

Two Reasons Jesus Came to Die

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[0 : 0 0] John chapter 15. Colin has asked me to read several verses here. We're going to begin reading in verse 12 and read through verse 17 before the preaching of the word.

My command is this. Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends for everything that I learned from my father.

I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. Then the father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

This is my command. Love each other. Good evening.

[1 : 1 9] It's good to be with you all to be able to open God's word together. I count it a great privilege each time that my family and I can be up here with you to worship and to consider what God has to say from his word.

Well, tonight we do. We plan to take communion. And sometimes it is good for us to pause and be reminded of why we do what we do. There's lots of things in life that we do that can become routine in a good way.

We need to make those routines just happen. But sometimes we need to pause and say, well, why? Why do we do what we do? What is the purpose for what we're doing? And so it is good for us to ask that question.

Even as we take communion, why do we take communion? To remember the Lord's death. And then a really natural kind of follow-up question is, why did Jesus die?

Now, you might have an answer in mind. In fact, if I pulled the room, I pulled my father-in-law, I got the answer I was looking for. If I pulled the room and I asked, why did Jesus die? You would probably have one question or one answer that would most naturally come to mind.

[2 : 2 3] To save us from our sins. And that answer is absolutely correct. But sometimes when we have one answer that comes to mind, we can kind of flatten the richness of God's word.

I read a book recently called 50 Reasons Jesus Came to Die by John Piper. He gave 50 good reasons. Some that weren't as front and center, but all good biblical reasons for why Jesus came to die.

So you guys ready for a 50-point sermon tonight? We can set like a Guinness Book of World Records. There's like a record for everything. So I think we could set a sermon points record.

No, I'm kidding. That would be either like a really long sermon, which I'm not supposed to preach a really long sermon. Or it would just be a really like brief point. It would be like one five-second point each to get through the sermon.

So we're going to consider two. Two reasons why Jesus died. We're going to highlight those tonight as we open God's word together.

[3 : 27] And we're not just going to sit in one passage. We're going to think more holistically about what the whole Bible has to say about each of the reasons that we look at.

So we're going to consider why Jesus died. Two reasons. First, he died because he was obedient to his father. Jesus died because he was obedient to his father.

From eternity past, God the Father had a plan, a perfect plan to redeem his people. To reverse the curse of sin. To make us right again with him.

To restore and to renew all things. And at the center of that plan was God's son, Jesus Christ. And the son, he didn't need to be like duped into fulfilling this plan.

Jesus didn't have to be tricked into it. It wasn't like he came to earth, he was living his life, and all of a sudden one day it was like, wait, you're arresting me? What's happening here? I didn't anticipate this. I'm in the prime of my life.

[4 : 31] I didn't think this was going to happen. That's not at all how it went down. It also wasn't that God the Son, he didn't have to be like persuaded. He didn't have to be convinced. God the Father didn't have to sit him down and say, no, let me give you 50 reasons for why you're going to die.

No, Jesus was fully on board. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world. This was a perfect plan. The Father and the Son in harmony together. The Son would submit himself to the Father's will.

He would willingly say and do all that the Father laid out for him. We see this throughout the book of John. This submissive relationship of the Son to the Father.

It's a common theme. So we're going to look at one passage in particular about this, but I want to read just a few to kind of set the stage for that. A few passages in John that help us to see, wow, God the Father, God the Son, they're on the same page, and Jesus is ready to do all that God says he should do.

He's ready to say all that God says that he should say. John 5, 19. Jesus speaking here. Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing.

[5 : 46] For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. A few verses later, John 5, 30, and then again, 36. I can do nothing on my own.

As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just. Because I seek not my own will, but the will of him who sent me. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me.

Several chapters later, John 12, 49. For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment, what to say and what to speak.

So over and over again, we see that Jesus identifies himself as being intimately related to the Father, on the same page as the Father, and over and over saying, I'm going to submit myself to what the Father has for me to say, I'm going to submit myself to what the Father has me to do.

So let's land for a moment in John. Let's look at a passage together that I think especially draws this out. It's John chapter 4. You can go ahead and turn there. John chapter 4.

[6 : 56] This is the story of Jesus' interaction with the woman at the well. It's a fairly well-known story. And Jesus reveals himself as the Messiah to her.

And at the end of this kind of interaction they have, Jesus' disciples arrive on the scene. And we're going to pick up reading the story beginning in verse 27.

This is the word of the Lord. Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman. But no one said, what do you seek? Or why are you talking with her?

So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ? They went out of the town and were coming to him.

Meanwhile, the disciples were urging him, saying, Rabbi, eat. But he said to them, I have food to eat that you do not know about. So the disciples said to one another, has someone brought him something to eat?

