

CHRIST CRUCIFIED

- ♪ There was a battle ♪ ♪ A war between death and life ♪ ♪ And there on that tree ♪ ♪ The lamb of God was crucified ♪ ♪ There ain't no grave gonna hold my body down, no, no ♪ ♪ There ain't no grave hold body down, oh ♪ ♪ No, there ain't no grave gonna hold my body down ♪ ♪ No, you won't hold me down ♪ ♪ No, you won't hold me down, yeah ♪

- Today is Good Friday. It's a holy day or a holiday for Christians around the world and it's actually the darkest day in human history. It was on this day that a man named Jesus of Nazareth, after declaring himself to be God, was sentenced to death. Though it was midday, we are told that darkness came upon the earth in the darkest moment of human history. In our time together, we're going to examine the crucifixion, the execution, the murder of Jesus of Nazareth, and we're going to examine it historically, medically, biblically, and personally. Let's begin by examining crucifixion historically. Christians have long used the cross as our symbol of faith, our icon, if you will. Christians begin wearing the cross, adorning their homes with the cross, making the sign of the cross in the earliest days of Christianity, starting with a church father named Tertullian. It's a bit shocking that this symbol was chosen because it was a death sentence for someone to be crucified and it was the most shameful, painful, and dishonorable way to die. The pain and horror of crucifixion is so overwhelming that a word was literally created to explain its suffering. Excruciating comes from the Latin derivative meaning, from the cross. What we know historically is that in more modern days, some crucifixions have continued. In the days of Adolf Hitler, he had Jews crucified. In addition, the Nazis during the World Wars would crucify their enemies on the sides of barns and also trees with bayonets through their shoulders, their necks, and with men, even their testicles. The Khmer Rouge in Cambodia crucified their enemies. In Africa, the regions of Sudan and Darfur, it was as recent as 2002, that 88 people were crucified, including two children. To this day, Islamic extremists around the world occasionally will crucify Christians in mockery of our Christ. Some nations have actually used crucifixion to declare that Christianity is outlawed and to discourage anyone from worshiping Jesus Christ as God. For example, in 1597, 26 people were crucified in Japan for their Christian faith. This is still happening globally as it has historically. Crucifixion is ultimately state sponsored terror. It began, it is believed, about 800 BC by the Persians. The Persians began by impaling enemies of the state. They would take a long pole that was at the end toward a sharp point. They would run it through the midsection of someone who was considered an enemy of the state. They would dig a hole, they would drop the pole into the hole, so that the person was impaled and suffering a very violent, bloody and prolonged death. This continued until the time of Alexander. And what Alexander did is he added the crossbar, and that allowed crucifixion to be more painful and elongated. Well, crucifixion was really perfected by the Romans who ultimately crucified Jesus of Nazareth. The Romans would take turns tormenting prisoners, seeking to elicit the most incredible pain and the most prolonged pain that they possibly could. It became something of a sport or a competition for the Romans soldiers. By the days of Jesus, there were two parts to the cross. One, there was something called a stipe, and that would be the post that probably remained on location and it weighed around 200 pounds. In addition, on

