

# Christ Crucified

by Charles Price

---

*This sermon delves into the profound significance of the crucifixion in Christianity, exploring the brutal nature of crucifixion as a form of capital punishment and the divine plan behind Jesus' sacrifice. It emphasizes the concept of Jesus as a substitute, taking on the sins of humanity to reconcile God's justice and mercy. The message highlights the transformative power of understanding the cross and the freedom and forgiveness it offers to those who acknowledge their need for a Savior.*

**Scripture:** Isaiah 53:5, Romans 3:25, 1 Peter 2:24, Romans 5:8, John 3:16

**Topics:** "Crucifixion", "Divine Sacrifice"

---

## Description

This sermon delves into the profound significance of the crucifixion in Christianity, exploring the brutal nature of crucifixion as a form of capital punishment and the divine plan behind Jesus' sacrifice. It emphasizes the concept of Jesus as a substitute, taking on the sins of humanity to reconcile God's justice and mercy. The message highlights the transformative power of understanding the cross and the freedom and forgiveness it offers to those who acknowledge their need for a Savior.

---

## Transcript

Why does such a barbaric act lie at the very heart of the Christian message? Why every time you see a church, do you see a cross? Why does Paul, writing in the New Testament, say, they may never boast except in the cross? Why boast about such an evil act? Crucifixion was a particularly terrible way to die. It's a form of capital punishment invented by the Phoenicians and then later adopted by the Romans as their means of putting to death slaves and the lowest types of criminals, though very rarely a Roman citizen, designed to be slow, designed to be painful. The victim of crucifixion ultimately, or usually, died of exhaustion eventually.

Sometimes ropes, in the case of Jesus, nails secured him in place. The nails in Jesus' hands, more likely his wrists and his feet, would be careful to avoid any major artery as that would speed up the process of dying. And the whole point of crucifixion was a slow, lingering, painful death.

And the weight of the victim's body would stretch him. And in order to breathe, he'd have to pull his weight up with his arms and push with his feet so that his lungs could expand sufficiently to breathe. And then he could exhale and slump back down again.

And every attempt to breathe would be painful and draw on his strength until eventually the strength diminished and a man would die, usually of asphyxia. He would simply be unable to breathe anymore. A strong man could remain many hours, sometimes days, on a cross.

And to speed up the process, the victim's legs would be broken, thus preventing them being able to push, leaving only just a pull with what was left of the energy in their arms. And usually then they would die of suffocation in a matter of minutes. There were other factors in crucifixion that contributed to death, including heart failure, sometimes an excessive loss of blood, not through the cross, but through the treatment prior to the crucifixion, where their body would be ripped through the cross, whipping and beating.

As it said in the passage we had read tonight, his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man. His form marred beyond human likeness. You had to look twice to know it was a man on the cross.

What was it all about? Why does Paul say, I will glory in such a barbaric act? Why does he say, I'm not ashamed of the cross? You would think that he would be. You would think that we, the whole of humanity, should be ashamed of such barbarism. What actually happened that day outside the city of Jerusalem? Well, there'd be many theories as to the meaning of the cross.

I want to tell you what I find to be most consistent with the Scripture and what is most transforming when we understand it. Read to us so well earlier from Isaiah 53, let me read again some verses written 700 years before Christ was ever born. When Isaiah writes, surely he took our infirmities and carried our sorrows.

He was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. The punishment that brought us peace was on him by his wounds.

We are healed. We all like sheep have gone astray. Each of us has turned to his own way.

And the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us. Oh, did you notice six times there? He speaks of Jesus as our substitute. Our infirmities, our sorrows, our transgressions, our iniquities, our punishment, the iniquity of us all, our iniquities.

Of course, there were human factors that led to the crucifixion of Jesus. We know the factors that built up to this climax in the days preceding the actual crucifixion. But behind all of that was a divine plan.

God had already revealed it in passages such as this. What the cross was about is this. Two things in the heart of God demanded the cross.

His justice and his mercy. God is just. God is merciful.

The problem with those two qualities are they're actually incompatible with each other. You can't be just and mercy at the same time. They're in conflict.

If you were caught speeding through Keswick, if you could manage to pick up enough speed, and you were brought before the local magistrates court, the magistrates, understanding what has happened, declares you guilty, then has a choice of one of two things. They can either exercise and fine you and put three points on your license, or they can exercise mercy and say, I know you don't live here, you're a southerner, you're not used to these kind of roads, you come from Chichester or somewhere remote like

that, I'll let you go free. But what the magistrate cannot do is both.

They cannot exercise justice at the same time extend mercy. You see, justice and mercy are only compatible when there's the introduction of a third party into the scenario. So someone comes into the court, magistrate, is obligated to deal with you justly, says I fine you 100 pounds, three points off your license.

