

The King is Dead

- An emblem of suffering and shame. Those are the words that an old Christian hymn uses to depict and describe the execution, the crucifixion of our God and Savior Jesus Christ. When Jesus was a little boy, there was a Jewish uprising against the Roman government and they responded with a mass crucifixion of God's people. Makes you wonder if as a little boy, if He looked up and looked into the future and saw His fate and the foreboding of the crucifixion that was coming. In the days of the early Church, beginning with the Church father Tertullian, Christians had to determine what our symbol or sign for our faith would be. Ultimately a cross was chosen. That emblem of suffering and shame. It was at that time that God's people began making the sign of the cross, wearing the cross. Placing the cross on the door of our home and on the top of our church. Nonetheless, throughout history, crucifixion has always been state-sponsored terror. This explains why throughout history, Hitler had Jews crucified in Dachau. When the Nazis would take Allied forces, they would crucify them on the sides of barns and homes through the throat and the testicles with bayonets. The Khmer Rouge commonly crucified people in Cambodia. To this very day, jihadists in Sudan are crucifying people, including God's people. Crucifixion has always been state-sponsored terror. It is the equivalent in our day of a beheading that is livestreamed on the internet. It's for everyone to see and it's a warning. Whatever they believed or however they behaved, do not follow in their footsteps or you will suffer their fate. Crucifixion was invented by the Persians around 800 BC. It began by taking a long pole that was sharp at the end and running it through a man's midsection and then dropping that pole into a hole in the ground so that he would lay there for perhaps days, suffering and bleeding, in and out of consciousness. Dehydrated, weeping, struggling. And ultimately surrendering to death. It was perfected by the Romans. They were masters in terror. By the days of Jesus they had perfected their craft. They had found the most arduous way to extend and elongate and increase the pain of the crucified. This included having both a post that was probably left in the ground and a cross bar that the victim would be forced to carry to their place of execution via crucifixion. Someone crucified could hang for upwards of nine days. In and out of consciousness, bleeding, incontinent, dehydrated, sunburned. So that a pool of tears and sweat and urine and feces dripped off their body and gathered beneath what was soon to be a corpse. This was all done, not privately, but publicly. Not in a dignified way but in a damnable way. They would find the most well-traveled places to crucify people. Jesus was crucified up on a hill so everyone could see Him. This would be like taking your kids to the park or going to the grocery store and walking out and seeing the horror of someone being crucified at eye level. So that you could mock them. So that you could jeer them. So that you could bet on the time of their death while their friends and family wept bitterly. The pain and the horror of crucifixion is so overwhelming that the English language had to create a word to contain its meaning. The word excruciating literally means from the cross. Crucifixion happened commonly in the ancient world on the day that Spartacus fell in battle. In 71 BC it was Alexander who had 6000 soldiers crucified along a 120-mile stretch of highway in a single day. Imagine getting in your car and driving to the border and there are 6000 men crucified, suffering, bleeding, dying while their family and friends are weeping and crying. Says that Jesus began His bloodshed the night before He was crucified. Says that He was awake all night in anxiety, praying, wrestling with God the Father. The Bible says that He sweated like drops of blood. Medical doctors will

call this hematidrosis. It is a condition that is only experienced by a small percentage of people who are under such great pressure and anxiety that their body begins to leak blood. Then He was betrayed. By a pretend friend, Judas Iscariot. We then hear that He was blindfolded. He couldn't even see those who were opposing Him and soon to be beating Him. They beat Him all night. An angry mob of men who didn't even have the dignity to allow Him to see them. The Bible simply then says that they took Him and they had him scourged. Scourging took the life of many men. Many did not even make it to their place of crucifixion. The Romans had invented a flagrum or a cat o' nine tails, has a handle. From which proceed straps of leather. At the end of which is a ball, usually made out of metal or stone for the express purpose of tenderizing the victim's flesh. So that then the hooks could dig deeply and then the executioners would take turns ripping the flesh off of the man's neck, shoulders, back and buttocks. Deep tissue trauma, significant bleeding and occasionally history reports that a rib would come flying off of a man. Isaiah says that He was marred beyond human likeness. Had you known Jesus, you would have not known that that was Jesus. He did not even resemble the man He had been prior to the scourging. They then put a crown of thorns on His head to mock Him as the king. They then forced Him to carry His cross bar. Perhaps upwards of a few hundreds pounds of recycled timber with the tears and the blood of men who had died on it