

SERMON OUTLINE

SERMON TITLE: Why the Cross?

SERMON REFERENCE: 1 Peter 3:18

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #2189

We are grateful for the opportunity to provide this outline produced from a sermon preached by Adrian Rogers while serving as pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee. This outline is intended for your personal, non-commercial use.

In order to ensure our ability to be good stewards of Adrian Rogers' messages, Love Worth Finding has reserved all rights to this content.

Except for your personal, non-commercial use and except for brief quotations in printed reviews, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means –electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other– without the prior permission of the publisher.

Copyright ©2024 Love Worth Finding Ministries, Inc.

1) INTRODUCTION

- a) 1 Peter 3:18
 - i) There is enough Gospel dynamite in this one verse to blow the hatred and sin out of any heart.
 - (1) But that Gospel dynamite must be ignited by the spark of faith.
- b) A Christmas tree is used to celebrate a very happy occasion, which is the birth of a baby.
 - i) But there is another tree, an old rugged cross, that we will look at today.
- c) The cradle, the crucifixion, and the coronation are inextricably interwoven and linked together.
- d) Jesus lived in the shadow of the cross.
 - i) He knew from His youth up that He was born to die.
- e) Today's message will focus on four great truths that come out of 1 Peter 3:18, as we answer the question, "Why the Cross?"

2) THE SUBSTITUTIONARY PURPOSE OF THE CROSS (1 PETER 3:18)

- a) "The just" in this verse is Jesus.
 - i) We are "the unjust."
- b) God forgives sin, but how does God forgive sin?
 - i) He must do it with a substitute.
 - (1) There must be someone who pays the penalty for sin.
- c) God cannot overlook sin.
 - i) If God were to overlook sin, then God would no longer be a holy God any more than a judge would be a righteous judge if he were to overlook a crime.
 - (1) It has been said that when a guilty man is acquitted, the judge is condemned.
 - (2) If a judge were to overlook crime just because he was a loving judge, then at that moment, the judge becomes a criminal.
- d) If God were to overlook sin without sin being punished, then God would topple from His throne of holiness.
 - i) If there was one word to describe God, it would be "holy."
 - (1) The word "holy" means that God is the opposite, the antithesis, of sin.
 - ii) God is a righteous and holy God, and sin must be punished.
- e) Not only is God holy, but God is also love.
 - i) So, God must have a way that He can have sin punished, yet have us forgiven.
- f) We are sinful by birth, by nature, and by practice.
 - i) Yet, the world rejects the idea of sin.
 - (1) We may read about pornography, drunkenness, drug addiction, and all kinds of mayhem, but the word "sin" is hardly mentioned.
- g) God, who is infinite love, has a holy hatred for sin.
 - i) So, God had in His heart and in His mind a plan by which sin could be punished and man could be forgiven.

- (1) That method is substitution.
- h) God had prophesied the cross many years before Jesus died on the cross.
 - i) Abraham was the first of the Hebrews.
 - (1) He was the father of the Jewish nation.
 - (2) He was the father of the faithful.
 - ii) Genesis 17:19
 - (1) God told Abraham that he would have a son.
 - (2) Through this son, all the nations of the world would be blessed.
 - (3) His name would be Isaac, which means “laughter.”
 - iii) Isaac was the son of prophecy.
 - (1) God told Abraham about Isaac before he was born.
 - (2) God gave his name before he was born.
 - (a) Just as Jesus’ name was given before He was born.
 - (b) Just as Jesus was the Son of prophecy.
 - iv) Isaac would be born of a miracle.
 - (1) Abraham was an old man.
 - (a) He was one hundred years old when Isaac was born.
 - (2) Sarah was past menopause.
 - (a) It was impossible from man’s viewpoint for her to have a child.
 - v) Isaac was a picture, a prophecy, in the Old Testament of the Lord Jesus.
 - (1) Genesis 22:1-14
 - (2) God told Abraham to take Isaac, his only son and the son whom he loved, to a place He would show him and offer him up as a burnt sacrifice.
 - (a) Abraham didn’t understand it all, but he must obey.
 - (i) The God who gave him a miracle is still the God of miracles.
 - (ii) The Bible tells us that Abraham knew that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead, if necessary.
 1. Hebrews 11:17-19
 - (3) Abraham and Isaac went to the place that God pointed out, Mount Moriah.
 - (a) It was the same mountain that the temple would be built upon.
 - (b) It was the same mountain that Jesus would be crucified on.
 - (4) Isaac, with the wood upon his back, started up Mount Moriah.
 - (a) Just as Jesus, with the cross upon His back, started up that same rugged hill.
 - (5) Abraham had a torch with a flame that spoke of the burning wrath of God against sin.
 - (6) Abraham had a knife in his hand that spoke of the penalty of sin.
 - (a) Romans 6:23
 - (7) Isaac saw the wood, the knife, and the fire, but where was the sacrifice?
 - (a) Abraham made one of the greatest statements in the Bible.
 - (i) “God will provide Himself a sacrifice.”