top, there was the patibulum. We would know that as the crossbar, and sometimes it was nailed toward the center point and oftentimes at the top. And what would happen is the person would be forced to carry that crossbar of about a hundred pounds to their place of crucifixion where then it would be nailed to that post, and that is in fact what happened to the Lord Jesus. Someone hanging on the cross could hang anywhere from hours to days. A lot of the length of suffering was contingent upon the depth of scourging. The beating prior to the crucifixion would literally end the life of many men so that they didn't even make it to their place of crucifixion. All of the crucifixions in the days of Jesus were generally done openly, publicly, and shamefully. This was not done in private with any consideration for the person's reputation or family. The entire point was much like a beheading today live simulcast on the internet, is to create terror and to strike fear. And so if you can imagine going to a park or a mall or a grocery store and outside toward the entry was someone who was hanging and bleeding and weeping and dying. That was the circumstances surrounding ancient crucifixion. Some of the Christian artwork depicts crosses as very high, and that probably is not the most accurate. Most historians believe that people were crucified at eye level. This is probably how Jesus was crucified for when they went to put a sponge in his mouth, they were able to do so with a stick, which probably meant that he was at about eye level. This would also have allowed those who hated and despised those being crucified to look them right in the eye, to curse them, to mock them, to place bets on the timing of their death. Women were rarely crucified, and when they were, the women were generally turned around because even that barbarous of people didn't want to see the horrific look on the face of a dying woman. Oftentimes too, they would have incredible psychological torment as part of crucifixion, meaning the man would be crucified, and then they would punish and sometimes even execute his wife and children in front of him to psychologically torment him. And as others watched in horror, the message was very clear. However this man behaved or whatever this man believed, you should not repeat or you will endure his fate. Alexander Jannaeus, who was a Jewish high priest, had 800 Pharisees, religious Jewish leaders crucified. And before they died while hanging on the cross, he had their wives and children slaughtered in front of the husbands and fathers. In 518 BC, Darius who was king of Persia, he crucified 3000 Babylonians to warn their enemies. In addition, by 332 BC, Alexander the Great entire crucified 2,000 enemies on a day. In 71 BC, the day that the gladiator Spartacus died in battle, Alexander crucified 6,000 enemy combatant soldiers along 120 mile stretch of highway. If you can even fathom or imagine that in the ancient world, you're traveling on a highway, and over the course of 120 miles, there are 6,000 men in a single day who are crucified, bleeding, sweating, urinating, defecating, screaming and dying while their mothers, their fathers, their friends, their brothers, their sisters, their own wives and children, watched in horror. This was the ancient world and this was the way of ancient crucifixion. It's even possible that Jesus of Nazareth, when he was a boy, that he saw a mass crucifixion. It was right around the same time that Jesus was born that there was a Jewish uprising against the Roman government, and they crucified 2,000 Jews. Just makes you curious. Perhaps Jesus was able to see that. And if so, he was able to see something of the horror and future that awaited him. Well, crucifixion is the most horrific way to die. It has been that way historically. The entire point of crucifixion was to destroy someone's life and to destroy anyone who would want to continue their legacy. There's an old Christian hymn that rightly calls crucifixion, and the cross, quote, "an emblem of suffering and

shame," and that is precisely what it was and is. Throughout the course of history, all cultures have agreed that there is nothing worse than being crucified. The Jewish historian Josephus called it, quote, "the most wretched of deaths." The Roman leader Cicero said, quote, "It was the cruelest and most terrible punishment." The Greek philosopher Plato said, "The just man who is thought to be unjust will be scourged, wracked, bound, will have his eyes burned out. And at least after suffering every kind of evil, he will be impaled." God's people always considered someone who was crucified as cursed. In Deuteronomy 21:22-23, Moses himself says this, and it is a prophecy about what Jesus Christ, Jesus of Nazareth, would endure for us out of love. "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." The apostle Paul in his letter to the Galatians quotes that very line, and he reminds us that Jesus Christ, Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus, our Lord God, creator, and savior, he was cursed on the cross in our place for our sins. In addition, those who worshiped Jesus for his death and resurrection were ultimately mocked and hated. It is believed to be from around 200 AD that an ancient painting was found on a cave wall and it depicts a man being crucified, and he has a donkey's head but a man's body. I know the language is strong, but so is the imagery, and the imagery indicates that anyone who worships Jesus is just worshipping a dead jackass. And the quote under it says, "Alexamanos worships his god." The point is this, there's nothing worse than crucifixion. There's nothing more painful, more shameful, more public. There's nothing that is more horrifying and haunting. And what happened is when someone was crucified, they were considered forsaken by God, and oftentimes even forsaken by family. Oftentimes the bodies were just left on the cross for the vultures and the wild animals to feast upon the flesh. Sometimes the bodies were just thrown into a dump to just be decomposed in a dishonorable way or thrown to wild dogs to be feasted upon. This is the history of crucifixion. In the next portion of our time together, we will examine medically exactly what happened to Jesus Christ. We will now examine crucifixion medically. The storyline of the Bible simply says that they took Jesus and had him scourged. The reason that the Bible doesn't give a lot of details was because the original recipients saw men get scourged and crucified. And once you saw it, you didn't need it to be explained to you because you were haunted by it for the remainder of your life. scourging was used by Roman soldiers to begin the death process for a criminal. They would've had a handle that was usually made out of wood. From it would proceed long straps of leather. At the end of each strap of leather, there was a ball usually made out of metal or perhaps stone, and the point was to beat and tenderize the flesh to soften up the tissue so that then the hooks could sink in as deeply as possible. The hooks were oftentimes made out of bone or metal and they would then dig into the deep tissue and organs of the man's body. The man's body would be affixed usually to a post or over a stone so that his shoulders and his back and his buttocks were exposed and a soldier on each side with a flagrum or a cat of nine tails would then whip the man across the back, and then the tender flesh would have the hook sunk in and then they would literally rip the flesh off of the man. This would begin contusions at the deepest level of the organs. This would send the heart into a shocked state and some ancient reports outside of the Bible say the man's rib would actually come flying off of his body just from the scourging. At this point, the skin, the muscles, the bones, they are bruised, the lungs are struggling to breathe, there is deep tissue damage and the death process set in. Many men died from the scourging. They didn't even make it to