previously. They laid it on His traumatized, bloody, barren back. And they made Him carry it through the old city streets of Jerusalem. We now know it as the Via Dolorosa, or the Way of the Cross. These are narrow streets within the city walls. This is where people go to conduct business and Jesus is carrying his cross bar over cobblestone streets. As women and children are traumatized and shocked and in horror at what they are seeing. Jesus strained to carry the cross. He fell. Medical doctors will tell you that this is the equivalent of a head on car collision where your body is thrown into a steering wheel. No airbag is deployed, no seatbelt is utilized. You have deep trauma in your heart and chest. You are in the process of dying without medical attention. Finally, with a bit of help, Jesus was taken to His place of crucifixion and execution and there they took the equivalent of railroad ties and they took the hands and feet. The most sensitive nerve centers on the human body of Jesus Christ who had Himself driven many nails as a carpenter and they nailed Him to the cross bar. And then they lifted it up. And they dropped it in the ground and there Jesus' body would've shook violently. It would've twitched uncontrollably because He is dying, painfully. They then peered His, pulled His beard out rather as an ancient sign of disrespect. You're not a man, we don't honor you as a man. They spit on Him, they cursed Him, they jeered Him. They stripped Him nearly naked and there Jesus looked out. Saw His own mother who had counted 10 fingers and 10 toes and never anticipated that this would be their fate. And all Jesus speaks from the cross is blessing. He promises salvation to a repentant man at His side. He prays for His enemies and He blesses His mother. Not only does blood come out of Jesus, but so does grace. To silence Him, a soldier took a sponge, sopped it in wine vinegar, put it on the end of a stick and shoved it into His mouth. That was likely part of the Roman soldier's field kit when they would head off into battle in the middle of the wilderness. After they'd go to the bathroom, they would need to clean themselves. So they would pack a sponge and they would put it on the end of a stick. They would use the wine vinegar as an antiseptic and they would use it to scrub themselves. This is their way of silencing Jesus and anything else that He is going to speak. He is going to speak with the taste of a bowel movement of His

enemy on His lips and He continues to bless. The Bible says that He prayed for His enemies and He then cried in a loud voice, "It is finished." And He gave up His Spirit. The executioner whose job was to ensure His death declared Him dead. To ensure He was dead, they took a spear. They ran it under His ribcage, puncturing His heart sack so that water and blood flowed from His side and Jesus Christ literally and metaphorically died of a broken heart. Darkness came, the body was buried. The king was dead. The question is, why did He die? Let me give you 12 reasons Jesus died for you. Number one, Jesus died to take your place. 1 John 4:10 says this. "This is love, not that we loved God "but that He loved us and He sent His son "as an atoning sacrifice for our sin." So I must speak of sin. When I speak of sin, I have sin, we have sin. But I'm going to talk about your sin because your sin is your biggest problem. You are not a good person, you are a bad person. You are not a victim of everyone else. You are a villain and God is your victim. You do not have a good heart. You do not have good days. You're a sinner and before you can receive any good news, you must accept the bad news of who you are. Because Jesus Christ doesn't just accept you. He needs to forgive you and die for you and change you. That's how deeply, profoundly flawed you are. You are a sinner by nature and choice. It is a condition that results in action. Jesus doesn't need to just make you better. He needs to make you new. You've sinned in your thoughts. God knows your thoughts. You've sinned with your words. You've said things that should not have been said. You've sinned with your hands, you've touched things and people that were none of your business. And you've sinned with your motives, God knows your heart. And oftentimes when you do a good thing, it's to get their praise and your benefit and it's just sin in a despicable, damnable and deceiveable way. You are a sinner by commission and omission. You have said and done things that should not have been said and done. And you have failed to do the things that God made you to do and to say the things that God has made you to say and believe the things that God has made you to believe and to give things that God has made you to give. Scholars will call this penal substitutionary atonement. Atonement literally means at one meant. It's bringing two people together who had been adversarial. Penal is that there's a penalty to be paid for the sin that is committed. And substitution is that Jesus dies in your place for your sins. See, when you sinned against God, you took God's place. When Jesus died, He took your place. There's only two options my friend. You will die and go to hell and repay Jesus Christ for all of your sins forever or Jesus died on the cross in your place for your sins. Those are the only two options. I'm passionate, I'm loud, not because I'm angry. Because this is the most important thing in all of human history. It's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God. Do