



# WHY THE CROSS?

ADRIAN ROGERS



Pastor, teacher, and author **Adrian Rogers** has introduced people all over the world to the love of Jesus Christ, and has impacted untold numbers of lives by presenting profound biblical truth with such simplicity that a 5-year-old can understand it, yet it still speaks to the heart of the 50-year-old.

**Love Worth Finding** was started in 1987 as the broadcast ministry of Adrian Rogers and remains the exclusive provider of his comprehensive teachings today. By connecting others with his plainspoken and timeless biblical wisdom through resources like books, video and audio recordings, digital content, and other media, we seek to not only reach non-Christians with the hope of Jesus, but strengthen and encourage everyday Christians in their faith as well.



TRUTH WORTH SHARING ■ LIGHT COLLECTION

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## TRUTH WORTH SHARING

Following Jesus' last words of earthly instruction to us in Matthew 28:19, Love Worth Finding's *Truth Worth Sharing* collections are designed to be used both in your own personal growth and, more importantly, in your assignment to "Go therefore and make disciples..."

“God can use you, with what you have, where you are. And He will supply your every need.”

ADRIAN ROGERS

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This booklet is taken from Adrian Rogers' message *Why the Cross?* (#2189), available online at the link below.

[lwf.org/products/2189cd](https://lwf.org/products/2189cd)



# Why the Cross?

The cross is at the center of all Christianity. And as I reflect upon it, I remember a painting I saw one time of the Lord Jesus Christ. He looks to be about 15 years of age and is standing in a doorway of a carpenter's shop.

The sun is setting. The wood shavings are scattered across the floor. And you can see the carpenter tools in the background.

It appears to be the end of a hard day and this young Lad, who would one day die upon a cross, is stretching and yawning. And on the back wall, you can see the boy's shadow in the shape of a cross.

Jesus lived in the shadow of the cross. He knew from His youth that He was born to die. And die He did—for all of mankind to be saved.

How do I respond when people ask, "Why the cross?" I turn to 1 Peter 3:18 which says:

**For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.**

There's enough gospel dynamite in that one verse to blow the top off the question, "Why the cross?" We needed a Savior to pay the penalty of our sin before a holy and awesome God. That's why there is a cross.

I pray that God will take this verse and these next four truths about His glorious cross of love and ignite your heart with a spark of faith that will cause a spiritual explosion in your life!



# The Substitutionary Purpose of the Cross

“THE JUST FOR THE UNJUST”

All sin is against God, so only God can forgive sin. But how does He do it?

Look at 1 Peter 3:18 again and you'll find a phrase, “**the just for the unjust...**” Jesus is the just. You and I are the unjust.

How does God forgive sin? He must do it with a substitute. The penalty of our sin must be paid. You see, God cannot overlook sin. If He overlooked sin, then He would no longer be a holy God—any more than a judge would be a righteous judge if he overlooked a crime.

There's a saying in jurisprudence that when a guilty man is acquitted, the judge is condemned.

If God were to simply overlook sin without punishment, He would topple from His throne of holiness. God is holy.

Revelation 15:4 says:

**Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest.**

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**God cannot overlook sin. If He overlooked sin, then He would no longer be a holy God.**

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But not only is God holy, God is love. First John 4:8 says, **“He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”**

God, in His infinite love and holy hatred for sin, devised a plan by which sin would be punished and we would be forgiven. And that plan included the substitutionary purpose of the cross.

First Peter 1:18-19 says:

**Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.**

This verse compares Jesus to the Passover lambs that were sacrificed by the Jews to commemorate the night that the Lord passed over the nation of Israel (see Exodus 12).

Do you know where Passover lambs were bred in Jesus' day? Bethlehem.

The shepherds, who first heard the Christmas message, were probably watching over this special breed of Passover lambs when they were called from their flocks to see the Lamb of God.

Several years later, there came the day of crucifixion during Passover week. Over the brow



of the Mount of Olives, the Lamb of God rode into the City of Jerusalem through the Eastern Gate. At the same time these Passover lambs entered the city through the sheep gate.

While the priests examined the Passover lambs to make sure they were perfect, another group of men criticized, interrogated, and castigated the Lamb of God to find some flaw in Him. Even that hard-hearted politician Pilate had to say, "I find no fault in Him" (see John 19:4).

Pilate, trying to escape from this predicament, decided to follow a custom of releasing one notorious criminal during the feast. Pilate thought he could let Jesus go and maintain his dignity and station with Rome.

