

Cross: God Dies

Teaching Transcript

- This lecture is "Cross: God Dies." And I want you to emotionally identify with the subject and theme of the crucifixion, the execution of Jesus Christ. To do that, I would ask you to consider this question where now in your life are you experiencing suffering? Life has suffering. For some of you, it's financial. For some of you, it's emotional. For some of you it's mental. For some of you, it's relational. For some of you, it's physical you've got physical pain, injury, ailment, chronic sickness that you're struggling with. Now consider for a moment, if you have the opportunity to remove all suffering in all categories and not live with any suffering at all. Which would you choose? We would choose to end the suffering. And here's, here's the amazing thing about Jesus. He was in heaven, not suffering. He comes to earth and he chooses to abandon that which would have been for him much easier and much more blessed to endure that which is much more difficult and much more cursed. And as we're talking about the cross, we're talking about suffering, all of human suffering starting with the suffering of Jesus. And I just want to close with this point, in my introduction, it is amazing, that in a world filled with suffering, we have a God who is not immune to it or removes himself from it, he enters into it. And he wants to do the same in your life, with your suffering, and your pain. He wants to enter into that. He wants to participate in that. He wants you to learn to love him and become like him, and to hate the sin that you committed that caused his suffering. So, as we're talking about the cross, it is something done for us, but my friends tragically because of sin, it is something done by us. Let me start with this question. How did God prepare his people for Jesus' cross? We looked in the last lecture or they knew that Jesus was coming and he was coming for the purpose of dying. Hebrews 2:17 is reflecting back on the Old Testament. And it says for this reason, he that is Jesus, had to be made like his brothers in every way. God became a man. In order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God that he might make, very crucial word here, what is that, atonement for the sins of his people. What that means is at one meant that in this act God would take those who were separated and make them reconciled as one. God was going to do something. And so this would have been a very familiar word and concept because the people who originally received this, their biggest holiday every year was called what, the day of atonement. Some of your Jewish friends will call it Yom Kippor, the day of atonement. The, the people of God called it the day. Of all their holidays, their Holy days their feasts and their festivals, the big day, the ultimate day was the day of atonement. And for the day of atonement, the Old Testament has a lot to say about how to celebrate and how to commemorate this sacrifice of atonement on the day of atonement. And so what would happen is people who are believers in the God of the Bible, knowing that they had sin and the wage for sin is death. Because without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin. They would acknowledge their sin, and they would make the long journey to a place called the temple. It was the holiest place on earth. It was the connection point between the seen and the unseen realms. It was the place that God's angelic family would come and be present with his human family. And ultimately, as you would make the pilgrimage to that place as a family, you would bring with you animals for slaughter and sacrifice. All of this is showing that death needs to happen for you to be forgiven. And what would happen on the day of atonement. It was a day of bloodshed. The high priest representing symbolizing, the people in

the presence of God would bring forth two animals, a sacrifice and a scapegoat. And over the sacrifice, the high priest is the mediator, intercessor, and representative of the people of God, would confess the sins of the people and then slit the throat, murdering the animal as a substitute. That was to show us what would happen to Jesus behold the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. In addition this second, this was a goat on Yom Kippor day of atonement. On Passover, it was a lamb. The second goat on day of atonement was called the scapegoat, the scapegoat. What they would do is they would confess the sins of the people, but rather than slaughtering the animal, they would set the animal free and they would drive it out of town, into a region where they believe that the demon God Azazel dwelt. And they were taking that, which is sinful and taking that, which is demonic, and the people would literally chase the scapegoat out of town. All of this is to show when Jesus comes, he is the sacrifice for your sins and the scapegoat for your sins. He pays your price and he takes your condemnation. All of this was in every faithful home, something that was practiced every single year so that people would be ready when Jesus came. Well, Jesus does in fact come and he is crucified. And I want to answer this question. What is crucifixion. In Isaiah written 500 years before Jesus walked the earth. He talked so much about Jesus, especially in chapters 40 through 66 on the suffering servant that some call Isaiah the fifth gospel but he foretells behold my servant at the whole of, or excuse me the whole of Isaiah 40 through 66 is about this servant. My servant shall act wisely. He shall be high and what? It's going to be lifted up. God's going to see that as being exalted but it's ultimately going to happen on a Roman cross. As many were astonished at you you saw Jesus being crucified. It was horrifying. His appearance was so marred. If you