not be deceived, God will not be mocked. You will reap what you sow. And you may not believe in God but when you die and stand before Him, you will regret not receiving His Son Jesus Christ as your substitute for your sin. Number two, Jesus died to defeat Satan. Colossians 2:13-15. "You, who were dead in your trespasses." Physically alive, spiritually dead. "God made alive together with Him, "having forgiven us all our trespasses, "by canceling the record of debt that stood against us "with its legal demands." When Jesus died on the cross, there was a rendering, a reckoning in the unseen realm of all of your sin. And He died for that. "This He set aside, nailing it to the cross. "He disarmed the rulers and authorities." That's Satan and demons. "And put them to open shame, "by triumphing over them in Him." Scholars will call this Christus Victor. The rebellion against God started not on Earth, but in heaven. Not with us, but with Satan. And

Satan recruited demons to join him in his cosmic treason. His horrific rebellion against God the creator. Satan and the demons lost that war. They were sent down to the Earth and they sought to recruit us to join them in their war against Him and every single one of us has chosen Satan's side of the war and we have declared war on God. And as a result, Satan is our king. Unless you receive Jesus Christ as your only God and Savior and the substitute for your sin. Satan owns you because of your sin but Jesus' death conquers Satan's control of your life, pays the penalty for your sin and transfers you from the domain of darkness to the kingdom of light. From Satan as your Lord to your Jesus as your Lord. Number three, Jesus died to set you free. It's a joke that we live in a nation that decries freedom when we're all a bunch of slaves. 1 Peter 1:18-19. "It was not with perishable things such as silver or gold "that you were redeemed." It doesn't matter how much money you make, you cannot purchase salvation. It does not matter what kind of lavish lifestyle you enjoy. At the end of this life, this lifestyle comes to an end. "Instead you were redeemed from the empty way of life "handed to you by your forefathers "and it was done with the precious blood of Christ, "a lamb without blemish or defect." Scholars will call this redemption and the point is this. You are a slave to sin. Now for some people this is obvious, they have addictions. They can't stop. They're in a self destructive process of their own decision making, leading to their own demise. But the truth is, we're all slaves to sin. And if you disbelieve that, prove me wrong by being perfect. And the fact that you and I cannot be perfect is simply because we are slaves to sin. And what happens is God sets us free from sin, free to worship Him. We tend to think of our freedom as freedom to sin. No it's freedom from sin to worship. The prototype for redemption in the Bible is the Book of Exodus. God's people were slaves. They could not free themselves. God set them free supernaturally so that they would be free to worship Him. There are only two options my friend. You live your life as a slave to sin and then you pay God back for your rebellion and treason against Him or Jesus Christ dies so that you can live and He sets you free from sin so that you're free to worship Him and once you are set free, the Bible says if the Son sets you free, you are free indeed. You are free from sin, you are free from death, you are free from wrath, you are free from hell and you're free to God and you're free to worship and you're free to glorify the God who created you. When God frees you, He gives you a new nature. He gives you new desires. He gives you a new identity. It's not just a better you, it's a new you. Free to be all that God intends for you. Number four, Jesus died as your sacrifice. Hebrews 9:11-12. "When Christ came as high priest, "He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves "but He entered the Most Holy Place "once for all by His blood." Scholars will call this New Covenant sacrifice. The point is this. Sin causes death. That's why the Bible is such a bloody book. 450 times roughly. The Bible mentions blood. It's a blood-soaked, blood-dripped book. In the Old Covenant there was a temple where there was a priest and you would bring a sacrifice. And that sacrifice would be a substitute for your sin. And the priest would shed its blood and there was a river of blood that flowed from the temple. Today we have no temple 'cause Jesus is the presence of God on the Earth. We have no priest because Jesus is our great High Priest. You did not bring a sacrifice because Jesus Christ is the once for all sacrifice, the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. There's only two options. You will have your blood shed for your sins or you will receive Jesus' blood shed for your sins. Number five, Jesus died to make you right with God. You're not born right with God. You need to be born again to be right with God. Romans 5, "The Gift is not like the result "of one

