at the cross of Jesus that I see how bad my sin is and how loving my Savior is and those two things literally intersect at the cross of Jesus unlike anything else in the history of the world.