knew Jesus and you saw him after his flogging and during his crucifixion, you probably wouldn't have even recognized him. He was unrecognizable. His appearance was so marred beyond human semblance and his form beyond that of the children of mankind. So they shall sprinkle many nations. And that language of sprinkling is something that the priest would do with the blood of the substitute. And it's showing that Jesus is coming as the high priest, his body is the Holy of Holies and he is the substitute and he is the scapegoat. And he comes to sprinkle his blood so that we can have relationship with God. So what I want to talk about is crucifixion. The Bible gives scant few details regarding crucifixion in general, or the crucifixion of Jesus in particular. I believe it is because people who originally were recipients of the New Testament, they had publicly witnessed a crucifixion. This was familiar to them. And so they knew exactly what all of this meant. But you and I, we tend not to see crucifixions, so we may not fully see the suffering of Jesus. So I want to explain to you in a bit of detail historically, about the cross. One of the great hymns of our faith calls it quote the emblem of suffering and shame. Early on Christians decided that we needed some sort of symbol for our faith. They considered the rainbow that's since been stolen. They considered the dove, which has been stolen. And then ultimately God's people landed upon the cross, starting with it is believed the early church father Tertullian. And it was like, if we could have one thing to represent Jesus, what would it be? His cross. So Christians started making the sign of the cross. They started wearing the cross, artwork started to portray the cross and in ancient cities where believers dwelt, they would etch a cross into the roads so that if you landed in town, let's say from a ship in the city of Ephesus, I've been there myself. You can look down to this day in the ancient marble and there are crosses. And that's their way of saying thousands of years prior the people of Jesus are here, and the Christians would put across outside of their home saying, we believe in Jesus. And if you

knocked on that door and were a believer they would welcome you in because you were a brother or sister. You were a family because of the cross. But ultimately the cross was the defining statement for what it meant to believe in and belong to Jesus. Now what's amazing about crucifixion. It was and is state sponsored terror. So in our day, crucifixion is still sometimes occurring. Oftentimes in places that radical is long and its demonic root system has taken hold and they will still crucify on occasion, some people and they will oppose those that they called the worshipers of the cross, we don't worship the cross, we worship the one on the cross. In Jesus' day, it was no less state sponsored terror. In our day, when an organization takes somebody captive and they're going to crucify our behead them it is done openly, publicly scandalously. And the point is to discourage or dissuade anyone from joining that movement. So it was in the days of Jesus. Crucifixion was state sponsored terrorism, it was done openly, publicly, shamefully. It was intentionally done in places where people gathered to what? To increase the horror. As a result in Jesus' day, they saw crucifixions. It is likely, or I should say possible that when Jesus was a little boy, he witnessed crucifixions. There was a Jewish uprising against the Roman government that led to a mass crucifixion of Jewish people when Jesus was probably a little boy. And there was a day that Spartacus fell in battle. And on that day, they crucified 6,000 men in one day along a roughly 120 mile stretch of highway on the Roman road. Imagine that you get in your car and you drive 120 miles. And along the shoulder of the road, you see 6,000 men crucified, bleeding, weeping, incontinent, crying, cursing, urinating while their enemies are cheering. And their family is weeping. Crucifixion was generally done at eye level. Some of our artwork shows a very high cross. Oftentimes crucifixion was done at eye level. So literally your enemies could just look you in the eye. Even that barbarous of a culture struggled to crucify women, and so on the rare occasion that a woman was crucified, it was not uncommon for them to turn the woman around, so that her face was not toward the crowd. Crucifixion started with the Persians, it is believed in 800 BC. They started with impaling, getting a large pole, bringing it to a sharp point at the end and then running it through someone's body so they're impaled, and then having a hole dug in the ground and dropping the, the impaling pole in the ground so that they are slowly painfully dying Crucifixion was likely invented by the Persians but it was perfected by the Romans. The Romans made it into a sport. The Roman soldiers made it into a competition. How can we prolong the pain and suffering and misery so that that person endures more than is humanly possible to endure? Crucifixion could take upwards of nine days. We live in a hot arid desert climate. Not dissimilar. Imagine no food, no water, no medical attention crucified in the sun for nine days. Crucifixion was painfully slow death by asphyxiation. What would happen is as you're being crucified through the most sensitive nerve centers on the human body the hands and the feet, what would happen is as you were on the cross, obviously your body would begin to slouch. And then the air would be pressed from your lungs. You would pass in and out of consciousness as you are choking and asphyxiated. And then some people would push themselves up to get more breath into their lungs as their adrenaline fires. And sometimes people took upwards of nine days to die and to hasten the death, sometimes they would break their legs. They would break their legs so that they couldn't push themselves up to get air into their lungs. The Bible says that none of Jesus' bones were broken, that after his flogging he was already near death before he was crucified. Now, when it comes to crucifixion, the pain and the horror of crucifixion is so intense that a word was literally described to explain it. I had the honor, not long ago, I speaking to, I don't