man's sin." He's gonna juxtapose Adam and Jesus. The man who brought damnation and the man who brings salvation. "The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, "but the gift followed many trespasses "and brought justification. "For if, by the trespasses of one man, "death reigned through that one man, "how much more will those "who receive God's abundant provision of grace "and the gift." That's the big idea. "The gift of righteousness rein in life "through the one man, Jesus Christ." Scholars will call this justification. And the point here is this. God rules through laws and sin is a violation of God's law. You're not a law unto yourself. I don't care what your gender is. I don't care what your culture is. I don't care what your nation is. I don't care who your candidate is. God rules as a judge and He judges justly and perfectly, all peoples, times and places according to His Word and the problem is that we've all violated God's law. We've all sinned against God. The question is how do we get right with God when we've done so much wrong? There are two ways that people pursue this. Number one is what the Bible here is referring to as works righteousness. It's works. I work hard, I do my best, I'm a good person. This comes in two forms. For religious people, they have traditions and rituals. Silly things that they think will please God. For those who are irreligious, they have causes and justice and good works and the right hashtags. To try to pretend that they can make it right 'cause they're good people. You're not a good person, you're a bad person. You don't get to just brag about your best day, you need to own your worst day. You don't need to just post everything you have done right, you need to stand before God and give an account for all that you have done wrong. So ultimately, the only way to be made right with God is not by something you have done. But by what Jesus has done. You don't make yourself right with God. The battle is between you and the Lord. You don't make it right, He makes it right. Through the death of Jesus Christ in your place for your sins. Jesus was perfect, you are not. Jesus was punished so that He could receive condemnation and you could receive salvation. Number six, Jesus died to make you righteous. 2 Corinthians 5:21, "For our sake, God made Him who knew no sin." That is Jesus. "So that in Him, we might become the righteousness of God." There are two ways that people pursue righteousness. Through doing things to earn God's favor or by thanking Jesus for doing all that is required for us to have favor with God. It's not about what you do, it's about what Jesus does. It's not about your resume, it's about His resume. We don't boast in who we are, we boast in who He is. We don't boast in what we've done, we boast in what He's done for us, in us and through us. There are only two options my friend. You can take all of your good deeds and hope that when you stand before God you've been good enough but Jesus says, "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." His standard is not good, it is perfect. God is perfect, heaven is perfect. Only perfect people should be allowed before a perfect God and a perfect place. Your good deeds are not going to earn you relationship with God. Only the deeds of Jesus Christ. He lived the life you have not lived. He died the death you should die. And He gives the gift you cannot earn, forgiveness of sin and eternal life. Number seven, Jesus died to satisfy God's wrath. We live in a world where everyone's a victim. Nobody's a villain. We all want justice, except for God's justice. We all pour out our wrath with the people and things that we're just so frustrated by but God's not allowed to pour out His wrath. As He was headed to the cross, Jesus says this in Matthew 26:39. "He fell on His face and He prayed, saying, ""My Father, if it be possible, ""let this cup pass from me. ""Nonetheless, not as I will, but as you will."" Scholars will call this propitiation. The big idea is this, that your sin triggers God's wrath. God is holy and you

are unholy and it would be unholy for Him not to respond in a holy way toward your sin. And here Jesus is talking about a cup and He's using an analogy. The big idea is this. God's wrath comes in two forms. Number one, there is passive wrath. Where God lets you do whatever the hell you want to do. And then eventually it culminates in active wrath, where God makes you pay for all you have done. Some of you are living in the path of the wrath of God. You're in danger. There's a cup in the presence of God with your name on it and God's allowing you to do whatever the hell you want to do. But every time you sin, that sin is accounted in that cup and you're just filling it up. You're not getting away with anything, you're storing up everything for the day of judgment. When Jesus said, "Take this cup from me." He knew that He was going to take a cup with my name on it. And He was going to drink every drop of the wrath of God. In my place, for my sins. So He's up all night, "Father, if there's another way." Not my will, your will be done. There's only two options friend. Number one, you just keep filling that cup. And then you're going to die and you're gonna drink every last drop of the wrath of God or Jesus drank your cup and emptied it, enduring the wrath of God on the cross in your place for your sins. You are saved from God. You're not saved from your unfulfilled potential. You're not saved from your low self esteem. You're saved from God. You're saved by God, you're saved to God. And if you're not saved by God, to God, for God, you're not saved, you're damned. Number eight, Jesus died to make you clean. "If we walk in the light." A lot of darkness, hiddenness, secrecy, covert behavior, hiding, blame shifting, excuse making. "We have fellowship with one another, "and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. "If