

His Terrible Death

Loving Our Magnificent, Invincible Savior

No one could see it at the time. Jesus had to descend into the abyss of suffering and sin without a guide to lead Him through it, or a friend to cheer Him on. How it must have looked to everyone who knew Him like a colossal mistake, a ghastly travesty of justice. In reality it was the most noble and valiant conquest of a hideous foe—all that is fallen and corrupt in our nature. The innocent Victim became the invincible Victor, even before He died!

“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.” John 10:17-18 ESV

How Far We Fell

There are three ways to attempt to see how far we have fallen into sin:

1) There is the view from the top. With our imaginations aided by divine revelation we can look at created human nature as it existed in Adam and Eve on the high ground of holiness before the fall.

Innocence, purity, intimacy with God, mind-body-soul in perfect harmony—all lost! Lost even beyond the capacity of unredeemed humanity to believe it ever existed.



2) There is the long way back up. We can observe how extraordinarily difficult is the climb back to even a semblance of restored purity of heart, of freedom from sin, of health and well-being, of an unbroken flow of love, joy and peace, to say nothing of living once again in the unveiled presence of our God. There's such a long way to go.

These views are from our perspective. But there is another view. It is God's perspective.

3) There is the broken heap at the bottom. We can look to the cross to see how much it cost Jesus to reverse the direction of the curse, by meeting us at the very depth of our fallenness—at the place where our sins would have plunged us into their awful penalty. Looking at the sufferings of Jesus during His terrible death enables us to see what God had to do from His perspective to deal with the terrible consequences of our fall from His grace.



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Take this journey slowly. Allow time to let it sink in. With each of the steps you may want to breathe out this prayer: "Dear Lord, forgive me that this is what You had to suffer because of me." Then follow it with this one, "Thank You, Jesus, that You were willing to suffer all of this for my sake!"

What Jesus Suffered

Let your heart meditate on what Jesus had to endure because of our sins.

1. The Suffering in His Body

a) In the early stage of making atonement Jesus suffered in His body... all that human cruelty could devise as torment. His body was bruised by beatings from the guards—brutal men who enjoyed inflicting pain. He was torn by the whipping that ripped His flesh, laying bare His bones. A crown of thorns was pressed like spikes onto His head. The hard weight of the cross beam (estimated at 100 pounds) was an agony to carry after these punishments. Then came the piercing of the nails (large spikes) through feet and hands and the wrenching effect on Him as He was lifted upon the cross. Finally, not least, there was the agony of crucifixion itself—gasping for breath, heart strain, and the cramping of all His muscles. The cross was designed by the Romans to torture its victims to death.

But that was just the beginning of His physical sufferings.

b) In the latter stage of making atonement Jesus suffered in His body... physical pains and ailments that the Author of health had never known. Isaiah revealed that the Messiah would carry within Himself our sicknesses and our diseases. This would have included our wasting illnesses and afflictions in all of their dreadful forms. Our pains, fevers and piercing agonies were all in the cup from which He drank.

2. The Suffering in His Soul

a) In the early stage of making atonement Jesus suffered in His soul... all that human sinfulness could heap upon Him. He suffered reproach and insults along with vile and baseless accusations from those who surrounded Him. He felt the rejection of those He had served, the hatred of those He loved (all of us), and scorn by those He had tried to reach. He fully experienced the pains of betrayal, abandonment and intense loneliness.

But that was just the beginning of the sufferings in His soul.

b) In the latter stage of making atonement Jesus suffered in His soul... thoughts and feelings the sinless One had never known as His own—except as temptations to be spurned. On the cross it was necessary for Him to be made one with our sins. He suffered the feeling of our kind of anger which has such hatred in it. He knew within Himself our sullen bitterness as hard and implacable as rocks; our lust that craves pleasure and is never satisfied; our untrusting fears, anxieties, and terrors that destroy all peace; our ugly prejudices spawned by ignorance and contempt; our heartless apathies that abandon hope and embrace despair; our loneliness that reeks with self-pity; our jealousies and envies that love nothing but their own self-seeking; and our pride



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and ambition in all of their scheming forms. Jesus experienced for the first time in His life the unspeakably foul thoughts and feelings of our sin nature.

But was this His final and most terrible suffering? No, there was worse to come.

