

June 27, 2017

Dear Grace Church Family and Friends,

*Why did Jesus die?*

That's the second question from our summer preaching series: Questions of Faith, and it's a tough one. People have been wrestling with the question for centuries, and there is whole theological discipline dedicated to articulating answers.

The most common response is: Jesus died to save us from our sins; or, at least, words to that effect, but that answer only leads to more questions, like: *How? How does Jesus' death save us from our sins?*

The truth is it's all a bit of mystery. We know Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection reconcile us to God, once and for all, but we don't know how it works, which is why we often use the term *paschal mystery* in referring to those events of Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

I guess the two points I would want to make are: one, something needed to be done to reunite us with God, because so often we separate ourselves from God, by choosing our ways over God's ways; and, two, Jesus chose to die for us, because Jesus loved us that much, and he knew God was working through him to bring about our healing, wholeness and salvation.

Rowan Williams, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, puts it this way:

*Something needed to reverse the flow, to break the cycle [of sin]. Fearlessness in giving has to find its place at the heart of things, within the world of human exchange and interaction. It is only a tangible historical act, a human act that can break through all this, yet human beings, caught up in the cycle of rejection and defense, are not human enough to perform it. So, we begin to see the outline of an answer to the question about why the life, the identity, of Jesus is needed. Only a human word, a human act will heal the process of human history; it isn't ideas and ideals that will do this, but some moment in history when relations are changed for good and all...*

See you in church,  
*Andrew*