

YOU

Bible Study

Sermon Series: Essentials of Christianity

To be used with: The Death of Jesus

Sermon Title Possibilities: The Great Forgiver

Scripture: John 19:8-24, 28-30

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the small group study “Essentials of Christianity,” this sermon uses the session Scripture passage to recognize that forgiveness of sin is only possible when someone places their faith in Jesus Christ, who died for our sin.

Introduction: Love. That’s a word that gets thrown around a lot, and it’s used for a lot of things that aren’t really love. “I love my car.” “I love ice cream.” “I love <my favorite football team>.” “I love my job.” And, “I love my spouse.” Out of all of those, only the last one is really related to love, all the others are just measures of extreme likes.

While the message of sin and separation from God was seen in the Isaiah 59 passage, there is good news. God loves us—He loves you. Despite the fact that humanity has sinned and rebelled against God, He still loves us. He loved us so much that He did what we could never do for ourselves. He sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to bear the punishment we rightly deserve for our sin. The work of Jesus provides a way for all us—including you—to be forgiven and experience salvation.

1. Jesus’ death was under God’s control. (v. 8-16a)

While it was Pilate and the Roman soldiers who had Jesus, make no mistake, God was in control. There was nothing about any of this that surprised God. In order for the penalty for sin to be paid, Jesus had to be arrested and stand trial. This was all in God’s plan. Verse 11 reflects Jesus’ understanding that what was happening to Him was not because of Pilate’s authority, but because of God’s.

From our vantage point in history, we understand the spiritual ramifications of Jesus’ arrest and crucifixion. Yet, we may struggle with the realization that God was in control of the events that led to Jesus’ death. Galatians 4:4-5 reminds us that God, in His own timing, brought about these events that would lead to the redemption of humankind.

2. Jesus’ death was for us. (v. 16b-24)

Jesus endured the awful death by crucifixion to pay the penalty for our sin. Jesus was completely sinless and didn’t deserve to die. But His death was foretold in Scripture. The events that took place were all fulfillments of Old Testament prophecies concerning the coming Savior, the Messiah.

Crucifixion was the most cruel death the Romans could devise. They reserved crucifixion for the most serious of crimes. The Romans didn't invent crucifixion. It was originally used by the Assyrians and Babylonians. The Romans, however, refined the punishment. Their goal was to inflict as much pain and blood loss as possible before crucifixion, but just to the point of death. Then they would let the victim hang on the cross in terrible pain until they could no longer breathe. Rest assured of this fact: Jesus endured the pain of the cross for you and for me.

3. Jesus' death completed the work of salvation. (v. 28-30)

Jesus endured the pain of the cross and the agony of crucifixion for as long as He needed to until all of Scripture related to God's plan for salvation had been accomplished. Verse 28 makes it clear that Jesus was still understanding all that was taking place. He knew that all the Scripture was fulfilled.

When Jesus said, "It is finished," He meant that the work necessary for salvation—God's redemptive plan—was completed. He had done everything He had to do in order to provide the gift of salvation to you and me. To be complete means there was nothing else that needed to be added to what He had done.

Yet, we still try to earn salvation by our works, don't we? What could we do that would be greater than what Jesus has already done for us? The penalty of sin is death. Either you can pay the penalty, or you can accept the price that Jesus paid for you in His death.

Conclusion: The crucifixion of Jesus, while carried out by Romans soldiers under Pilate's authority, was God's plan. God was in control of all of the events of Jesus' death. Jesus' death was for all of humanity, even though it was over 2,000 years ago. And Jesus' death completed—fully—the work of salvation. There is nothing that you need to do, or can do, to earn your salvation. Jesus paid the price for you. Forgiveness of your sins is possible because Jesus died for your sins.

Author Bio: Rick Prall is a senior curriculum specialist with Ramsey Solutions and an ordained minister. He has served churches in California, Oklahoma, Texas, and Tennessee and has written Bible study curriculum material for over 30 years. Rick has been married to Helene for 37 years and they have two grown and married children and two wonderful granddaughters. Rick and Helene have a passion for international missions and have served in many countries together; they are members of Gladeville Baptist Church.