

Why did Jesus die?

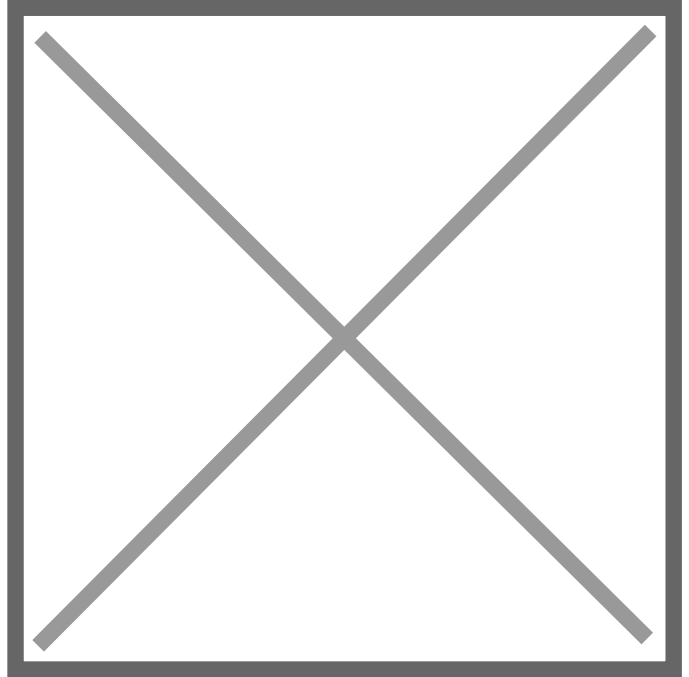
by Beth Desplancke, Captain –

Every Easter, as we celebrate our Savior's death and resurrection, the question comes up, "Why did Jesus have to die?" The crucifixion was gruesome, painful, excruciating and bloody. Why did God allow such an awful event for us? The answer can be found in four words: "Guilty! Imprisoned! Sick! Isolated!"

God declares we are "Guilty!" All of humanity is in God's courtroom—all on trial for the same crime—sin. Romans 3:23 tells us that "everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standards" (NLT). God declares us guilty and the sentence is death. However, God is a gracious judge and he paid the price for our sin. "Yet God, with undeserved kindness, declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins" (Romans 3:24). Christ's cross declares us "Innocent!"

God declares we are "Imprisoned!" Due to our sin, we have been captured, and no matter what we do we cannot escape our bondage. Christ paid the price for our release. "For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And the ransom he paid was not mere gold or silver. It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God" (1 Peter 1:18-19). The price for our sin was death, and with his blood he paid it for each one of us. Because of his sacrifice we can be declared free. "So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death" (Romans 8:1-2). Christ's cross declares us "Freed!"

God declares we are "Sick!" Sin is a disease we inherited and we cannot heal ourselves. No matter what we do we cannot cure ourselves of this sickness. Christ came as the Great Physician to heal us of this deadly disease. Jesus said, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners" (Mark 2:17). Jesus is the only cure for our sin disease. "He was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed" (Isaiah 53:5). Christ's cross declares us "Cured!"



God declares we are “Isolated!” Envision being alone, stranded on an island, completely separated from civilization. You see a big ship in the distance but have no way to get to it. Sin is our island, and we are completely separated from God. Christ came as a life raft to get us from the island of sin to be on board God’s ship. The only way is through Jesus. “When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God’s sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God’s condemnation” (Romans 5:6, 8-9). Through Christ we are no longer stranded; we are brought near to God. Once separated from him, now he says, “Welcome aboard, my friend!” Christ’s cross declares us “Rescued!”

Why did Jesus die? The Apostle Paul explains: “For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:21). No longer guilty, but innocent. No longer imprisoned, but free. No longer sick, but cured. No longer isolated, but rescued.

What should our response be? In the Words of Philip P. Bliss:

*Man of Sorrows! what a name
For the Son of God, who came
Ruined sinners to reclaim;
Hallelujah! What a Savior!*