So Pilate gathered the people and brought two men before them. The Lamb of God, Jesus, and an insurrectionist, a thief, and a murderer named Barabbas. Matthew 27:17-25 records the scene:

**Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ? For he knew that for envy they had delivered Him. When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just Man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him.**

**But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with**

**Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let Him be crucified.**

**And the governor said, Why, what evil hath He done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let Him be crucified. When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.**

At three o'clock in the afternoon the priests lifted the chins of those Passover lambs and drew their knives to kill *their* substitution. And over on the Mount of Calvary, Roman soldiers nailed the perfect Lamb of God to the cross as *the* substitute.

This mountain was destined to be a place of sacrifice. Did you know that the death of the Savior occurred on the same mountain where Abraham was led by God to sacrifice his only son (see Genesis 22)? Do you think all of this happened by chance? No! It's all a part of the plan of grace from the hands of a holy and loving God.

There are three crosses. Originally, the crosses were for *three* thieves, the two thieves whom now we know were crucified, and Barabbas. Jesus' cross was Barabbas' cross. Jesus died in his place. Jesus died in *your* place. And in *my* place. The just for the unjust.



# The Suffering Passion of the Cross

“FOR CHRIST ALSO HATH ONCE  
SUFFERED FOR SINS”

## THE EMOTIONAL SUFFERING

The cross brought emotional suffering to our Lord.  
Luke 22:41-44 says:

**And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.**

Jesus prayed for the cup to be removed, but He also prayed that His Father's will would be done. He was in agony over this emotional turmoil.

The very blood of the Son of God fell to the ground as He fervently prayed. Medical textbooks tell us that in times of great duress, minute capillaries can rupture and drops of blood can appear on the surface of the skin.

What does it mean that our Lord was in agony? The word *agony* comes from the Greek word *agōnia*, which means “an athletic contest or a battle.” It means to strive with all of one’s strength.

Jesus was in a battle—not with God—He wanted the will of God the Father. He wasn’t battling with Satan either—He could decimate Satan. Then what was He battling? His own humanity. He knew what He was about to face. It was the cup of suffering.

And what was in that cup? Think of it this way...

If I passed a cup to you and asked you to empty all of your sins into that cup—every dirty thought, foul word, selfish deed, lie, etc. Everything you’ve ever done would be in that cup. Now, pass that cup to the billions of people who are alive on the face of the earth and let them put their sins into that cup.

Then go back through time to Adam and Eve and up until the time when the trumpet shall sound and time shall be no more, and let all humanity put their sins into that cup—rape, sodomy, arson, abuse, lasciviousness, drug addiction, abortion, pride, lust, envy, demon worship, and every form of slimy, filthy violence.

Now, do you have a picture of the cup from which Jesus drank?

Second Corinthians 5:21 says, **“For He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”**

Jesus knew that He must put His pure and holy lips upon that filthy cup and He must drink it down—all the way down. By doing this, He would not *become a sinner*, but He would *become sin*.

When I think of Gethsemane I want to weep. With my mind’s eye, I can see the Son of God knelt down with blood dripping down His face, as He prayed, “Father, Father, if there be some other way, please let this cup pass from Me.”

Don't get the idea that Jesus strolled to the cross saying, "I am all-powerful. You can't hurt Me. I have nerves of steel." Nobody has ever suffered like the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus suffered the penalty for *all* the sin of *all* the world for *all* of time upon that cross. Lamentations 1:12 says:

**Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow, which is done unto Me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted Me in the day of His fierce anger.**

Jesus knew that when He drank that cup, that God would have to treat Him as God treats sin because He's the substitute. There would be no mercy coming from the Holy Throne of God that day. Isaiah 53:10-12 says:

**Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall My righteous servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He hath poured out His soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.**

Jesus knew that He, who had been in the bosom of the Father from all eternity, would now become the object of the Father's wrath. He knew that the fires of God's wrath would burn themselves out in Him. Jesus knew that He was going to baptize His own soul in hell.

## **THE PHYSICAL SUFFERING**

Pilate thought the crowd's anger would subside if they saw Jesus brutalized, so he said, "Let him be scourged."

Do you know what a Roman scourging was? The Romans would strap the condemned person to a pillar or post. Then, they would tie his wrists above his head to the post—elevating him up on the balls of his feet.

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Next, they would strip him of all his clothing and two men would take a whip that had a sturdy handle and thongs of leather. Embedded in these thongs of leather were bone, glass, lead, and/or iron. It was an excruciating instrument of torture.

As the leather straps wrapped around a limb, the flesh was torn away. Experienced soldiers were

able to remove just enough flesh as to expose the nerves, but prevent disemboweling the victim. It was not a pretty sight.

Veins were laid bare and muscles were exposed. The goal was to beat a person as severely as possible without killing him.

Historians tell us that no man ever walked away from a scourging. If he could move at all, he would crawl away when they cut him down.