3. The Suffering in His Spirit

This is a mystery so deep we can barely lift the veil.

a) In the first stage of suffering in His Spirit Jesus began to bear not the experience of what our sin is like, but the awful consequence of our sins. Sin darkens, deadens and defiles and destroys all that it touches. His incomparable understanding began to be darkened. We live in semi-darkness—stunned by moments of enlightenment; now the Enlightened One was stunted by our darkness. His inward vitality began to wither and die. We are half dead to the glory of each moment, thrilled at being quickened by His Spirit; now the Spirit-filled One was experiencing our deadness. Defilement by sin is normal for us — holiness and purity are rarely experienced; now the Holy One of God was experiencing the staining of our defilement. His inner peace began to be destroyed by the crushing weight of sin. He who knew no sin was made to be sin.

Yet, these evils were as nothing compared to the most terrible suffering of all... This may well have been the suffering Jesus saw in the cup the Father showed Him in dark visions at Gethsemane. Here was the ultimate punishment, the suffering that He would have set aside, if only the Father in all His love and wisdom could have devised another way to save us. But there was no other way to reverse our fall.

b) In the second stage of the suffering in His Spirit Jesus faced the unimaginable—unimaginable for Him and unimaginable surely for us. He received within Himself the horror of sin's ultimate penalty. Jesus began to experience for the first time in all the eons of uncreated time, total separation from the Father's loving presence. There! There is the thing He dreaded most: Cut off from God!

His Greatest Agony

Sin separates us from God. It destroys our vision of God. It destroys our communion with God. It destroys our intimacy of conversation with God. It separates us from the blessed presence of God. This is the deepest agony of His travailing prayer at Gethsemane. This is at the heart of His cry of dereliction at the cross. "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"

He who had never known the slightest separation from His Father finally bore our sins to the point of being identified with us in our separation. Even in our darkest, loneliest moments we only experience this separation in part—we are covered by so much love, surrounded by so much grace that the pain of our separation is cushioned. He suffered in its sheer, dreadful totality. Gone now was the all-consuming embrace of divine love. It was still flowing ever outwards, but Jesus was cut off, stricken for our sins, seemingly forever exiled from the presence of pure love and perfect, joy-filled fellowship. This is an anguish our minds simply cannot fathom.



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These terrible sufferings were in the cup that Jesus drank from at the cross. What of suffering, or sin, or sorrow has been in your cup? Know that He has already drained it all for you—and blazed the pathway out!

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5:21 ESV

The Final Word

The sufferings Jesus endured — as terrible as they were—didn't get to have the last word. He did! When it was all over, when He had completely drained the cup His Father offered Him, Jesus declared His great Work finished! Only then did He freely surrender His Spirit to God and leave for Home in triumph.

When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. John 19:30 ESV

Explore More about Jesus

[The Sacrifice of Christ: The Temple Background](#) Sometimes you see a thing, as with a silhouette, more clearly by stark contrast with what it is not. The gospels show us the events that led Jesus to the cross on Good Friday. The writer of Hebrews interprets those same events by contrasting that Sacrifice at Calvary with the Temple sacrifices of ancient Israel which were still being practiced in his day. It helps to understand the Reality by gazing upon its "shadow."

[The Sacrifice of Christ: The Power of His Blood](#) According to the Lord's own instructions to Israel the power of an atoning sacrifice is in the blood that is shed. Many moderns typically become squeamish at the thought of a bloody sacrifice and question its necessity. Being willing to shed that world view allows us to see through the lens of scripture what is in the Mind of our Maker. Knowing and believing what Jesus' Blood means can establish your faith like nothing else.

[The Sacrifice of Christ: Victim, Victor, Vision](#) So much of what the Lord does is holographic. Turn the image just a little and it will look entirely different. Few things demonstrate this principle better than His death on the cross. What was He doing? Great truths infuse our hearts through these three historically favored perspectives. We need them all! Take care which one you latch on to, for the image we hold of Him will define our relationship to Him for better or worse.

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Scriptures on His Terrible Death

All four gospels give extensive accounts of Jesus death on the cross told from the “outside perspective” of eye witnesses describing and recording the event itself. Isaiah foretold it with prophetic “insight” which affords us a unique opportunity to see what transpired at the cross “from the inside.”

Who has believed what they heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors. Isaiah 53:1-12 ESV

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For over a decade Steve Evans and [Healing Streams](#) have been helping people recover inner peace and freedom through the free eCourse for healing, [Matters of the Heart](#). Through Forerunners4Him he has been showing how we can be saved for heaven and teaching the way to live a Spirit-filled life on earth. Go now to receive a completely free primer, [Getting to Heaven](#) and/or an introduction to [Living in the Spirit](#) at our website.



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