1. Genesis 22:8
- (8) Abraham bound the hands of Isaac.
 - (a) Abraham was an old man.
 - (b) Isaac was a strapping youth, full of vigor and strength.
 - (i) Isaac could have overcome Abraham; but he stretched out his hands in obedience, just as Jesus laid down His life.
 1. John 10:18
 - (ii) The son willingly submitted to the father.
 1. Just as Jesus said, "Not my will, but thine be done."
 - a. Luke 22:42
 - (9) There was a ram with his horns locked in a thicket.
 - (a) He was crowned with thorns.
 - (b) God told Abraham to offer the ram in the place of his son.
 - (10) By a double illustration, God taught substitution.
 - (a) God knew what He was going to do, but Abraham didn't know it.
 - (b) When Abraham started up one side of the mountain, unseen to him, the ram started up the other side of the mountain.
 - (c) No wonder Jesus said that Abraham saw His day and was glad.
 - (i) John 8:56
 - (11) He named the place Moriah.
 - (a) Abraham received a name for God there:
 - (i) Jehovah Jireh, which means, "The God Who Will Provide."
 1. God would provide Himself a lamb.
 - i) The Passover lamb is a picture of substitution.
 - i) Exodus 12:13
 - ii) The Jewish people bred Passover lambs in Bethlehem.
 - (1) The shepherds who first heard the Christmas message were the shepherds watching over this special breed of lambs.
 - (2) The lambs were born in the fields of Bethlehem.
 - (a) But in a smelly stable, Mary had a little Lamb who was virgin-born.
 - iii) When John the Baptist saw Jesus, he knew that Jesus was the Lamb.
 - (1) John 1:29
 - iv) Matthew 21:1-9
 - (1) The day of crucifixion came during Passover week.
 - (2) Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem over the brow of the Mount of Olives, up through the Eastern Gate.
 - (a) At the same time, the Passover lambs from Bethlehem entered Jerusalem through the sheep gate.
 - (i) They were all on the Temple Mount at the same time.
 - v) The priests examined the Passover lambs to make sure they were perfect.
 - vi) Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, was criticized, interrogated, and castigated as they tried to find some flaw in Him.
 - (1) John 7:46
 - (2) John 18:38

- (3) John 8:46
 - (a) He was a perfect Lamb.
 - vii) At 3:00 PM, the Passover lambs were sacrificed.
 - (1) At the same time, the Lamb of God was nailed to the cross on the same mountain where Abraham had told Isaac that God would provide a sacrifice.
 - viii) John 19:30
 - (1) It was paid in full.
 - (2) The Levitical priests and the Passover shepherds are no longer needed.
 - (3) The plan was done.
 - (4) God was teaching substitution.
 - (a) 1 Peter 3:18
 - j) Before Jesus was put upon the cross, Pilate tried to escape a predicament.
 - i) It was a custom in that day that one notorious criminal would be released.
 - (1) Barabbas was an insurrectionist, a thief, a murderer, and a rebel.
 - (2) This was Pilate's way to let Jesus go and for him to maintain his dignity and his position with Rome.
 - ii) But the people wanted Jesus crucified and Barabbas released.
 - iii) Matthew 27:15-23
 - k) Jesus was taken and nailed to the central cross of three crosses.
 - i) The three crosses were really put up for three thieves:
 - (1) The two thieves who were crucified with Jesus and Barabbas.
 - ii) This was Barabbas' cross; it was made for him.
 - (1) Jesus died in his place.
 - (a) You may say, "Christ died for me," but you should say, "Christ died instead of me."
 - l) The purpose of the cross is one of substitution.
 - i) Barabbas was a thief; we are thieves.
 - (1) We were supposed to have been God's stewards, and we failed.
 - ii) Barabbas was a rebel.
 - (1) We were meant to be God's servants, and we failed.
 - iii) Barabbas was a murderer, and we have put the Son of God to ignominious death.
 - iv) Barabbas was a prisoner; we are bound with sin.
 - v) Barabbas represents all of us.
 - m) 1 Peter 3:18
 - n) Some people don't like the idea of the substitution of the cross.
 - i) They think that Jesus died as an example or as a martyr.
 - (1) He did not; He died as a substitute.
- 3) THE SUFFERING PASSION OF THE CROSS (1 PETER 3:18)
- a) In this verse, the word "passion" means "feeling" or "suffering."
 - b) Jesus suffered on the cross; God suffered.