know maybe six or 8,000 men in Mexico at an event. And I was speaking and I said something and the translator was supposed to translate it. And he's like, we don't have a word for that. It was the word excruciating. The word excruciating literally means from the cross. That's what it means. It was such a painful historical reality that they didn't have a word that was big enough to explain the suffering that it caused. And so the word crucifixion, or excuse me the word I should say the word excruciating again literally means from the cross, from the cross. And some cultures have a hard time depicting and articulating the horror of crucifixion. Just think about it in our day, right? We don't do blood. We don't do death. We don't do suffering. We call 911. We put them in a hospital. We put them in a care facility. In that day, you're seeing it openly, publicly shamefully in front of your family. The ancient historian Josephus called it the most wretched of deaths. Roman citizens were told by Cicero and others not to ever speak of the cross because it was unfit for Romans. Romans, generally weren't crucified. Jesus was Jewish and so he was crucified, and insofar as the Bible goes here is what Deuteronomy 20 verses 22 and 23 say, if a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, a hanged man is cursed by God. For the Jewish people, they believed that they were the blessed people of God. Somebody hung on a tree was cursed of God. Paul quotes this in Galatians where he says that Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming cursed for us. See, sometimes what happens is we say the word cross, but we don't articulate the full meaning of crucifixion. Many Christians mean very, very well but it's things like Jesus loved you. And he died on the cross for your sins. And we just move right along. Sometimes stopping to explain his suffering helps to show the true depth of the love of Jesus for God demonstrates his love for us in this while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. And for the believer, it is an understanding that Jesus died for my sin. And I love him so much, I want to put to death that which put him to death. And so it's putting to death sin because Jesus died for sin. Well, the story of Jesus is that he was falsely accused, tried, he was beaten by a mob of men, they covered his head during a sleepless night. He was then wrongly condemned to die by the testimony of false witnesses. And all of this was a demonic plot led by Judas Iscariot who himself was filled with Satan, the counterfeit to being spirit filled that they took Jesus it says, and they simply had him flogged. That's all that it says. Flogging in that day is when you would take a man, you'd strip him nearly naked. You would have fixed his arms over his head either through a pole or over a large stone. Two executioners would stand one at each side with a flaggermer, a cat of nine tails. And they would whip the man at the end of each strap of leather, there would have been a ball made out of probably metal or stone. And the point was to tenderize the flesh and then affixed at the end of each leather strap was a hook to sink into the deep tissue of the man's body. And then they would grab it and pull it forward so that the man's flesh was ripped off of body. Some of the historical records outside of the scriptures say that it got so deep into deep tissue and organs that on occasion a man's rib came flying off his body. The Jesus was nearly unrecognizable. That his form was marred. That's what it's talking about. The scourging. Many men died from the scourging. Now you have blood loss, you have deep tissue trauma. You have contusions, you have strain, you are bleeding. Your body is in crisis. We did this to God, but the cross of Jesus, we learn how bad we are and how good is. And ultimately Jesus was then given a heavy crossbar maybe a hundred pounds to carry on what? His bloodied bare back. He carried it through the shopping district in Jerusalem. You can go there today. They call it the Via Dolorosa, The Way Of The Cross. These are narrow streets

where people are getting groceries and going to buy spices and conduct their business. And here is a bleeding, dying man, carrying a cross on his bloodied back while the women and children scream and scurry. That's Jesus. The Bible says that he was so exhausted that he what? he fell. I looked it a medical examiners report and they say that the condition of his body at that moment would have been the same as a high speed head-on collision where your chest cavity is thrust into the steering wheel. No seatbelt, no airbag. Now you have deep heart trauma. And unless you get medical attention, you're going to die of cardiac arrest. So he got some help carrying the crossbar to his place of crucifixion. Then they pulled out his beard, which was to dishonor a man. They spit on him. They stripped him nearly naked. They cast lots for his clothing. They shoved a crown of thorns maybe three to four inches deep into his head so that he is bleeding into his eyes. And then they take the carpenter, who had driven many nails. And they, they drive the equivalent of railroad spikes through the ,most sensitive nerve centers in the human body, the hands and the feet. And then they lift Jesus up and they drop his cross in the hole and his body is shaking violently. And