



EASTER SERIES 2024

WHY DID JESUS COME TO DIE?

PART 1

WEEK 1 | 1 JOHN 4:7-12
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This morning, Friday evening, and next Sunday, we will divert from our 1 Timothy series and focus on trying to answer the question, "Why did Jesus come to die?" Clearly, we will not be able to explain why He did this in three messages. Still, I think it is important to understand what Jesus did through the events that make up what we refer to as Good Friday and Easter and why He did them. The atoning work of Christ is a marvelous mystery. As we have said before, it is something simple enough that a child can believe, yet, at the same time, complex enough that it intrigues and baffles the minds of the greatest scholars and thinkers. This morning, we will see that **Jesus came to die to show the depths of God's love for sinners and create a people capable of loving as He loves.**

God loves and is love. (vv.7-8)

A constant theme in Scripture is the love of God. While it is evident from front to back that God loves mankind, one of the great mysteries of the Bible is how God can love humanity the way He does. In the book of Genesis, we see that the man and woman God created in His image and likeness shared a special place in His heart. This is demonstrated in His unique relationship with them compared with the rest of creation. He talked to them and told them who they were and what they were to do as He walked in fellowship with them. Even after they rebelled against Him, He continued to show love through both mercy and grace. Scripture is clear and attests to the reality that God loves us.

The word for love most used in the New Testament is "agape." It is a special kind of love that originates with God, defined as an *act of will that seeks the highest good of the one it loves*. It is different from other types of love in the fact that it isn't based upon attraction, feelings, or what one receives, but rather is a love that acts decisively, seeking to give selflessly and sacrificially, offering the best for the one who is loved. This kind of love is not passive but rather active and is the kind of love God has, is, and grants to us.

This is not because man is lovable but because God is love. This is where love originates, and it flows from God because God is love (1 John 4:7-8). The reason we know what love is and experience it is because God loves us.

How do we know that God loves us? (Vv. 9-10)

A question often asked is, "How do I know that God loves me?" The first and easiest reason I can give you is because God has said so. This might sound trivial, but it is not. Because God is true, and in Him is no falsehood; when He speaks, He means it. When God says He

loves us, there should be no doubt because God does not lie. The question, however, is not to be dismissed and stems from the reality that all of us have heard the words "I love you" yet later found that not to be true. After all, talk is cheap. We ultimately understand love not on the basis of what is said but what it gives. The depth of love is determined by the depth of what it gives, and in this regard, it is clear that there is no greater love given to men than the love God gives. In verses 9 and 10, we see God's love displayed in two clear ways. The first is the sending of Jesus, His one and only Son, to earth (the incarnation) in order that we might live through Him. This act, by which God the Father sends the Son to earth, taking on human form and identifying completely with mankind, speaks to what God is willing to give. There is nothing greater that God could give to show His love, as He gives His very best. We are able to live through Jesus' life because He lived the life that we were incapable of living in our place.

The depth of God's love doesn't stop there, however. Not only did Jesus come to earth to live, but ultimately to die. Verse 10 states clearly that God sent Jesus to be "the atoning sacrifice for our sins." The word for atoning sacrifice is *propitiation*, which means to "appease or satisfy." What must be satisfied is God's rightful wrath toward our sin. In order for sinners to be freed from God's wrath, a price must be paid. This idea is not exclusive to Christian thinking. Other religions are filled with ways that sacrifices must be made in order to appease their gods. What sets Christianity apart is the willingness of God to provide the needed sacrifice to appease His own wrath. The depth of God's love is revealed in His willingness to send Jesus to earth and, at the same time, Jesus' willingness to come to earth to live and die for sinful humanity. If love is truly measured in what it gives and sacrifices, there is no greater love given.

Loved in order to love - (vv.7, 11-12)

Jesus came to reveal the depths of God's love for sinful mankind and also to create a people who are now able to love as He loves. Love comes from God. The reason it exists is because God is love. While love exists in the world today, it is not the same type of love that God has and is. Most of the love we talk about in the world is selfish rather than selfless. It is love based on mere feelings or what one gets, which is why it comes and goes so carelessly. We have reduced love to fleeting feelings, attraction, or a form of sexual gratification. Because we have experienced the love of God in Christ Jesus and been made new, we are now a people who are created and called to love as God loves, forsaking the cheap definition of love that the world has.

We are to love one another as this is the true sign of being Jesus' disciples (John 13:35) and to love the world as God loves the world. As Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:14, it is the love of Christ that compels him to see people differently and desire to make Christ known in the world. A true sign that we have experienced the love of God and understand the love of God is in our ability and desire to love others. Jesus came to show the depth of God's love and create a people who now love as He loves.