the crucifixion. And the more you were scourged, the more quickly you would die if you were in fact still alive for your crucifixion. At this point, a criminal, including Jesus who was treated as a criminal, would have a body that was in total shock. You at this point have significant blood loss and the heart is straining. Some medical experts have said that the equivalent would be a shotgun blast to a bare back at a close range. That's exactly what scourging accomplished. And then the victim, if they remained alive after the scourging, would be hung on a cross. And there is some historical debate. Some think that the victims were in fact hung on the cross through the hands with basically the equivalent of a railroad tie. There was a German researcher in the 1930s who began what has been a series of experiments and he proved that if a man was crucified through the hand, what remained of the hand could not sustain the weight of the body. And so it is believed that Jesus was likely crucified as most men were through the wrist, and perhaps as well the hands at the wrist were tied via rope to the cross to help hold the body, and they would nail the man through the most sensitive nerve centers on the human body. This would cause involuntary twitching, the body would be in tremendous shock, and every movement would be incredibly and overwhelmingly painful. And so it is believed that Jesus, like most who were crucified in the ancient world, that he was crucified by being nailed to the crossbar that he carried and nailed to the post that would've remained in place. It is unlikely in the ancient world that men carried the entire crossbar and the post because that's about 300 pounds. And after the scourging, they were in dire medical condition. But make no mistake, this is what happened to Jesus of Nazareth. He himself, a carpenter, had driven many nails, and suddenly those same nails were driven through his hands and his feet, and his feet were probably stacked one on top of each other as depicted in most Christian art. In addition, here's what we hear about crucifixion. Seneca in the ancient world reports, "Some hang upside down, others drive stakes through the genitals, still others extend arms on the patibulum," that's the crossbar. Josephus reports with when there was a mass crucifixion of Jews in the days of the Roman Empire, they quote, "Out of rage and hatred, amuse themselves by nailing their prisoners in different postures." The point simply being this, there were different ways that different soldiers crucified different criminals. And there was no consistency. It was whatever they deemed most painful and awful in the moment. How would someone die? Well, what we know from the medical experts is that the cause of death varied from man to man. Some men died from the scourging, some men died from exposure to the elements, some men died of heart failure and or heart attack, some died of dehydration, and others of asphyxiation. Asphyxiation was perhaps the most common way that a man would die. When you're crucified and your arms are extended above your head and your body is slouching on the cross, you have an incredibly difficult time filling your lungs with fresh air, and so you pass in and out of consciousness. And so what you would do then to prolong your life, you would push yourself up on your crucified feet or you would pull yourself up on your crucified hands, but the amount of pain that would be sent through your body as your nerve centers were twitching and convulsing was incredible. And the men had to decide, are we willing to endure a little more pain so we can take one more breath? Eventually their body would slouch on the cross to where they could no longer gather air into their lungs and they would painfully die often by asphyxiation. This explains why some people historically hung on the cross for upwards of nine days, passing in and out of consciousness. And if they wanted to hasten someone's death, they would break