who does he see? His mother. There's Mary. There's Mary. When, how many of you moms when baby was born, you're like one, two, three, four, five one, two, three, four, five, 10 fingers, 10 toes railroad spikes through the 10 fingers and 10 toes of her baby boy. At this point, men are bleeding. They're sweating. They are weeping. They are dying. They are incontinent. Some of them are trying to urinate on the crowd that is mocking them. People are placing bets for the time of their death. Their enemies come to scorn them and shame them. And there hangs our great God, Jesus Christ. The one who made the world is being hung on one of his trees. And what Jesus says on the cross is amazing. These are called the seven last words of Jesus. Here's the next question. What did Jesus say as he died? These are the seven things that he said. First thing he says, father, what does he do? He prays. Here's a good thing to learn when you're suffering. Start by going up, not by going into your pain or out to your problem, but up to your father. He starts in prayer. Father what? Forgive them. Why is Jesus dying on the cross? To answer his own prayer. His death will allow you and me to be forgiven. Okay, this is, this is something that everyone needs. They need to be forgiven. And so people will say things like I don't feel like I need to be forgiven. It doesn't matter, criminals usually don't. But their victims know the truth. God is the victim. We've sinned against him. We are the criminal. We need to be forgiven. Number two, Luke 23:43. I tell you the truth. Today, you'll be with me in paradise. There's a, there's two guys getting crucified next to Jesus. We don't know their name. They don't get a holiday and we don't have a religion for them because three days later, they didn't get up. Hey, if Jesus didn't get up, we wouldn't know about him either. Cause we don't know about the other two guys. One guy is next to him and he is basically cursing God. The other guy is being crucified and says, here's God Jesus did nothing wrong. This is, this is evil. A paraphrasing of course. And so what Jesus does, he looks at that man. And he says, today you will be with me where? In paradise. You know what Jesus is doing on the cross? Ministry, ministry. Here's one guy, you know what? This must be a divine appointment to talk to him about the grace of God, the people that you are in the midst of because of life circumstances are oftentimes divine appointments that talk about the grace of God. Some say that when Jesus died, just tangentially just as a bit of a rabbit trail that comes to mind. So there are two versions of an ancient church creed. One says that when Jesus died, he went to Hades which is the realm of the dead. Another says that he died and went to hell. When Jesus died, and you'll see it in a moment. He says on the cross, it is

finished. I don't believe he went to hell because there's nothing left to do. Furthermore, he tells this guy we're going where? Paradise, let me just tell you Hell and paradise are different destinations. Amen? They're different destinations. Number three, John 19:26 through 27. Dear woman here is your son. Here is your mother. He loves his mother. He ministers to his mother. He appoints John, the beloved his nearest and dearest disciple to care for his mom. John 19:28 point number four, Jesus says I am what? Thirsty, full humanity, he's thirsty. What they do after that is something that I didn't fully understand as a new Christian As a new Christian, I remember my pastor said, read the Bible. So I sat down and I did, like in a short period of time, I read the whole Bible And I'll never forget, the first time I was reading about the crucifixion of Jesus. I thought this is horrible. Oh, but look, they gave him a drink. It just shows that, you know we make mistakes, but we have a good heart that everybody's got a little goodness in them. I mean, they're given Jesus a drink. That's kind of what I thought as a college kid. And then some years later, the family and I we went to Greece, Israel, Turkey some of the archeological excavated sites from the days of the New Testament, we were sitting in the ancient excavated city of Ephesus, which is amazing. And there was this open public restroom. And there were these seats, toilets and underneath all made out of marble was a big hole. And so I asked our tour guide, who was an archeological and history professor that we hired to be with us. I said, that's odd. And I asked him, what is that? And he said, Oh, when they would defecate and go to the bathroom, a slave would take a branch, they would put a sponge on the end. They would stop it in wine vinegar as a disinfectant. And then they would scrub you after you defecated. Now, what it says here is Jesus says, I am thirsty. What did they shove into his mouth? A sponge on the end of a stick. Most likely part of the Roman soldiers standard issue field kit. When you're out in the wilderness and you're going to the bathroom, get a stick, disinfect it, use this sponge. That sponge, they shoved in God's mouth to shut him up. Now everything else Jesus is going to say, he's saying with probably the bowel movement tasted on his lips and in his mouth. And what comes out of Jesus is grace and love and mercy. There's an old missionary, this comes to mind. Her name is Amy Carmichael and a little book she titled "If", but she basically uses this analogy that that when you bump a glass of water, what comes out? Whatever's in the bottle. Jesus here is more than being bumped, he's being attacked, more than just spilling a drop. He empties his cup to use his language. And what comes out, love grace, mercy. Suffering reveals you. Suffering reveals you. What's in comes out when you're suffering. Here, Jesus is suffering. And what comes out is love and grace and