Somebody comes into the courtroom and says very, very simple, doesn't do full justice to the cross, but it's simple and I want to be tonight. He comes into the courtroom and pays you 100 pounds, makes a check in his name on his checkbook, signs his signature, pays it to the court. The records of the courtroom say this, gives your name, the accusation speeding in Keswick, the result guilty, fined 100 pounds, paid.

You actually walk out of the courtroom having not paid a penny. You're the recipient of mercy only because a third party has stood in your place and paid your fine. It's simple to the point of being simplistic, but it contains truth that lies at the very heart of the Christian message that Jesus Christ was your substitute.

God as a holy God, as a just God declares the soul that sins shall die. God is also incredibly kind and merciful, but they're incompatible when a man is found guilty, when a woman is found guilty before God. So the Lord Jesus stepped into the courtroom and his physical death with all its agony was to some extent symbolic of the real agony of the cross.

When he who knew no sin was made to be sin, he endured the consequence of sin, which is separation, death, separation from the Father. He cried, my God, why has that forsaken me? Not as a cry of despair. You see, they didn't have psalm numbers in those days, they knew the psalms by their opening line.

The opening line of Psalm 22 is, my God, my God, why has that forsaken me? And as Jesus cried that from the cross, he was saying in effect, Psalm 22, Psalm 22, if anybody had gone away that day and gone down to the temple or the local tabernacle, the local synagogue, taken the scroll, Psalm 22 began to read the Lord, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Their hair would have stood on end of what they read. They would have read this, I'm a worm and not a man, scorned by men, despised by the people. All who see me mock me.

They hurl insults, shaking their heads. He trusts in the Lord, let the Lord rescue him. Let the Lord deliver him since he delights in him.

I am poured out like water, all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax. It was melted away within me.

My strength is dried up like a potsherd. My tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth. You lay me in the dust of death.

Dogs have surrounded me. A band of evil men has encircled me. They have pierced my hands and my feet.

I can count all my bones. People stare and gloat over me. They divide my garments among them and cast lots of my clothing.

And reading that written a thousand years ago, you would have said that's exactly what I've witnessed. That's today's newspaper record of what's just taken place. What was Jesus saying? My God, why have you forsaken me? Yes, I'm enduring the agony of separation from my father, being made sin.

But it is no accident. It was written a thousand years ago in Psalm 22. God in his divine plan was giving his son.

Because were you and I to pay the consequence of our own guilt, we would have no hope, no future, no confidence. But because he died, the just for the unjust, he extends mercy. When you and I come to God in acknowledgement of our sin, we don't appeal to his mercy.

Though we are the recipients of his mercy, we may appeal to his justice. John writes in his epistle, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins. Isn't that incredible? God is just, says John when he forgives you.

Why? For the same reason the magistrate could not come after you and say you didn't pay for this fine comeback. No, the penalty is paid by a substitute. You're free.

That's why to be forgiven by God is called in scripture to be justified. The word justified is related to justice. It's a legal term.

It's to say that men and women, boys and girls, though by nature and by action guilty, stand as though they never did it. Do you know one of the greatest psychological needs that people have is the need to be forgiven? I was driving my car one day down the motorway listening to a discussion with a psychiatrist who was the chief psychiatrist of a hospital in Scotland. What he said caused me to pull off the motorway and write down what he'd said so I wouldn't forget it and lose it.

He said this, if my patients could be assured of forgiveness, half of them could go home tomorrow. It wasn't a Christian speaking, that was a psychiatrist speaking. At the root cause of the people with whom I deal whose lives have broken down, he says, is guilt.

The marvelous thing is you can come to the cross of Jesus Christ and be clean. Many of us are Christians here tonight, of course. Do you know one of the biggest needs amongst Christians is to go on being cleansed and to know they're cleansed? I meet so many who live with a sense of condemnation and guilt because they've done the same thing again and again and again.

There's some wonderful pictures in the Bible as to what God does with our sins and pictures sometimes leave the best impressions in our minds. Let me give you some. Psalm 103, as far as the east is from the west, so far as he removed our transgressions from us.

He doesn't say as far as the north is from the south. The north and south are fixed points. If you're to go north in a straight line, it won't be long before you pass over the north pole and begin to go south.

But if you go east, you keep going around the world, you never begin to go west. If you go west, you keep going around the world, you never begin to go east. As far as the east is from the west says David infinity, God removes our transgressions from us.

He says in Isaiah, you put all of my sins behind your back. That's an interesting statement. If God is omnipresent, meaning if God is in all places all the time, where is there such a place as to be behind his

back? It doesn't exist.

That's where he puts our sins, where they don't exist. I love that statement Isaiah 43, your sins and your iniquities I will remember no more. It doesn't mean God forgets.