their legs so they could no longer push themselves up and gather air into their lungs. The journal for the American Medical Association actually did an intense investigation into crucifixion. They came out with a special communication titled, "On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ." They say, quote, "It is our intent to present not a theological treatise, but rather a medically and historically accurate account of the physical death of the one called Jesus Christ." They say that the length of survival generally ranged from three or four hours to three or four days and appears to have been inversely related to the severity of the scourging. They also report the fact that Jesus later was offered a drink of wine vinegar from a sponge placed on the stalk of the hyssop plant approximating 20 inches strongly supports the belief that Jesus was crucified on the short cross. We also read the short terse utterances must have been particularly difficult and painful. At about 3:00 PM that Friday, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, bowed his head, and died. They say that at the time when Jesus was on the cross, quote, "he was already dead." They did not break his legs. That was in fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy that not one of his bones would be broken. It also proves that Jesus very much did die on the cross. There have been some who have purported a swoon theory including some Islamic scholars saying that he passed out and appears dead. But nonetheless, the medical record shows that he in fact died. He then had a spear run through his side, and the journal for the American Medical Association says the wound was in the thorax. It goes on to say that a very large flow of blood would be more likely with a perforation of the distended and thin walled right atrium or ventricle than the thick walled and contracted left ventricle. Although the side of the wound may never be established with certainty, the right seems more probable than the left. Their assumption and their conclusion is, that when the blood flowed from Jesus' side, it literally punctured his heart sack and Jesus literally died of a physical and spiritual broken heart. In conclusion, the medical experts say of the death of Jesus, a fatal cardiac arrhythmia may have accounted for the apparent catastrophic terminal event. And lastly, the spear thrust between his right ribs probably perforated not only the right lung, but also the pericardium and heart, and thereby insured his death. That is the summary of the medical death of Jesus Christ. Next, we will examine the crucifixion of Jesus biblically. We will now examine crucifixion biblically. The crucifixion of Jesus was predicted a thousand years before his birth. In the book of Psalms, it says that he would be pierced through his hands and feet. What's interesting about that is the promise of Jesus crucifixion was also the promise of the invention of crucifixion. The crucifixion of Jesus was predicted roughly 100 years before Persians began even crucifying people. Nonetheless, the story of Jesus crucifixion is the most important in the history of the world. The most significant person in world history is Jesus Christ and the darkest day in human history was the day of his death. The death of Jesus is for Christians, one of the two most sacred days in human history. The other of course being his resurrection to conquer death and to forgive sin and to open heaven. Christians' called this the gospel or the good news of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Likely the oldest record of the Christian gospel is found in 1 Corinthians 15. It is believed by most scholars to be the first and oldest part of scripture, dating all the way back to the first Christians singing these very words as a song, hymn or creed in church. The apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15, he says, "I delivered to you as of first importance..." What Paul is saying is that the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus is the most significant historical event and fact in human history. He says, "I delivered to you as of first importance

what I received, that Christ died." That's Good Friday. "For our sins," he says. We'll examine that in the next section in accordance with the scriptures.

- [Jesus] But I did not come to deliver the people from Rome.

- [Nicodemus] Then from what?

- From sin, from spiritual death. God loves the world in this way that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

- So this has nothing to do with Rome. It's all about sin.

- God did not send his son into the world to condemn it, Nicodemus. He sent him to save it through him.