mercy and forgiveness and compassion. He then cries out. Number five, Matthew 27:46. He quotes the Psalms. My God, my God. Why have you forsaken me? At that moment, atonement occurred. At that moment, Jesus substituted himself in your place for your sins. We'll examine that more thoroughly, momentarily. Jesus then says in a loud triumphant cry because it was a victory, it is finished. All the work of salvation was done. Any other man-made effort of human works or religious tradition to add to the finished work of Jesus is demonic. It's finished. It's done. All you need to do is trust in what he has done for you and not trust in anything done by you. You and I are saved by works, but it's not our work, it's Jesus' work. He does all the work. He says that the work is finished and we just trust in his finished work. And then Jesus cries out. Luke 23:46, number seven, father into your hands, I commit my spirit. For a moment here, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? The theologians say that the father turned his back on the son. The worst part of Jesus' suffering was the severing of his relationship. Let me just tell you this. Whatever you're going through,

that suffering is not in the same category of those who are suffering without a relationship with God. The deepest suffering, the greatest pain that Jesus endured was the severing of the relationship with the father because he treasured that above all. A spear was then thrust into Jesus' side, water and blood flowed from his side. Cardiologists would say that that shows that the heart sac was punctured. Jesus is declared to be dead. He is wrapped in maybe 90 pounds of burial linens and spices. His body is put into the tomb, gifted him post-mortem by a man named Joseph of Arimathea. A large stone is rolled over the anterior way. Guards from the Roman government are put on duty and the seal of the Roman government attaches itself to that tomb so that if you break it, it is a federal crime. Jesus is dead. That sets the stage for the resurrection in the next lecture. But let me ask you this. We celebrate the crucifixion of Jesus every year on what day? Good Friday. And we call the gospel of Jesus Christ what? Good news. The question is how can any of this be good? The worst thing happened to the only perfect person. So what the Bible will do, it will give us the historical facts and then the theological implications of those facts and in transition, your English Bible, will use the little word for. For, I want to show it to you. Isaiah 53:5, he was wounded for our transgressions. He was crushed for our inequities. Romans 4:28, he was delivered up for our trespasses. Romans 5:8 Christ died for us. First Corinthians 15:3 Christ died for our sins. First Peter 3:18 Christ suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous. What this is, this is the doctrine of substitution. I would go so far as to give you a longer statement. It's penal substitutionary atonement. That's what it is. If you want to just sort of look at the theological. That is the category, penal penalty substitution Jesus in your place, atonement to pay your debt to God so that you could be reconciled to God as one. A loving, harmonious, reconciled relationship. In every day, those people who think that we're better than we are tend to diminish the significance of Jesus' death. They want to turn him into a great example. Look at Jesus when he suffered what a great example. And let me tell you, Jesus is a great example but above all else, he's a great substitute. He's a great substitute. And second Corinthians 5:21, the apostle Paul says this it's possibly my favorite scripture. God made him who knew no sin to become sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. Martin Luther called this the great exchange. And what it means is that Jesus took your place and puts you in his place. He traded places with you. What happened in the garden is that we traded places with God, what happens on the cross is that God trades places with us. He reverses the curse through the death of Jesus. What this means is all of your sin past, present, and future, word, thought, deed, and motive, commission, doing the bad thing, omission, not doing the good thing. All of that is on Jesus. Colossians 2:13 through 15 says that when he was crucified, there was all of your sin written on a spiritual document in the unseen realm. And there, all of your sin was listed and Satan every right to condemn you and to haunt you and to shame you and Jesus died for you and Jesus forgave, you and Jesus delivered you. And he died in your place for all your sins. Sins you haven't even committed yet that he and his full knowledge and Providence knows that you will commit. Now, some will hear this and they'll say what does this mean? Well, number one, it means that there is a great problem. That problem is you. Number two, you have a great enemy. And your greatest enemy is you. Number three, you need Jesus, because you are the problem, not the solution. That's the point of the cross. Now there are those who would deny this. Mahatma Gandhi said and I quote, speaking of Jesus, his death on the cross was a great example to the world. But that there was anything like a mysterious or miraculous virtue in it, my heart could not accept. It is possible to appreciate

