

# The Cross and the Son

by Roy Pointer

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*The sermon explores the profound significance of the cross in the context of Jesus' obedience, the defeat of Satan, and the redemption of humanity.*

**Duration:** 30:41

**Scripture:** Colossians 2:13

**Topics:** "The Cross", "Redemption Through Faith"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker introduces the concept of the cross as the splendid theatre of God, where the drama of salvation is enacted. The speaker also addresses the question of whether there is life on other planets, stating that while there is no evidence of life within our solar system, the vastness of the universe suggests the possibility of life elsewhere. The sermon emphasizes the need to address the injustices and unbelief in the world and encourages believers to step out and witness the triumph of beauty, light, goodness, and love. The speaker highlights the significance of Jesus' submission to the cross, explaining that it was an act of obedience to the Father and a means of redeeming mankind. The sermon concludes by emphasizing the role of believers as agents of the King, carrying the message of Jesus and bringing about positive change in the world.

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## Transcript

Last week I introduced you to the concept from John Calvin, the great French reformer, who talked of the cross as the splendid theatre of God. The image of the cross being the focus of a great spectacle, where you have the great drama of salvation being enacted, where you have God and the cross, and then the whole cosmos is the audience. The whole cosmos is watching.

And sometimes you hear the question, is there life on other planets? Well, we have not yet discovered any evidence of life on any other planet within our own solar system. The argument seems to be that with so many possibilities spread out before the vastness of the universe, surely there must be some other planet somewhere where life could exist. Well, if it does, and we have no evidence to believe that it does, but if it does, it doesn't alter a thing, because the cross is still God's splendid theatre, where the whole cosmos is still the audience.

If any other creature should exist, they would still be spectators of the spectacle, the cross. As we come to the cross, I've chosen to come and to think of the cross and the Father, the cross and the Son, the cross and the Holy Spirit, and then, as it were, to turn to the audience and say the cross and the world. Last

week we looked at the cross and the Father, and we said that the cross was the Father's initiative, it was the Father's satisfaction, and it is the Father's appeal.

And as we turn this morning to consider the cross and the Son, I've chosen my text from Luke 23, verse 33, and in fact I've chosen only a phrase within the sentence, they crucified him, they crucified him. As I try to address this subject, I'm overwhelmed by the inadequacy of human thought and speech to address this subject. How on earth can I convey this truth? How dare I to try to explore the relationship between Jesus and the cross? As we commence our study and try to understand the Lord's perspective on the cross, we need to notice first of all that he shrank from it.

He shrank from the sheer physical horror of it, and he shrank from the spiritual horror of it. For not only would he be crucified, but also he would be separated from his Father, as we know from the great cry of dereliction. In John 12, verses 27 and 28, the Lord says this, now is my heart troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour.

No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name. And then in the Garden of Gethsemane on the eve before the event, our Lord prays, Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me, yet not my will, but yours be done.

And so our Lord cringed before the cross, but they crucified him. What is crucifixion? What was it? Well, look, the physician spares us the gruesome details, but we know something of the horror. We know that a condemned man was taken, and he was nailed to the cross, that the nails were driven through the base of the hand at the wrist, and the man hung there.

We know that his feet together were nailed to the cross, and so the man tried to lift his weight from the pain of his hands, and the agony of his chest, in order to snatch a breath of air, and we know that ultimately his failing strength, his inability to raise himself, meant that he actually asphyxiated himself. We know that it was the most bestial and barbaric form of execution ever devised by the evil and depraved mind of man. Why did he submit to it? And he did submit to it.

He said to Pilate in Matthew 26, Do you think I cannot call on my father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way? He could have called ten thousand angels to destroy the world and set him free, but he did not. Lord Jesus, why surrender to the mockery of men? Why bear your back to the whip, a cat of nine tails that had at its ends either bones or lead, that would literally flail the flesh from a man's back, and often kill the victim? Lord Jesus, why did you submit to that? Why did you allow those brutal Roman soldiers to press the crown of thorns upon your brow, and spit upon your face? Lord Jesus, why did you allow them to nail you to the cross, strip you naked, and let you die in agony and shame? Why? Well, as we seek to study this, I think we have to say, first of all, he is obeying the Father. Let me turn you to that great hymn of humiliation in Philippians chapter 2, where the apostle is describing the humiliation of the Lord Jesus.

Philippians chapter 2 from verse 5, he says your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus, who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness, and being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross. Therefore God exalted him to the highest place, and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue

confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father, the great hymn of Christ's humiliation. Jesus submitted to his Father's will, he came in obedience to his Father, he left the glory of heaven, and came and was born in squalor and poverty, in the home of a poor Jewish carpenter.

At his birth he was laid in an animal's food trough. He was sent on a mission, he came in order to save his people from their sins, to be sacrificed as the sinless spotless lamb of God. Isaiah prophesying centuries before described him and said, he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

Jesus knew what lay before him, it was no secret to him. In Luke 9 22 he says, the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law, and he must be killed, and on the third day be raised to life. Then later in Luke 18 he also tells the disciples, 18 31, Jesus took the twelve aside and told them, we're going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled.