- For hundreds and thousands of years, God's word through the prophets had predicted that Jesus would come and that Jesus would die and that Jesus would rise. And then he concludes by saying that he was buried and he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures. Well, we know that Jesus was crucified in his early thirties. He was a healthy, strong young man. He worked a job as a carpenter. He would walk dozens, hundreds of miles. He would sleep outside. He was in great health and he was a vibrant and strong young man. The night before his death, he had the Jewish Passover meal with his disciples. It harken back to the days of Moses when God brought death to everyone in the nation of Egypt, with the exception of those households that sacrificed the lamb as a substitute for their sin and painted the doorposts of their home with the blood of the lamb so that death and the wrath of God would literally pass over those who were covered by the blood of the lamb. All of that was foreshadowing Good Friday and the death of Jesus of Nazareth. That he would come as the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Paul says that he is our Passover lamb who is slain. And that on the cross, literally, Jesus would shed his blood in our place for our sins so that the wrath of God could pass over us. All of that was foreshadowed in the Passover feast and Jesus celebrated that with his disciples. We now refer to it as the Last Supper. During the Last Supper, Jesus began to ominously prophesy that he was going to be betrayed by someone who was breaking bread with him, and they would participate in the breaking of his body. Jesus then spent an entire night in anguish in a garden called Gethsemane. He couldn't sleep. He was overwhelmed knowing that his death was coming and the cross was looming. The Bible says, including the writings of a doctor named Luke, that he began sweating like drops of blood. To this day, medical experts will tell us that this is a rare medical condition called hematohidrosis. It is evidenced only in those people who are overwhelmed with anxiety knowing that a horrific fate awaits them and their body literally begins to leak blood through their capillaries as their body cannot handle the level of stress. Jesus spent the entire night praying, asking for another way to save sinners rather than suffering crucifixion and enduring the wrath of God. His friends fell asleep and abandoned him and he was all together alone. At that point, Judas had left to betray him and the disciples had failed him, and Jesus was alone. Suddenly, Judas arrives. He was the

pretend friend of Jesus. He had been stealing from Jesus and plotting his murder through the course of their years together. And Judas brought together a collection of religious and political leaders conspiring to murder Jesus. They came under the cover of darkness. This was not a fair trial, this was a planned execution. They then ran him through a series of trials. None of the false witnesses agreed. He's up all night, he's dehydrated, he's exhausted, he's walking miles, he's having to defend himself. And eventually, he was blindfolded and beaten mercilessly by an angry mob of men. The Bible says that then he was stripped nearly naked in shame. A crown of thorns would be placed upon his head, mocking him as Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews, and he was forced to endure scourging. The scourging of Jesus was absolutely horrifying. As we studied scourging in general, I just want to briefly visit the scourging of Jesus in particular. By the time they were done ripping the flesh off of his body and tormenting him mercilessly, it was prophesied some 700 years prior by the prophet Isaiah that he would be, quote, "marred beyond human likeness." What that means is, when they were done scourging Jesus, ripping the flesh off of his body, plucking out his beard, putting a crown of thorns on his head, had you seen him in that state and known him, you would not have even recognized him from the beating and the suffering and the scourging that he endured. Jesus was then forced to carry his crossbar, as we've established, perhaps upwards of a hundred pounds, to his place of crucifixion. This would've been a recycled piece of timber. Generally, the crossbar and also the nails used to crucify a man were used over and over and over. This crossbar likely had the blood, tears, the sweat of other men who had died previously. It was roughly hewn timber, perhaps like a hundred pound railroad tie, and it was put on his bloodied and barren back. This had to be incredibly painful and Jesus was required to carry it through narrow streets as onlookers watched in horror. Today in Israel, you can still walk this path. It's called the Via Dolorosa or the way of the cross. The Bible says that Jesus was so weary from the scourging and beating and sleepless night and dehydration that he fell and that the crossbar would've then crushed his chest cavity. Medical experts, including the Journal for the American Medical Association who have studied this will tell us that this would cause deep chest contusion and trauma. One expert says it would be the equivalent of a head-on car crash where the driver is thrown into the steering wheel, not wearing a seatbelt with no airbag deploying. At this point, you have deep chest contusion. And if you do not receive medical treatment, you will die simply from that event. Nonetheless, Jesus could not carry the cross alone to his place of crucifixion, and so there was a disciple of his, Simon of Cyrene, who helped the Lord Jesus carry his cross. At this point, Jesus arrives at his place of crucifixion. Most likely the crossbar was in place laying on the ground before the hole that it would be dropped into. And Jesus was carrying the crossbar with the help of Simon of Cyrene. He is then laid on the cross and he is crucified through the hands and the feet, the most sensitive nerve centers on the human body. At this moment, imagine Jesus being nailed through the wrist and through the feet. His body is twitching involuntarily. The death process has begun and the human body has reached its limit. Then Jesus would've been lifted up on the cross, the cross dropped in the hole as his body would've been shaking violently and involuntarily. What we know is that some men took days to die and Jesus took merely hours. He was already near death. At this moment, while crowds cheered and mocked, while bets were placed on how long a man would live, many men sought vengeance. They would spit on their enemies, they would urinate on them, they would curse