we have no sin." I'm a good person, I've lived a good life. You have no right to judge me. "We deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. "If we confess our sins." God I agree, you're good, I'm bad. You're the solution, I'm the problem. He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all of our unrighteousness. Scholars call this expiation. He not only cleanses you, forgives you rather, He makes you clean. It's why God's people in the Bible, when they go to worship, they wear white. It's why a bride wears white on her wedding day. Because of Jesus, I'm clean. I'm not just forgiven and dirty, I'm forgiven and clean. Sin here is depicted as defilement, uncleanness, filth, disgusting. So you have two options. You can hide your sin and hope God doesn't see it, but He does. You can blame someone else for your sin, but God knows you're responsible. You can make excuses about your culture or the systems or your genetics. Or you can celebrate your sin. You can have pride in it. You can take it as an identity. And the things you're supposed to have a funeral for, you can have a parade for. Or you can have Jesus take your sin and your defilement and cause you to be forgiven and clean. Number nine, Jesus died to pay your debt. 1 Timothy 2:5-6. "There is one God." Just one. Just one God. Some of you say I disagree, then you're wrong and you're gonna die and stand before that God. And there's one mediator between God and us. The man Christ Jesus. We all need Jesus. Jesus is our only hope. This is what scholars will call ransom. Every sin you commit accrues a debt to God. The question is, who's gonna pay that debt? Two choices, you pay it in hell or Jesus pays it on the cross. The debt is real, the payment is mandatory. The question is, who will pay? Number 10, Jesus died as your example. 1 Peter 2:21. "Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, "that you should follow in His steps." Scholars call this Christus Exemplar. Jesus is what you're supposed to look like. He's normal, you're abnormal. He's right, you're wrong. He's healthy, you're unhealthy. His life should be like your life and at any point, your life is not like His life, you're in

sin. Sin here is where we, we do not carry forth the character of Christ. So you have two options. You can do like everyone else does. If they do evil, I do evil. If they hit me, I hit them back. If they hurt me, I'm bitter against them. Or you can do what Jesus did for you. They cursed me, but I blessed them. They hate me, but I love them. They sin against me, but I forgive them. Our world needs much more of this. See this evolutionary myth that we're good and getting better, it's not true. We're bad and getting worse. The only thing we're getting better at is doing evil. Number 11, Jesus died to reconcile you to God. Romans 5:10-11, "If while we were enemies." You need to start by understanding, you don't begin as a friend of God. You begin as an enemy of God. See, some of us will look at what Jesus does and we'll say, "I can't believe that He speaks to me this way." And the question is, "What have you done for your enemy?" "How many enemies have you pursued?" "How many enemies have you adored?" "How many enemies have you suffered and died for?" "While we were enemies, we were reconciled to God "by the death of His Son, much more, "now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life. "We also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, "through whom now we have received reconciliation." Scholars call this the doctrine of reconciliation. Sin here is living independently of God. Some of you are like, "I don't hate God, I don't care." I don't disregard God, I don't even consider God. We're all independent and God wants to be restored in relationship and He does that through His Son Jesus Christ. So there's two options. You live your whole life, you die and you're entering into your eternal life separated from God. No love, no grace, no mercy, no relationship. Or in this life which continues into the eternal life, you have reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ. I want that for you, I love you. Number 12, Jesus died to reveal God. John 1:18, "No one has ever seen God, "but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, "has made Him known." This is the scholarly doctrine of revelation. The point is this, we're blind. We don't see God. God sees us but we don't see Him. Jesus comes to reveal God. If you want to know what God is like, His name is Jesus Christ. If you want to know what the creator of heaven and earth is like, His name is Jesus Christ. If you want to know what the Savior of the world looks like, His name is Jesus Christ. You have two options. You can live your life not seeing Jesus Christ as your only God and then die to stand before Him and realize that you were wrong or you can receive Him as your only God and be reconciled to God in this life and in the life to come. Jesus came the first time to be punished for sin. He came in humility, Jesus is going to come again. Not in humility but in glory. Not to be punished for sin, but to punish sinners. As long as there is breath in your lungs, you have the most important decision you will ever make. Will I receive Jesus Christ as my God and Savior or will I reject Jesus Christ as my God and Savior? My job is to tell the truth, your job is to make that decision. There are two options my friend. Jesus died for your sins or you're gonna die for your sins.