He's not forgetful. He remembers everything about us. I mean he doesn't forget anything about us, but he remembers no more.

I'll never again bring it up, bring it, bring you to account. I wish we could really believe that. I think some of us a bit like a couple of boys I heard about one day, a couple of brothers have been fighting all day and it came time to go to bed at night and their mother went to tuck them in, tried to appeal to the old of the two boys, said you've been fighting your brother all day today, why don't you make up with him before you go to sleep? He said I'm not going to make up with him, it's his fault, he hit me first.

She said but you need to forgive him. I'm not going to forgive him, it's his fault, he needs to forgive me. So she tried to appeal to his sentiment a little bit and said just suppose if during the night your brother died, wouldn't you be sorry in the morning if you hadn't forgiven him? So the boy thought for a moment and said all right, I'll forgive him, but if he's alive in the morning.

I think sometimes we have this fear, yes God cleanses, but what about the morning? Do you know what it says in Romans 8 verse 1? There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, no condemnation. Listen, whenever you sense a condemnation for your sin, it is never God who condemns you, it is always the devil who condemns, because we're told in Revelation chapter 12 that Satan is the accuser of the brethren. Satan accuses.

You see God speaks about our sin and the devil speaks about our sin, but there's a huge difference. When God speaks about our sin, he convicts. When the devil speaks about our sin, he condemns.

Condemnation is like a wet blanket, it sits on you and you can't move. Conviction makes us aware of our sin, but whenever the Holy Spirit convicts of our sin, he always points us to the cross of Christ and shows us the way out. He convicts us of our sin, not to rub our nose in our own dirt, not to condemn us, not to humiliate us, but to liberate us and forgive us.

And it's a marvelous thing to know that though I don't deserve it, and we don't, you can say thank you Lord Jesus Christ, I'm clean. Despite my past, despite my history, despite the things that are true of me, thank you so much, I'm clean. But it's not automatic.

We have to respond. The New Testament says the Christian life is like marriage. It says that Christ is like the bridegroom and his church, Christians are like a bride.

And a marriage you see is a mutual agreement, where the bridegroom and the bride together submit themselves to one another when a marriage takes place. The bridegroom is asked the question, will you take this woman to be your lawfully wedded wife to look after and hang on to? I've forgotten what the words are. It's 18 years since I last said them, since the only time I've said them.

And he answers, I will. Then he turns to the bride and says, will you take this man to be your lawfully wedded husband to love and cherish and so on? And she says, I will. And then he says, I now pronounce you man and wife.

If I can say this reverently, there was a day when the father looked on his son stretched out on a Roman cross, his back whipped, a crown of thorns on his head, the blood and the spittle trickling down his face, the hairs of his chin have been ripped out, disfigured beyond that of human form, we're told. And he said, will you take these men, these women, these boys, these girls in successive generations? Will you cleanse them? Will you give them the gift of your Holy Spirit to live within them? Will you give them the assurance of eternal life and love them? And from the cross Lord Jesus was saying, I will. That doesn't make a marriage.

He turns to you tonight, maybe some of you here tonight and says, will you take this Jesus to be your savior? Will you repent of your sin, your independence? Will you love him? Will you allow him to enter your life? And will you submit to him as your Lord? And you say, I will. And the marriage is enacted. Is this a key? The little girl asked her father.

Is this cross a key? Yes, it is. It's the key to life. It's the key to eternity.

It's the key to security. It's the key to forgiveness. It's the key to go into bed at night and put your head on the pillow and saying, despite my failures, I'm clean.

You ever taken the key? The message of the cross at Paul is foolishness to those who perish. It's foolishness to those who are saved. It is the power of God.

And I know that most of us here tonight know the Lord Jesus Christ, but there will be some of us and you don't in a personal way. You may go through the forms, the rituals associated with the church and those are good. They're right that they can become a substitute for the individual submission of your life to Jesus Christ.

It isn't just a Sunday event, but live every day in humility and obedience and dependency. We're going to sing a final song and I'm going to ask you to make this your prayer. We heard it already this evening against that powerful drama that we saw when I surveyed the wondrous cross.

That hymn says, see from his head, his hands, his feet, sorrow and love flow, mingle down. Then it responds at the end, love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all. Will you sing that in a fresh way tonight? Some of you need to come back to the cross.

You've grown stale and distant. Others for the first time, we're going to help you at the end of this meeting. Just come to the platform and speak to one of us.

Just help you to be sure of this. But let's sing this hymn. I think we remain seated and just sing it thoughtfully, allowing the words to Become our words when I survey the wondrous cross.

---

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/vjs2Mth27bc.mp4>  
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/charles-price/christ-crucified/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**