them, they would argue with them, but Jesus did not. Jesus remained loving and pronounced only blessing with his final breaths. And as we've established, for him to elevate his broken body to get air into his lungs would've been incredibly painful. As a result, the seven final statements of Jesus called by theologians the seven words were short, but each one was pregnant and filled with love. "Father, forgive them." He tells the man dying with him, "Today, you will be with me in paradise," caring for his mother who is present seeing her son be executed. He assigns his friend, John, look after my mother. And then Jesus says, "I am thirsty," and they put a sponge in his mouth on the end of a stick. That sponge was sopped in wine vinegar. That was part of The ancient field kit for a Roman soldier. When a soldier would be deployed in battle, they would receive a sea sponge. They would sop it in wine vinegar on the end of a stick to cleanse themselves after going to the bathroom. It was their version of toilet paper. When Jesus was loving and when Jesus was caring and Jesus was interceding even for his enemies to silence him, they shoved their sponge and his mouth. That means that the remaining words of Jesus are spoken with the taste of a soldier's bowel movement on his lips. Nonetheless, he then cries out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

- My God, why have you forsaken me?

- The fact that he does so in a loud voice means that he is probably suffering a heart attack, and this is the end. At that moment, he becomes cursed. He endures the wrath of God and he is forsaken. In the dying moment, he says, "it is finished," and he does so in a loud, triumphant declaration of victory. And then he says, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." Jesus died in a few short hours. They didn't have to break his legs so that he could not push himself up to breathe. He died quickly, and this again was in fulfillment of the ancient promises and prophecies and psalms that none of his bones would be broken. Jesus was declared dead by an executioner soldier who was present. They then took a spear and they put it in his side under his rib, puncturing his heart sack, so that water and blood literally flowed from his side. At that moment, as Jesus died from a broken heart, the curtain in the temple was torn from top to bottom. Darkness came over the land, though it was midday, and Jesus' dead body was laid in the tomb of a man named Joseph of Arimathea. Jesus, of course, was poor, yet in a prophecy in Isaiah, it was said, quote, that "he would be buried with the rich in his death." Postmortem, Joseph of Arimathea gave Jesus his personal burial chamber as a gift. And Jesus' body was placed in this known location and a large stone was rolled over the entrance as it was now possession of the Roman government. The Roman government affixed a seal that this was now state property and that tomb was guarded by Roman soldiers to ensure that there was no tampering with the body. That is the biblical record of the death of Jesus Christ. And next, we will study crucifixion personally and what this means for you and the most important decision you will ever make. ♪ Oh blood and tears ♪ ♪ How can it be? ♪ ♪ There's a God who weeps ♪ ♪ There's a God who bleeds ♪ ♪ Oh, praise the one ♪ ♪ Who reached for me ♪ ♪ Hallelujah to the Son of suffering ♪ ♪ Oh blood and tears ♪ ♪ How can it be? ♪ ♪ There's a God who weeps ♪ ♪ There's a God who bleeds ♪ ♪ Oh, praise the one ♪ ♪ Who reached for me ♪ ♪ Hallelujah to the Son of suffering ♪ ♪ Oh hallelujah to the Son of suffering ♪ ♪ Oh hallelujah to the Son of suffering