- c) Sin brings suffering.
 - i) Unless we have a substitute, we will suffer for our sin.
- d) The emotional sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ:
 - i) Luke 22:41-44
 - (1) This passage speaks of dark Gethsemane.
 - ii) The very blood of the Son of God profusely fell upon the ground.
 - (1) Medical books tell us that in times of great duress, the minute capillaries will rupture.
 - iii) Matthew 26:38
 - (1) Jesus was in agony.
 - (a) The word “agony” comes from a Greek athletic contest or battle.
 - (i) It means to strive with all of one’s strength.
 - iv) Jesus was in a battle.
 - (1) He didn’t battle with God the Father.
 - (a) He wanted the will of God the Father.
 - (2) He didn’t battle with Satan.
 - (a) He could decimate Satan.
 - (3) He battled with His own humanity.
 - (a) He knew what He faced.
 - v) Matthew 26:39
 - (1) The cup was a metaphor for suffering.
 - (2) There was a cup from which Jesus must drink.
 - (a) All of our sins were in that cup.
 - (i) Every dirty thought, every foul word, every selfish deed, every lie, everything that we have ever done was in that cup.
 - (ii) All sins from the time of Adam and Eve up until the time when the trumpet shall sound were in that cup.
 - (iii) Jesus knew this because He was to be a substitute.
 - 1. 2 Corinthians 5:21
 - (b) He must put His pure and holy lips upon that filthy cup, and He must drink it down.
 - (c) He would not become a sinner, but He became sin.
 - vi) Jesus suffered the penalty for all the sin of the world and for all time upon the cross.
 - (1) Lamentations 1:12
 - (2) Jesus knew that when He took that sin upon Him, God would have to treat Him as God treats sin because He was the substitute.
 - (a) There could be no mercy.
 - (i) Romans 8:32
 - (ii) Isaiah 53:10
 - (3) 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.
 - (a) He would be separated from God the Father.
 - (b) The fires of God’s wrath would burn themselves out in Him.

- (c) Jesus knew that He would baptize His own soul in Hell.
- e) The physical suffering of the Lord Jesus:
 - i) John 19:1
 - (1) Pilate, hoping to get Jesus off his hands, thought that if the people saw Jesus brutalized, they would be satisfied.
 - (a) So, Pilate had Jesus scourged.
 - ii) What was scourging?
 - (1) The Romans would take the person to be scourged and tie his hands above his head so that he would be standing on the balls of his feet.
 - (2) They would strip from him his clothing.
 - (3) The scourging was done by two people.
 - (4) They took a whip, called a flagrum, that had a sturdy handle and thongs of leather.
 - (a) Embedded in the thongs of leather would be bone, glass, lead, and iron.
 - (b) It was an instrument of torture.
 - (5) They would whip a man so as to take away the flesh and expose the nerves.
 - (6) Historians tell us that no man ever walked away from a scourging.
 - iii) Jesus went through mock trials, which were travesties of justice.
 - iv) Just before the crucifixion, the soldiers played a game called, "The Game of the Kings."
 - (1) In their hatred against authority, they took their hostility out on Jesus.
 - (a) They enjoyed their game.
 - (2) They snatched the beard from Jesus' face.
 - (3) The Bible says that He was more marred than any man.
 - (a) Isaiah 52:14
 - (b) You could not tell that He was a human being.
 - (4) Luke 22:63-64
 - (a) They pushed Him from person to person.
 - (b) They beat Him with clubs.
 - (c) He was blindfolded.
 - (d) They slapped Him.
 - (e) They spat in the face of the Son of God.
 - v) Then, the cross was put on His back, and they led Him along "The Way of Sorrows."
 - (1) He stumbled beneath the load.
 - vi) When they came to Mount Moriah, to the spot where "God will provide Himself a lamb," they stretched Jesus out on the cross.
 - (1) The soldiers were experienced.
 - (a) They knew how to put the nails right where they would find the median nerve so that every nerve would be a river of pain.
 - (b) They put the nails in His hands and in His feet.