[7 : 58] Jesus said to them, my food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. So here in John 4, we see that it's been a long day.

Jesus is thirsty and he approaches this woman and has an incredibly profitable conversation that started with him just being thirsty. And his disciples come and understandably they think he's probably hungry too.

Again, it's been a long day. But instead of taking up the disciples on their offer to get food, he replies with these words, I have food to eat that you do not know about.

And so the disciples, they're confused. What's going on here? Did somebody bring him food? Does he have like a lunchable, like a pizza lunchable? My kids love those, like something that lasted for a while.

Like how is he not hungry? What's going on here? But obviously Jesus isn't talking about physical food that sustains him. He's talking spiritually with them.

[8 : 55] And he says this, his closing line here, my food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. So obedience to the Father, it takes priority for Jesus.

Jesus has this single-minded devotion to the Father. He isn't saying, well, I never need to eat because I'm God. That's not what he's getting at here.

That would actually kind of undercut his point. He's saying like, yeah, that's understandable that I would be hungry. But even if I'm hungry, I got way bigger things than I'm concerned about. Obedience to the Father.

Jesus was using this moment to show his disciples his priorities. And so we see here that something is really important. The disciples, they kind of miss it.

Jesus has just preached the good news of himself to this Samaritan woman. He's just revealed to her that he's the way to eternal life. And yet the disciples, they don't marvel at this.

[9 : 53] If anything, they marvel because he broke social boundaries. They marvel because he doesn't really want to eat. Jesus has been busy doing the will of his Father.

And the disciples, they're missing it. And so Jesus, he shifts their focus. He changes their perspective. And he says, my food is to do the will of him who sent me.

This would have struck a chord with the disciples. This would have made them pause for a moment. It even might have brought up in their minds some Old Testament references like Deuteronomy 8 verse 3.

Where Moses said to the Israelites in the wilderness, God humbled you, causing you to hunger, and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

So Jesus is devoted to his Father's will. He's devoted to what his Father has purposed for him to do. He's devoted to obeying every word that comes from the mouth of the Father.

[11 : 00] And this would ultimately lead Jesus to the cross. Because that was the ultimate goal of his life, was to go to the cross. And so even as he anticipates this, Jesus can say in John 17, 4, I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.

So Jesus' death, it is the climactic moment of his ministry. It is the most significant part of his obedience to the Father's will. This is what it meant to fully and finally carry out his Father's desires.

It culminated in his death. So if we think about this now, from the angle of Luke's gospel, there's a theme that comes up in his gospel over and over again that reminds us Jesus has something very specific to accomplish.

Over and over again in Luke's gospel, we are reminded that Jesus is journeying to Jerusalem. He is going to Jerusalem with a very single-minded purpose.

And kind of the passage that kicks that off for us is in Luke chapter 9, during the transfiguration. And as Jesus' face is altered and his clothes become dazzling white, the text says that Moses and Elijah, they also appear in glory, and they have a conversation with Jesus.

[12 : 22] And in that time, it says that they were speaking with him about his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Sound anything like John 17, 4?

I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And then no less than nine times following that, do we find that Jesus has this intentional, purposeful journey to Jerusalem.

I'm just going to read out these verses in succession. When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. But the people did not receive him because his face was set towards Jerusalem.

He went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying towards Jerusalem. On the way to Jerusalem, he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee.

And then perhaps the most significant passage in Luke reads this, And taking the twelve, Jesus said to them, See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished.

[13 : 27] For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. And after flogging him, they will kill him. And on the third day, he will rise.

Jesus had this mission given by the Father. I must go to Jerusalem, because in Jerusalem, I will meet my death. And I will fulfill the Father's will for me.

So Jesus clearly connects his mission to die on the cross with this obedience to the Father. Even as Paul says in Philippians 2, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

You see, we always obey the desires of another. It would be silly to talk about obedience without there being some form of relationship there. So Jesus is obedient to the Father. The Son is obedient to the Father.

He submits himself to the authority of the Father. And he accomplishes all that the Father has for him. And so Jesus himself says this, And it's found in Hebrews 10, 7.

[14 : 35] Quoting from the Old Testament, Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book. So there's one reason.

The first reason we want to consider tonight. But we're going to look at two reasons together for why Jesus died. So the second reason. Jesus died because he loves us. Jesus went to the cross because of his boundless love for us.

We sang of that even in the hymn before we turned to the preaching of the word. So turn with me. If you've left John 15 to go to all these other passages, head on back to John 15 with me.

This passage, very fitting for tonight, is found during the institution of the Lord's Supper.