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- In our remaining few minutes together, I wanna talk about crucifixion personally. What does an ancient historical death and event mean for you, and not only your life, but your death. Since it is Good Friday, the question that we need to answer is, how could this possibly be good news that is celebrated by Christians on Good Friday? And for us to fully appreciate and to also reap the benefits of the death of Jesus, we need to understand not just that he died or how he died, but in fact, why he died. And my friend, he died for you and he died for me. The storyline of the Bible is that when we sinned against God, and we all did, we put ourselves in God's place. We lived independently. You, my friend, are going to die. I will die. Everyone will die. Death is undefeated. The past few years, we shut down planet earth just trying to preserve human life. And the truth is, eventually, inevitably, death comes for everybody. The Bible tells us why. The wage for sin, the consequence for sin, is death. Sin brings death. God is the living God and rebellion against God is cosmic treason, and it results in separation from God who is the source of life, and the consequence of that is death. Not just physical death, but spiritual and eternal death. The Bible uses a little word to give us a big understanding of why Jesus died. That little word is for, Isaiah tells us, "He was wounded for our transgressions." The apostle Paul says, "Christ died for us." And Peter says, "Christ suffered once for sins. The righteous for the unrighteous." Jesus Christ declared himself to be God. He alone is the only founder of any major world religion who has declared himself to be God. Jesus also said that he was without sin. These two claims are without pure or precedent in human history. Jesus then went to the cross and he died for sin, but not his sin because he had no sin. He died instead for your sin, for my sin, for our sin. On the cross, Jesus Christ took your place. And if you trust in him, he will put you in his place. Jesus endured the wrath of God so you could enjoy the grace of God. Jesus suffered death so you could receive life. Jesus was separated from the Father so you could be reconciled to the Father. Jesus went into the darkness so you could spin forever In the light. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says it this way. "God made him who knew no sin, to become sin, so that in him, we might become the righteousness of God." My dear friend, I need you to know, the most important thing is what you believe about Jesus Christ. The most important decision you will make is whether you receive him as your savior or you reject him for your suffering. You will die, and Jesus' death can be the victory in your death. If Jesus died for you, he also rose for you, and that will be celebrated this Sunday, Easter, where the church of Jesus Christ gathers globally to celebrate the victory over sin and death and the gift of eternal life. But on this day, Good Friday, I want this to be the day that you receive Jesus Christ, that you turn from your sin and you trust in him. If you do not, you will die and you will stand before Jesus Christ. You will be judged and you will be sentenced to the eternal flaming torments of hell. I don't want you to go there, but that decision is yours. Either Jesus endured the wrath of God or you will endure the wrath of God. I want the day that you die to be your greatest day, the day where the worst of your existence has ended and the best of your existence begins. For those of us who are Christians, this life is as close to hell as we ever get, and Jesus and heaven await us. If you reject Jesus, this life is as close to heaven as you will ever be and death and judgment and hell awaits you. My friends, this is the day of your salvation. The best way to prepare for Easter Sunday is to trust in Jesus today, to give your sins to Jesus today. And on Sunday, get up as he got up and go to church and worship him as you're living savior. I'm praying for you. The

decision is yours. ♪ Alas, and did my Savior bleed ♪ ♪ And did my sovereign die? ♪ ♪ Would He
devote sacred head ♪ ♪ For sinners such as I? ♪ ♪ Was it for sins that I have done ♪ ♪ He
groaned upon the tree? ♪ ♪ Amazing pity, grace unknown, ♪ ♪ And love beyond degree ♪ ♪ At
the cross, at the cross ♪ ♪ Where I first saw the light ♪ ♪ And the burden of my heart rolled away
♪ ♪ It was there by faith I received my sight ♪ ♪ And now I am happy all the days ♪ ♪ At the cross,
at the cross ♪ ♪ Where I first saw the light ♪ ♪ And the burden of my heart rolled away ♪ ♪ It was
there by faith I received my sight ♪ ♪ And now I am happy all the days ♪