

Message #1051
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"WHY DID JESUS HAVE TO DIE?"
{Isaiah 53}

Trinity Presbyterian Church
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Suppose you saw a colony of ants building their hill in the middle of a road. They'd have no clue that what they were doing was putting them in grave danger. From your perspective, however, you could immediately assess the situation, see the danger and know the proper corrective action to assure their safety and well being. You could do all that in an instant, but now how could you possibly communicate that to them? If you approached them they'd fear you, a threatening gargantuan, even more than they would the imminent danger that they faced from impending traffic. If you picked them up and moved them they would only be confused and terrified, learn nothing of the error of their ways and resume what they had started as soon as you left them alone. How could you relate to them? How could you save them? The only real way to help them would be to come to them as an ant yourself, a member of their own colony. Only then would you share a common language to use as a basis for communication. Only then could you even approach them without being regarded as a predatory threat or a tasty meal. Only then could you describe the problem they faced in terms that would make sense to them. As an ant, you wouldn't have all your human capabilities, but your insight into ant life would undoubtedly be quite amazing to them. Some would listen, heed your warning and seek a new life off the broad path of the pavement. Some would undoubtedly scoff at your description of things unknown to them; people, cars, and highways. Whether or not they listened, at least you would have done the best you could to save them while still preserving their freedom of choice.

God faced a similar dilemma in communicating with those whom He created. If He were to appear before us as the omnipotent and omniscient God, we would live in absolute terror. So, what did He do? He came to us as one of our own, God in human form, as Jesus Christ.

"IN THE BEGINNING"

We read in the Book of Genesis that following the work of creation that...

"God saw all that He had made, and it was VERY good!" {1:31a}

Those whom God had created enjoyed the blessing of God...

...God communicated with them and they with Him

...there was harmony between the Creator and the created

...He gave them rule over every living creature

...He supplied their every need

...God took care of them

...what an incredible relationship they shared

God placed them in the Garden of Eden where it was paradise on earth.

There was only one condition...

"You are free to eat from any tree in the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it, you will surely die!"

{1:16b-17}

But, you know the story...

...they were tempted by the serpent
...they doubted God
...and they ate from the fruit from the forbidden tree...
... and, they were evicted from the garden--estranged from their Creator
And...they were infected with a deadly disease far worse than cancer, heart problems, AIDS, any plague that's ever existed. This disease infected...and affected...them...their family...and every person since them. The disease...SIN!
Because of SIN a chasm came between God and mankind.
...everyone is infected
...Adam died
...and since everyone dies!
And, God who loves those whom He created--which He declared as "good"--has tried throughout history to communicate and bridge the gap!
...but how?

GOD'S EFFORTS TO COMMUNICATE

He called out a man called Abraham...
...promised to bless him and all his descendants
...yet it ended in division
...and the chasm grew
He called out to Moses...
...who led God's people from slavery
...yet they rebelled and complained against God
...and the gap increased
God sent them the Law...
...yet it was broken even before it was presented
...and people turned to other gods
...and the gulf widened
He sent the Prophets who foretold of One whom God would send to bridge the gap...but...
...they were scoffed at...
...beaten...
...killed
...and the breach broadened
There was but one way for God to resolve this...

HE SENT HIS ONLY SON JESUS TO BRIDGE THE CHASM

The Bible says--
"When the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights as His sons and daughters." {Galatians 5:4}
"He who was with God in the beginning, through whom all things were made...became flesh and lived for a while among us..." {From John 1:2,3b,14a}
"God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him..." {John 3:17}
And God's Son came to offer life...life abundantly to all! {John 10:10} An alternative to the death sentence. Incredible! The Bible says--"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." {Romans 6:23}
Isn't that amazing? Knowing our incapability to save ourselves, God through His mercy and His grace resolves the situation for us! This is overwhelming! Try to imagine someone who has been declared guilty for a crime they had committed and

the judge orders the individual to pay a \$1,000 fine.
...the person has no money
...they plead for the mercy of the court
...yet, justice had to be served.
...the judge could not just set the person free
...the judge demands the fine to be paid...however, at that moment, he steps down from his place of authority...went to the clerk and paid the \$1,000 from his own pocket
...the penalty had to be paid--so the judge paid it. God in His mercy...in His grace...in His love sent Jesus--His only son to serve as the bridge over the troubled waters.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life!" {John 3:16}

"We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all!" {Isaiah 53:6}

"You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die; but, God demonstrates His own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us!" {Romans 5:6-8}

WHY DID JESUS HAVE TO DIE?

Payment had to be made for sin...

...someone had to bridge the gap between God and man

...someone had to communicate the message of God's grace

...someone had to demonstrate God's unconditional love for the world

"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us!" {1 John 3:16}

"God is love! This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." {1 John 4:8b-10}

Why did Jesus have to die? To pay for our sins...

...mine

...yours

On the cross Jesus cried out, "It is finished!"

...original text: "Tetelestai"

...commercial word meaning: "It is paid: the debt is paid!"

Remember: "The wages of sin is death..." but Jesus says, "Tetelestai! The debt is paid!" It is paid by His PASSION on the cross! "The wages of sin is death...but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

CONCLUSION

God, through His Son, Jesus, offers you the free gift of eternal life...

...the chasm has been spanned

...you can be in a right relationship with God

...you have been bought from slavery of sin by Jesus' blood

...you can be forgiven of every sin

...you can have access to God

...you can have peace with God

...you can be adopted into the family of God.

...you can have eternal life

How? Receive the free gift by faith--

...not just intellectually

...not temporally

...but trusting faith

Will you receive God's gift to you this morning?

...the gift of grace...

...the gift of love

...the gift of God's Son!