the crucifixion of Jesus without accepting the crucifixion of Jesus in your place for your sins. Mahatma Gandhi appreciated the cross but he couldn't accept the cross. To accept the good news of the cross, we need to accept the bad news of human sin. For those of us who are honest and agree with God that we are sinners who need a savior that Jesus is our substitute, there are some amazing things that happen. I don't have time to get into them in depth. I don't know if I'll get through all of them. But there are nine things that the cross of Jesus does for someone whose faith is in him. Let me run through them quickly. Number one, Jesus died so you can live. Colossians 2:13 through 15. When you were dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. See sin is not just a condition. Excuse me. Say it again. Sin is not just an action. It's a condition. It's a nature. So it's not just changing your behavior, it's changing you. He made you alive with Christ. He what? Forgave. If you belong to Jesus, you need to know this. You're forgiven. You need to receive that. Now, even in saying this, some of you will say in your mind, I know that God forgives me. I just can't forgive myself. My answer would be blasphemy. If the highest God says you're forgiven and you say, you're not forgiven, then you are saying that you're higher than the highest God. It sounds humble to say I can't forgive myself. It's actually very haughty to say I can't forgive myself, because if Jesus died, you are forgiven. That is a gift for you to receive. And to reject that gift is to dishonor the giver of that gift, the Lord Jesus. Now I will tell you that because of our sin, especially those of you with a tender conscience, there will be difficulty in receiving full forgiveness. You may say I struggled to receive God's forgiveness. Okay, I understand that. But be very careful to be honest about your haughty inability to receive forgiveness and grace and saying Jesus forgave me. But I held court, I sat in the judge's seat and I slammed down the gavel on my own life. And I am overturning the verdict of Jesus Christ by not forgiving myself. Having canceled the written code with its regulations that was against us, that stood opposed to us, he took it away, what? Nailing it to the cross. Jesus died so you can live. Number two, Jesus paid the ultimate price for your debt to God. First Peter 1:18 and 19. For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold or your debit card or your American Express 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. Here, sin is referred to as a debt. Jesus said, forgive us our sin, forgive us our debt in two places that he articulated the Lord's prayer. So sin and debt in the Bible are synonymous. Every time we sin, we accrue a debt to God. We've all got debts, right? You've got a car loan, home loan, you got a student loan, you've got credit card debt, right? You've got bills and duties and obligations. Not only do you have physical debts we have spiritual debts, that's to God. And the question is, well, I can't pay my physical debt. How in the world do I pay my spiritual debt? You can't, you can't reincarnate and pay it back. You can't have your good deeds outweigh your bad deeds. But the good news is this. Jesus paid your entire debt to God. He paid the ultimate price for your debt to God. Let me just say what this looks like, practically. Two Christians, one sins, accrues a debt to the other. What should we do? We should forgive, but that's going to cost me something. That's what forgiveness is. It's paying a price for someone else to be blessed at your expense, that's what it means. Number three, Jesus was cursed so you could be blessed. I hit this in Deuteronomy 21, 22 and 23. Paul quotes that in Galatians 3:13, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, by becoming a curse for us, for it is written, cursed is everyone who hung on a tree. If you belong to Jesus, he was cursed so you could be blessed. This is the great

exchange in the changing of positions. What that means is that Jesus endured everything that you should endure and you receive everything that he should receive. The Bible calls that your inheritance. When you sin, if you are a Christian, you need to know that you are still a Saint, and as a Saint declared holy, because of Jesus, when you sin, there may be consequences or implications or painful complications, but nonetheless when you sin, God doesn't punish you. You know why? That debt was already paid. A lot of Christians, especially those of you with tender conscience, they will think when you are suffering, God is punishing. No Jesus was punished. You're blessed, not cursed. You're blessed, not curse. Number four, Jesus became unrighteous so you could become righteous. Again, second Corinthians 5:21. God made him who knew no sin to become sin so that in him we could become the righteousness of God. Jesus takes all of my unrighteousness and Jesus clothes me in all of his righteousness. There's a picture. I think it's in Zachariah chapter three. And it tells the story of the high priest. And there is someone who is wearing filthy garments. They're all dirty and they're condemned. And what happens is the clean clothes are placed on the dirty person and they are made clean. This is why God's people in the Bible often wear white. You need to know that if Jesus became unrighteous, it was so that you could become righteous. He took off all of the filth, guilt, shame, failure, sin and rebellion that you wear. And he then clothed you in his perfect garments of obedience and holiness and faith and grace and mercy and perseverance. And you now get to live from your identity in Christ regardless of what you have done. Number five, Jesus endured God's wrath so you could experience God's grace. God's wrath is real. God's wrath is not spoken of very often. God's wrath is poured out on the cross of Jesus. If you belong to Jesus, then the wrath was dealt with at his cross. If you do not belong to Jesus, then the wrath of God is in your eternal future. Romans 5:8, since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath? Some people will say, God is love. The Bible does say in First John 4 that God is love. The Bible has a number of attributes for God. Heresy happens when we take one attribute