- (2) The Romans crucified because it was the worst form of death that man could devise.
- (3) The word “excruciating” means “out of the cross.”
 - (a) Jesus was in excruciating pain upon the cross.
- (4) He who made the oceans, the rivers, and the rain clouds said, “I thirst.”
 - (a) John 19:28
- f) The spiritual suffering of the Lord Jesus:
 - i) Isaiah 53:10
 - (1) God hath put Him to shame, to death.
 - ii) Habakkuk 1:13
 - iii) When Jesus took our sins upon Himself, He was treated as we would be treated if we were punished for our sin.
 - (1) God did not negate nor dampen down the punishment.
 - iv) Jesus didn’t die for one sinner’s sin; He died for all sinners’ sins.
 - (1) He died for the sin of the whole world.
 - (a) The sin of the whole world was distilled upon Jesus.
 - (2) The suffering was compounded upon the Lord Jesus.
 - v) No one ever suffered like the Lord Jesus upon that cross.
 - vi) Matthew 27:46
 - (1) If you don’t get saved, then God will forsake you.
 - (a) Jesus took your place; He took it all.
 - vii) Psalm 23:4
 - (1) Jesus couldn’t say this because He walked that narrow valley by Himself.
- 4) THE SATISFYING PROVISION OF THE CROSS (1 PETER 3:18)
 - a) It is over; it is finished.
 - i) The righteousness of God is completely satisfied in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (1) He will never face the cross again.
 - ii) This does not mean once upon a time.
 - (1) It means once and for all.
 - b) When Jesus said that it was finished, it was paid in full.
 - i) John 19:30
 - ii) He will not come into double jeopardy, and neither will you come into double jeopardy.
 - (1) Romans 8:33
 - c) In Bible times when a man was adjudicated guilty of a crime and put in prison, the charges against him would be written down and nailed to the prison door.
 - i) Once he had paid his debt, he would be let out of prison.
 - ii) They would take that writing against him, and the judge would write, “It is finished,” and give it to him to keep.
 - (1) If anyone ever wanted to accuse him of that crime, then he could hold that up and say that the crime had been paid for; it was finished.

- d) The Bible says that Jesus took away the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, nailed it to His cross, and said, "It is finished."
 - i) Colossians 2:14
 - ii) John 19:30
 - (1) This is the reason why we can believe in the eternal security of the believer; because Jesus "hath once suffered."
 - e) When Jesus saves, it is good for one salvation only.
 - i) If it does not last, then Jesus would have to be crucified all over again.
 - (1) And He is not going to do that.
 - (a) It is once and for all.
 - ii) Isaiah 53:11
 - (1) That is the only thing that can take away your sin.
- 5) THE SAVING POWER OF THE CROSS (1 PETER 3:18)
- a) The reason for the cross is that we might come to God.
 - b) Romans 5:10
 - i) God is not reconciled to us.
 - ii) We are the sinners.
 - (1) We are reconciled to God.
 - c) The word "bring" in 1 Peter 3:18 has the idea of taking a person.
 - i) It is the Greek word which means to take a person and bring him into the court of the king.
 - (1) A person would have no way to come except through the cross.
 - d) If there had been some other way for us to be saved, then God would have taken it.
 - e) Romans 1:16
- 6) CONCLUSION
- a) Jesus died for you.
 - b) 1 Peter 3:18
 - i) That is the answer to "Why the Cross?"
 - c) God wants you to be saved today.
 - d) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
 - e) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16