

Text: The Story's Hero - Jesus
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WHY DID JESUS HAVE TO DIE?

"But now a righteousness (right standing) from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness (right standing) from God comes through faith (Not doing, but believing) in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned (missed the mark) and fall short of the glory (splendor or majesty) of God, and are justified (made righteous or given a righteous standing with God) freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him (Jesus) as a sacrifice of atonement, (to cover) through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate (authenticate) his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus." Romans 3:21-26

God is saying...

- In my MERCY, I've decided to let it go.
- In my JUSTICE, somebody has to pay.
- In my GRACE, I'm going to have my Son pay for your sin.

3 Statements to remember...

- Because of his mercy God DELAYED payment.
- Because of his justice God DEMANDED payment.
- Because of His grace God MADE the payment.

So What?

TIME WITH GOD

This week's memory verse: *"You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."* John 18:37

Monday

Read Matt. 27:11-26 & John 18:28-40. How did Pilate attempt to evade any responsibility in the condemnation of Jesus? What did Pilate want the Jewish leadership to do with Jesus?

What decisions have you been putting off for fear of the responsibility involved?

Ask God to help you decide biblically and wisely in areas of your life where you have been postponing a decision. Pray for our country today.

Tuesday

Read John 19:4-27. What do you learn about Jesus from these verses? Many commentators believe Jesus quoted Psalm 22 when he hung on the cross-- a psalm that was written 1,000 years before He was even born. Read Psalm 22 and then answer the following questions:

What difference does it make to you to know that Christ's sufferings were described in this detail a thousand years before the event took place?

How do you suppose Jesus might have felt as he watched all these events unfold?

Thank God today for planning in ages past to provide a sacrifice for your sin. Any trial that you might be going through and lay it at the foot of the cross..

Wednesday

Read John 19:1-3; 27-24. What did the guards do to Jesus?

How did the soldiers mock Jesus?

Why did Jesus put up with torture when He could have destroyed all His attackers?

How has Jesus demonstrated His mercy towards you when you've hurt Him? How has His mercy impacted your life?

Thank God today for His amazing grace. Thank Him for the painful price He paid to redeem your soul. Ask Him to help you reflect His mercy and love to those you encounter today. Please pray for our pastors today that God would use them to His glory!

Thursday

We're planning to look at Jesus' forgiveness of Peter in our Easter services, so let's prepare for that message today by reading Matt. 26:69-75 & John 18:15-18, 25-27. Recall a time when you told a lie that caused you pain later. What were the consequences of that?

Describe Peter's attitude in these verses. How do you think he was feeling? How can you relate to Peter?

When are you most tempted to downplay your Christian faith?

Think of the day ahead. How can you consistently acknowledge Jesus in your words and actions?

Thank God today for His mercy and forgiveness. Pray for boldness and strength to stand firm in your faith no matter who is watching. Pray for a friend, relative, associate or neighbor and plan on inviting them to this week's service.

Friday

Read John 19:25-42. Where have you seen Nicodemus before? For a refresher, look at John 3:1-17 and John 7:45-52. Nicodemus slowly came to faith in Christ. Yet he still was afraid of the opinions of his peers, and so went to the tomb at night. Does your fear of others' opinions and your love of Jesus sometimes conflict? How?

When did the meaning of Jesus' mission become real to you, as it did to Nicodemus?

Pray that the meaning of Christ's death would become real to the people in our church and in your life.

Saturday

Please spend some time in prayer today thanking Jesus Christ for what He went through... for you! Pray for the services this weekend-- that God would bless them and reach people with His love through them.