and we make it the only attribute. So if God is sovereign, that's all we have. It leads to something called deism that we think that he's left. If all you think is God is love, and you pour into that, the cultural misunderstanding of tolerance, then God can't be a God of holiness. God can't be a God of justice. God can't be a God of wrath, but he is. The holiness of God is the most frequently mentioned attribute of God in the whole Bible. And what happens on the cross, God in his holiness received us in our unholiness by sending Jesus to take our place and to put us in his place. That's the cross. That's the cross. I just feel inclined to share this. Maybe it's maybe it's from the Holy spirit. There's a little line early in Romans. This here is talking about the active wrath of God. The Bible says that those who are unbelievers are storing up wrath for the day of wrath. The Bible typifies this as a cup. What that means is every day you are sinning, if you die without belonging to Jesus, then when you die you will drink what? That cup. When Jesus was in the garden of Gethsemane and he was going to be crucified, he spent a night in anguish, sweating like drops of blood, crying out to the father. If there be any other way, take this cup from me. You know what that was? That was your cup. All of your sin was poured into that cup. That cup is the cup of God's wrath. And Jesus knew I'm going to go to the cross, and I'm going to drink your cup to the last drop. And he did, because he loves you. He loves you. Jesus drank your cup so you don't have to drink your cup. Now again, the line early in Romanas that comes to mind, it talks about the passive wrath of God. So people are like, God doesn't have wrath. I do whatever I want, he doesn't do anything. Oh, you're just filling up your

cup. Wait till the day that you stand before Jesus and you drink it. I'm reminded of that line in Revelation, that it speaks of the cup of his wrath. See, we take ourselves too seriously, we take God too lightly. We say things like Jesus saved me. From what? Everybody needs Jesus, either Jesus is going to endure the wrath of God on the cross, or you will endure the wrath of God in hell. Those are the two options that the Bible gives. Daniel 12:2, those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall arise. Some to everlasting life, some to everlasting death. Those are the only two options. Number six, Jesus was rejected by the father so you could be reconciled to the father. Some of you have been rejected. Jesus knows what that is like Romans 5:10 and 11 for if we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him. That's relational language. You ever had somebody you loved. And it all went bad and you're were like, I guess it's over. And then you forgave each other and figured it out and loved each other, and now your relationship is stronger than ever? That's what Jesus wants. Reconciled to him through the death of his son. How much more having been reconciled shall we be saved through his life? Not only is this so, when we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we have now received reconciliation. Let me tell you this. There is no way to get closer to God than through Jesus. Okay? Jesus, on the cross reconciled you to the father. You ever watched those shows on TV where somebody doesn't know their family and then they do all their genealogical work and they want to go meet their dad. That's the human heart in all of history. And Jesus comes as the big brother to rescue us and reconcile us to our dad. It's a great family homecoming. If you're like me and you cry watching all those military clips on YouTube where the soldier dad comes home and the kids are screaming and crying. I cry every time because I think, he's my father, he wants me to run to him like that. That's reconciliation. Number seven. Jesus was shamed so that you could be unashamed. Let's just be honest, we've all got some shame. Amen? The Bible says in Genesis that we were made perfect. Everything was good and very good. We were naked without shame. The first thing that happens when sin comes in, it says that they were ashamed and they covered themselves. And all we've been doing since is covering ourselves, right? Your works, your performance, your lies is all just a fig leaf. Don't see who I really am. There's shame. You know, we live in a day when we tell people you shouldn't have any shame, yes you should. In fact, you should be ashamed of yourself. I had a guy come to me one time. He's like, I feel bad. I said, it's because you're bad. This is, welcome to reality. If you don't move here, at least visit. You know? And so when we have shame it's not saying I should be proud of my behavior. It should be, I should be ashamed of my behavior and know that when Jesus went to the cross, he not only took my sin, he took my shame Hebrews 12: 1 to 2, let us run with endurance, the race that is set before us looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter, some of your translations will say author and perfecter of our faith, who for the what? Joy that was set before him endured the cross despising the shame, Jesus knew that you had sin. And as a result of sin, you had shame. It's powerful controlling human emotion. Every time I meet with someone in a counseling session they tell me what they've done, they don't look me in the eye, because they don't want to be seen for who they truly are. Jesus took your shame. You don't need to be ashamed. In fact, some of you would say what about all that horrible stuff in my past? Great, it's now your testimony. Yeah, this is who I was, and Jesus fixed it. Yay, Jesus. Oh, and you need Jesus too. And if he could fix me, guess what? You're not nearly as much work as I am. This is where we can boast in the cross of Jesus. And we don't have to boast in our behavior. We can boast that he has changed our behavior and he takes our shame. So many