After all this, the physical suffering had only just begun.

Matthew 27:27-31 says:

**Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto Him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped Him, and put on Him a scarlet robe. And when they had plaited a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head, and a reed in His right hand: and they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon Him, and took the reed, and smote Him on the head. And after that they had mocked Him, they took the robe off from Him, and put His own raiment on Him, and led him away to crucify Him.**

The Roman soldiers liked to idle away their time playing the Game of the King in Pilate's Judgment Hall.

A "pretend" court was held and a puppet king was abused, mocked, and beaten. I've been to that Judgment Hall and you can still see the "Game of the Kings" etched in the stones of the courtyard.

They enjoyed their travesty of six trials with Jesus—snatching His beard from His face, spitting

on Him, and hitting Him repeatedly on the head with a reed. The word *smote* is from the Greek word *tupto* that means “repeated blows.”

His face looked like the prophecy in Isaiah 52:14, **“As many were astonished at Thee; His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.”**

Shortly after dawn when the soldiers were satisfied with their cruelty, they put the cross on Jesus’ back and escorted Him out the city gates to the Via Dolorosa, the Way of Sorrows.

This method of going outside the city gates with the “scapegoat” of the people was nothing new. In Leviticus 16:7-10, we read the account of the “scapegoat:”

**And he [Aaron] shall take the two goats, and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD’s lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness.**

This is a picture of how Jesus took away our sins and cast them into the grave of God’s forgetfulness—never, never, never to be brought up against us again.

Hebrews 13:12 says, **“Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate.”**



Once on the hill, the Roman soldiers began their final phase of torture upon the Lord Jesus Christ—the crucifixion.

Do you know why the Romans crucified? In order to let death flirt with its victims as long as possible without extinguishing life. The Romans also wanted everybody to witness the shame and loss of dignity to the victim, to strike fear in the hearts of the witnesses.

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**Death by crucifixion was  
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it for you. And for me.**

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The soldiers were masters at their crucifixion craft. They attempted to drive the nails into one of the branches of the median nerve—sending an unending torrent of fiery pain up the arms and into the upper torso. The metacarpal bones were even separated. Wicked nails sealed our Savior to the cross.

They nailed Jesus at a 90° angle, but when they lifted Him upon the cross, His body weight caused His arms to be lifted up to a 65° angle. Such posture forced His weight down upon His chest cavity and made it impossible for Him to breathe without pushing on the nails in His feet. When He tried to pull Himself up, the pain filled His hands. His throat became filled with surcharge blood.

Experts say that the crucifixion also causes nausea, convulsions, dizziness, profuse sweating,

joints to come out of their sockets, and a steady loss of blood.

Death by crucifixion was in every sense of the word excruciating. Do you know what the word *excruciating* means? It means “out of the cross.” Jesus hung in excruciating pain upon the cross. And He did it for you. And for me.

## THE SPIRITUAL SUFFERING

Not only did Jesus suffer emotionally and physically, He suffered spiritually. Jesus became the object of the Father’s loathing. Matthew 27:46 says:

**And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?**

And elsewhere we read in Isaiah 53:10:

**Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.**

When Jesus had my sin and your sin upon the cross, He was treated upon that cross as you and I would be treated if we were punished for our sin.

Habakkuk 1:13a says of God, **“Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.”** God could not look at His Son who took upon the sin of the world.

Jesus didn’t die for *one* sinner’s sin; He died for *all* sinners’ sin. The sin of the world was distilled

upon Jesus. First John 2:2 says of the Savior, **“And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”**

Jesus took your place. He took my place. And He took it all.

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# The Satisfying Provision of the Cross

“ONCE SUFFERED”

The wrath of God was completely satisfied by the holy blood sacrifice of His Only Son. Jesus will never, ever face that cross again.

Hebrews 10:10-14 gives us a promise worth clinging to for the rest of our lives:

**By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once for all*. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. For by *one offering* He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.** (italics mine)

Jesus suffered one time. This does not mean “once upon a time.” It means once for all. It is over. It is finished. When Jesus bowed His head and cried out, “Tetelestai,” our sin debt was paid in full!

In Bible times when a man was convicted of a crime, he was imprisoned and a list of his sins were written on a sheet of paper along with the penalty he needed to serve. This Certificate of Debt was then nailed to the prison door of his cell.

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When he paid his debt, the certificate was handed to the prisoner with the word, "Tetelestai" written across it. His debt was paid in full. If anyone ever wanted to accuse him of that crime in the future, he could show his certificate and say, "My crime has been fully paid. It is finished."