He will be handed over to the Gentiles, they will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him, and kill him, on the third day he will rise again. The disciples did not understand any of this, its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about. But Jesus knew, Jesus knew what lay before him, and yet resolutely he pressed towards Jerusalem, and even in the Garden of Gethsemane, he knew what he had to face.

Yet not my will, Father, but yours be done. And so Jesus submits to his Father's will, and submits to the plan of salvation. Voluntarily and willingly he goes to the cross.

John Stott in his book *The Cross of Christ* says this, although Jesus knew he must die, it was not because he was the helpless victim, either of evil forces arrayed against him, or of any inflexible fate decreed for him, but because he freely embraced the purpose of his Father for the salvation of sinners as it had been revealed in Scripture. This was the perspective of Jesus on his death. Despite the great importance of his teaching, his example, and his works of compassion and power, none of these were central to his mission.

What dominated his mind was not the living, but the giving of his life. We cannot sound the depths of his anguish in Gethsemane, or his agony at Golgotha. It is impossible for us to understand it all.

However, what we do know is this, that he voluntarily and willingly embraced the cross. He submitted to it out of obedience to his Father. And the Lord Jesus Christ at the cross identifies with us.

He came to earth and became one of us. And upon the cross he dies for us. He experiences our pain.

Have you never ever wondered why it is that we cannot live this life without pain? It is the way the world is. And even Christ God's Son was not exempt from it. It's a great comfort to us to know that the Lord understands.

Joni Erikson, that fine young woman, as a young teenager, playing around, an athletic young woman, dives into Chesapeake Bay and has this dreadful accident that leaves her a quadriplegic. Completely paralyzed, devastated. You've probably read her writings or seen her somewhere.

If any of you were involved in the Y Encounter last year, you would have seen her giving a marvellous testimony and a marvellous witness to Christ during that event. She's the woman who paints with her mouth and writes books. She is the woman who testifies of her devotion to Christ.

But it was some three years after her accident, still struggling with what had happened to her, still bitter, still ill at ease with it all, when her friend Cindy, speaking to her about the Lord Jesus, reading about the death of the Lord Jesus, reading about Him on the cross, said to her, Joni, why Jesus was paralyzed too. And then she realized, the Lord understands. The Lord has experienced our pain.

The Lord knows. Lord Jesus, why did you submit to the cross? Yes, you were obeying your Father, but He was also defeating Satan. The cross is the place of Satan's defeat and Christ's triumphant victory over all the powers of darkness.

Satan was dealt a death blow from which he can never recover. Turn, if you will, to Colossians chapter 2, and you read there from the Apostle something of what the Lord did at the cross in relation to Satan. Colossians chapter 2, verses 13 to 15.

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins. Having cancelled the written code with its regulation that was against us and that stood opposed to us, He took it away, nailing it to the cross.

And having disarmed the powers and the authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. And so here, the Apostle uses two pictures to describe what Christ did to Satan on the cross. He says, first of all, on the cross, the Lord dealt with our sin, cancelled and took away the debts, the sins.

And what He's doing is taking a picture from Roman law. If you were in debt, it could be posted against you if you failed to pay. And so if you were in business and you were unable to pay your debts and your creditors wanted payment, they could issue some kind of bond.

It would be written up and it would be nailed to the door and everyone would see this person is not paying their debts. The debts are against you. It's displayed.

Now this sort of thing is carried through still today. And in British maritime law, for example, when a ship is held in bond, the bond is posted, nailed to the mast. And nobody is allowed to trade with that ship.

That ship is unable to move. No person would unload it, no person would load it, no person would move it, no pilot would board it. It's bonded.

And I wonder if at St. John they bonded that Spanish ship. I know they posted a half a million dollars of bond, but I wonder if someone went on board and fixed, on the mast, a bill. Interesting how things flow through history.

But under Roman law, this indebtedness would be displayed. And what the Apostle is saying is this, that your indebtedness and my indebtedness was displayed upon the cross. And you say, but that's my indebtedness, that's my sin.

Why is it displayed upon Christ's cross? Because he's paying the price for your sin. When Jesus cried from the cross, it is finished. The Greek word tetelestai means literally the debt has been paid.

If you were in a trading arrangement and you paid your bill, then what would be written across the bill is tetelestai, the debt has been paid. Like the stamp, paid. Your debt was paid upon the cross.

And therefore Satan the accuser cannot come and say, oh I know this about her, I know this about him, and they have a debt to pay, because the debt has been paid. And therefore Satan has been disarmed. And the other picture that Paul uses is from the Roman victory parade.

And what he's saying is this, is that the Lord Jesus disarmed all the powers of darkness. The devil is disarmed and so are the demons. And they will be displayed as powerless powers.

So the Roman general, having been victorious, would lead his legions into Rome. And then behind the legions, this crowd of prisoners in chains, ready to be butchered, ready to be sent into the arena, ready to be sold into slavery. There they would all be, and the enemy general or the enemy king at the front, in all his regalia, but disarmed.