people, they don't walk in freedom. They don't walk enjoy because they walk in shame. The Bible says there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ. Number eight. This is probably my favorite thing to share with you. I know many Christians who feel that though they are forgiven, they are still damaged goods. They're still dirty. They're still unclean. They're still defiled. They're still gross. They're still disgusting. They're still sick. They're still embarrassing. Grace was very brave to share some years ago, her story of sexual assault before we met. And I discovered that later in our marriage, and she shared that bravely to encourage people who have been sinned against to come forward to be cleansed from their defilement. There's a gal in Genesis, her name is Dana. She was raped. And it says that she was quote defiled. The cross, not only deals with the sins that we commit, the cross also deals with the sins that are committed against us. There is partly true, but not entirely helpful. Bible teaching that says Jesus died on the cross, confess your sins and he'll forgive you. That's true. But what if you're not the one who sinned? You were the one who sinned against. What if you were not the child molester, but the child? What if you were not the rapist, but the rape victim? What if you were not the one who committed adultery and blew up the family but the one who had the nuclear bomb dropped on your home? How do you repent to what they did? Well, Jesus died and made himself unclean so that you could live a clean life. So many people think of what they have done or what has been done to them, they're dirty. Every rape victim I've ever spoken to tells me that the first thing that they did after their assault is what take a shower. They're trying to get their body and soul, you're one person in two parts, clean. There's only one way to make your soul clean. You're going to need Jesus and the Holy spirit to apply his work to your soul. First John 1:7 through 9. If we walk in the light, that's relational ongoing lifestyle, as he is in the light. This is overt, not covert. This is coming clean before you're getting caught. You don't do this with everybody, but you choose the mature, faithful, dependable godly people that you're going to walk in the light with and be honest and open with. We have what? Fellowship. That's friendship and loving relationship with one another and the what? The blood of Jesus, there's the cross, his son what? Purifies us from how much sin? All sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves. And the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us and purify us from all sin and unrighteousness. You're not just forgiven and dirty, you're forgiven and clean. Jesus, doesn't get you up to zero. He gets you up to heaven. In the Bible, people purify themselves in. And what color do people tend to wear? White showing what? I'm clean. I'm clean. In revelation, it says that when Jesus returns he'll be like a groom and his church will be like a bride. And it says that fine linen white and clean will be given the bride to wear. Let me just make this really practical. There's a gal who has either done some things or had some things done to her or both that make her feel defiled. If she belongs to Jesus, does she get to wear white on her wedding day? Yes, because she will be wearing white on that wedding day when she is fully reunited with Jesus. And so let me just say this, you and I need to start to see people like God sees them. This is where the Bible says, let us therefore live up to what we've already attained. If God says they're clean, then we need to stop bringing it up. If God says they're clean, then we need to stop rubbing their nose in it. If God says clean, we need to stop shoving their face in it. If God says they're clean, they're clean. If God says we're clean, we're clean. If God says you're clean, you're clean, you're clean. And then lastly, 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. The cross is the demonstration of the love of God. I just get

so frustrated when I hear bad Bible teachers say how can you believe in the cross if God is a loving God? I believe in the cross because that's where I see the love of God. God demonstrates his love for us in this way yet sinners Christ died for us. Dear beloved, this is love. Not that we have loved God, but that God has loved us and sent his son, the Lord Jesus as the propitiation for our sins, John 3:16 right? . For God so loved the world that he gave his son. The cross of Jesus is the full revelation of the love of God. If you ever wondered, God, do you love me? Just close your eyes and think of Jesus dying for you with his arms outstretched, welcoming you because he loves you. Lastly, some will hear about the cross and Paul anticipated this says in Corinthians and Galatians, some will say it's foolishness, the cross. Others will say it's offensive. It's foolish to say that God forgives you. You don't need to be forgiven. And it's offensive to hear that God needs to forgive you. If you still think you're a good person. And what the cross does now close with this, the cross is the repudiation of human works, performance, and goodness, if we're good, why did Jesus have to die? If we could fix it, why did he come to fix it? If we were going to figure it out, why do we need him to figure it out? I don't want the cross to be foolishness to you. I don't want it to be an offense to you. I want it to be a joy for you. For the joy set before him, he endured the cross scorning its shame. The cross was not joyful, but he endured the cross for the joy on the other side of the cross. You know what that joy was? Getting you.