Colossians 2:14-15 says:

**Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and [Jesus] took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.**

Having nailed our sins to His cross in one final act of absolute sacrifice, we have eternal security.

When Jesus saved you it was good for one salvation only. If it doesn't last, then Jesus would have to get crucified all over again, and He's not going to do that. Jesus is not going to die again. It's once and for all. Believe it and thank God for it!



# The Saving Power of the Cross

“BRING US TO GOD”

If you come to God through the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, I promise you, on the authority of the Word of God, He will save you radically, dramatically, instantaneously, and eternally.

The reason for the cross is that you and I might come to God.

Did you know that the Bible says we are reconciled to God by the death of His Son? Romans 5:10 says:

**For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.**

God is not reconciled to us. We're the sinners. We're reconciled to God.

Let's revisit 1 Peter 3:18:

**For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.**

The word *bring* in this verse has the idea of taking a person. It's the Greek word *prosago*, which

means “to take a person and bring him into the court of the king.”

A person has no way to come to God except through the cross of Jesus. We go home by the way of the cross. There's no other way.

If there had been another way for you and I to be saved God would have taken it. But He didn't. Praise God! That is why we have the cross.

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# A Closing Plea

My friend, have you given your life to the Lord? Do you have the assurance that if you were to die right now, you would go straight to heaven? If not, please let me tell you how you can be saved, on the authority of the Word of God.

## ■ ADMIT YOUR SIN

First, you must understand and admit that you are a sinner. The Bible says, “**There is none righteous, no, not one**” (Romans 3:10). “**For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God**” (Romans 3:23). Sin is an offense against God that carries a serious penalty. “**For the wages of sin is death** [eternal separation from the love and mercy of God] **but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord**” (Romans 6:23).

## ■ ABANDON YOUR EFFORTS

Second, you must abandon any efforts to save yourself. If we could save ourselves, Jesus’ death would have been unnecessary! Even “getting religion” cannot get you to heaven. The Bible says it is “**Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His [God’s] mercy He saved us**” (Titus 3:5). Salvation is by God’s grace, “**...not of works, lest any man should boast**” (Ephesians 2:8-9).



## ■ ACKNOWLEDGE CHRIST'S PAYMENT

Third, you must believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died for your sins. **“But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”** (Romans 5:8). That means He died in your place. Your sin debt has been paid by the blood of Jesus Christ, which **“cleanseth us from all sin”** (1 John 1:7).

## ■ ACCEPT CHRIST AS YOUR SAVIOR

Fourth, you must put your faith in Jesus Christ and Him alone for your salvation. **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved”** (Acts 16:31). Salvation is God's gift to you! **“The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”** (Romans 6:23). **“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved”** (Acts 4:12).

Pray this simple prayer from your heart:

*Dear God, I know that I am a sinner. I know that You love me and want to save me. I know I can't save myself. Jesus, I believe You are the Son of God, who died on the cross to pay for my sins. I believe God raised You from the dead. I now turn from my sin and, by faith, receive You as my Lord and Savior. Forgive my sins and save me, Lord Jesus. In Your name I pray, Amen.*

If you have prayed this prayer today, please contact us and let us know. Then go find and join a Christ-honoring, Bible-believing church near you!

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- K102 Pardon With Punishment
- K104 Countdown in the Holy Land
- K105 How to Weather the Storms of Life
- K106 Unmasking the New Age
- K107 God's Way to Health, Wealth & Wisdom
- K108 The Music of Marriage
- K109 Pro-Choice Is No Choice
- K110 When Everything Goes Wrong
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- K112 Survival for the Home
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- K114 All Things New
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- K141 Why the Cross?
- K142 How to Keep Your Spiritual Fire Burning
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- K145 Christ of Every Crisis

- K146 Psalm 23: The Secret of Satisfaction
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- K148 How to Have a Meaningful Quiet Time
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- K151 How to Practice the Presence of God
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- K172 This World Is Not My Home
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- K174 Five Minutes After Death
- K175 A Prayer for America
- K176 Amazing Grace for Every Race
- K177 The Cup
- K178 The Crown
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“ Point people to  
Scripture and then  
get out of the way.”

ADRIAN ROGERS



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In today's fast-paced, self-focused world, it's difficult to find quality biblical teaching, let alone teaching that simplifies profound truth so it can be applied to everyday lives. At Love Worth Finding, we understand that struggle and seek to help Christians grow deeper in their faith through the timeless teachings of pastor and teacher **Adrian Rogers**.

We are dedicated to making the plainspoken, biblical wisdom he shared throughout his lifetime easy to access for non-Christians as well as new and long-time believers. Our desire is for all people to strengthen their relationships with God as we spread the Gospel of Jesus.

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