Jesus is having his final meal with his disciples. And John especially kind of gives us insight into that last meal and much of what Jesus said.

[15 : 34] And here we see in John 15, Jesus is giving final instructions. And we're going to begin reading. In verse 10. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my father's commandments and abide in his love.

These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

You are my friends if you do what I command. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing, but I have called you friends. For all that I have heard from my father, I have made known to you.

First reason just kind of pops up right there. Continuing in verse 16. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask in the father in my name, he may give it to you.

These things I command you so that you will love one another. So Jesus has shown his love for us here in John 15. He doesn't say it outright, but clearly Jesus is talking about the cross, laying down his life for his people at the cross.

[16 : 50] I lay down my life for my friends. Now, did he really mean to say friends? I mean, because we're kind of lousy friends. If you read the scriptures, we're not great friends to Jesus.

Romans 5 says that while we were still enemies, Christ died for us. And yet he still says here, I'm going to lay down my life for you. Lousy friends that you may be, I'm going to lay down my life for you out of my abundant love for you.

Now, this isn't just the death of a man for his friends. Dying sacrificially for another, that is an honorable, honorable thing.

We should esteem such a person. We celebrated Memorial Day recently. Thank God for those who have sacrificed that we might have freedom. And yet Jesus's death here is more than a man dying for others.

This is the son accomplishing the work that the father has laid before him. This is the son ransoming his people from their sins. This is the great exchange, his white robes for our scarlet ones, his righteousness for our unrighteousness.

[18 : 01] This is the great act of redemption where God has now transferred us from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of his beloved son in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

We have no eternal inheritance apart from his death. We have no hope of life beyond the grave without him entering the grave in our place. This is the death of a man for his friends, but this is also the death of the only man who could truly, completely, in every way, fully and finally save his friends.

This is love for us that is put on display in a way that can't be accomplished by anyone else. Now there's another place in John's gospel where Jesus will talk about laying down his life.

And that's in John chapter 10. So I'm going to read some of those passages or some of those verses if you'd like to turn there. John chapter 10 beginning in verse 11.

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.

[19 : 19] He flees because he has a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me just as the father knows me and I know the father.

And I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.

For this reason, the father loves me because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and I have authority to take it up again.

This charge I have received from my father. So Jesus, he calls himself the good shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep.

Again, he's not forced to lay down his life. He didn't have to be held down in order to accomplish what the father had for him. He gave his life willingly as a demonstration of his love for us.

[20 : 20] Of course, I will die for them. I will die for my sheep. And so let's consider these two reasons together.

Let's bring it all together. The son displays this great act of sacrificial obedience by going to the cross for his people.

His obedience to the father meets his love for his people in his death on the cross. His death that we remember tonight. This is the savior that we've come to remember.

This is the one that we've come to meet with at his table and to fellowship with together. This is our savior, the perfectly obedient son who loved us to the point of death.

So let's remember his death tonight. Let's worship him tonight. And then let's pray that God would make us to be a people who go from here and live lives that are pleasing to him.

[21 : 21] In John 15, we see the two reasons that we've highlighted for tonight for Jesus' death. His obedience to the father and his love for us. But we also see something else that Jesus speaks of.

He speaks of us then bearing fruit. And so in John 15, Jesus points out his love for us. He says that he's the one who laid down his life for his friends.

And in John 15, Jesus points out his obedience to the father. He's the one who has made known all that he has heard from his father. And in John 15, Jesus also points out this.

We should go and bear fruit by his grace. As the people that he has chosen and equipped, we are now to be the people who bear fruit.

So may this meal spiritually nourish us. May it strengthen us to live lives that are honoring to him. May it strengthen us to bear fruit in the Christian life.

[22 : 20] And then let's pray that God would give us grace as we take communion. And as we remember our Savior's obedience to the father and his love for us, let's pray that he would give us grace to live holy lives pleasing to him.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, we are so very grateful for what your son accomplished upon the cross.

We marvel that he would go in the place of us, rebels against you, shaking our fist at you, treasonous, going our own way, loving our sin.

And yet Jesus said, I will die for them. even while we're his enemies. And thank you, Lord, that you perfectly purpose all things, including even the death of your son.

And that even as we remember his death night, we can see that he accomplished your will in every respect. He obeyed in every way that we have disobeyed. He did all that you had for him to do.

[23 : 26] He said all that he had that you had for him to say. Father, we marvel. We are grateful. We pray, Lord, that you would then help us by your grace to then be a people who honor you with our lives, who reflect Christ to a watching world, who bring you honor and glory. We pray all these things in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.