And so the apostle says, oh the powers of darkness have been defeated. They have been disarmed by Christ upon the cross. And Bishop Hanley Mull says this of the cross.

He says, his scaffold, the scaffold of Jesus from one viewpoint, but his imperial chariot from another. Can you imagine it? Here is the Lord, the king, the victor, the one who is triumphant over Satan, the devil and all his powers. And at his second coming, the great parousia, then the whole cosmos will see the spectacle of Satan and all the demonic hosts for what they really are, powerless.

Christians are pardoned and protected. Satan can attack you, but he need not overcome you if you resist the devil. He has to flee.

And so the power of sin and death is broken. Satan is defeated and dethroned. There is a legend, and it is a legend, that following the resurrection, wherever Jesus walked, flowers bloomed.

Wherever Jesus stepped, flowers bloomed. It is a wonderful picture that illustrates the truth that wherever the Lord Jesus Christ is proclaimed, wherever people turn and submit to his reign upon their lives, there is goodness, there is light, there is cleansing, there is holiness. Missionaries will tell you, they can always tell when they go into a place where the gospel has never been preached before.

We need to realize, brethren and sisters, that we are the agents of the king. And as we go forth as lights into the world, so we carry the sweetness of Jesus with us. And as we witness by our lives and by our lips, so the good news of Christ spreads abroad and things change.

And we need to realize that we have a great mission as we move out in Jesus' name. And all the powers of darkness are driven back. And my goodness, there is darkness in Fredericton.

There are children being abused, and wives being abused. There are all kinds of criminal and evil activities prevailing in our city. There's all kinds of injustice around us.

There are so many who are still lost and unbelieving. Brethren and sisters, we need to step out and see the flowers bloom. Let beauty and light and goodness and love triumph.

Jesus has defeated Satan. Why, Lord Jesus, did you submit to the cross? Yes, you were obeying your Father and you were defeating Satan. But, Lord, you were also redeeming mankind.

The cross was for Jesus a place where mankind was redeemed. Jesus said this in Mark 10, 45. The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

And John Stott in his book, *The Cross of Christ*, says this. The imagery implies that we are held in a captivity from which only the payment of a ransom can set us free. And that the ransom is nothing less than the Messiah's death.

The literal translation of the Greek is, a ransom in place of and for the sake of. And so the Lord Jesus gives himself to pay a ransom to set us free. The idea is taken from the slave market of the ancient world.

When the ransom was paid, either to purchase or free the slave. And that's what took place here. The ransom was paid.

God comes to the rescue in sending his Son. And his Son comes to the rescue in giving his life. And the debt is paid.

And the ransom is paid. And we are set free. We are no longer slaves of sin and death.

For Christ has set us free. Peter says we have not been redeemed by silver or gold. Not those corruptible things.

We have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. It cost his death upon the cross and the shedding of his precious blood flowing from the cross. Paul says, you are not your own.

You were bought with a price. Therefore honour God with your body. What are you doing with your body? Are you honouring God with it? It has been purchased by Christ.

Is it in the right place? Maybe your body should be somewhere else in the world in the name of Christ. Paul says, the life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. And Jesus said, I am the good shepherd.

I lay down my life for the sheep. And brethren and sisters, it becomes so personal. This isn't Jesus just dying for the world.

This is Jesus dying for me. Was it the nails, O Saviour, that bound thee to the tree? Nay, it was thy love, thine everlasting love for me. We are all deeply moved by the bravery of those who go to the rescue.

The helicopter pilot who takes his helicopter in the most dangerous of conditions and risks his life and his crew's life and then tragically they are all killed. The lifeboat crewmen who go out in the fiercest storm and sacrifice their lives. The man who leaps into the river to save his son and is lost.

We are all thrilled by the heroism. Are you thrilled by the heroism of Christ who dies for you? To rescue you and save you and pay a ransom that sets you free. Jesus, why did you go to the cross? Why did you submit to such humiliation and pain? Jesus would reply, I was obeying my father.

I was defeating Satan. I was redeeming you. Let us pray.

Lord Jesus, as we come this Easter and remember your sacrifice upon the cross, bring each and every one of us to the foot of the cross. Maybe, Lord, it would be for the very first time for some here this morning, they have never yet yielded to you. They have never yet realized it was for you, it was for them you died.

That, Lord, you died in their place and for their sin. They have never yet, Lord, come to that place of opening their hearts to receive you by faith. Lord, I pray that if there are any here this morning, that they will come and yield to you.

For all of us, Lord, we need to come back to the cross time and time again. Calvary needs to be a familiar place. And the foot of the cross is the most appropriate place for us to live.

Help us each one, O Lord, to prostrate ourselves at the foot of your cross. And not to lift our heads until you touch us and receive us. Thank you, Lord, that it is at the cross that we find cleansing and the burdens roll away.

It is at the cross, Lord, that we begin and continue to live the Christian life. Lord Jesus, bring each one of us to the cross where you died for us. We pray in your holy name.

Amen. Amen.

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