

The Life and Death of Jesus

Intro: The difficulty of this lesson is making these truths relate to our everyday lives. What does it mean that Jesus “became flesh”? What does it mean that He died for us?

1. Jesus' Human Life in Perspective

- A. **Illus:** The quality of life in Russia. Willing to give up USA to live there?
- B. The Creator comes to the creation (Jn 1:3, 10):
 - 1. All belonged to Him by virtue of creation but He personally appropriated very little. Supported by benevolent offerings (Lk 8:1-3); no fixed residence (Lk 9:58); rode into Jerusalem on borrowed donkey (Mt 21:2-6).
 - 2. Status – Took on form of servant, not prince, statesman or aristocrat (Ph 2:5-8). He was from backwater Galilee; conception bore adulterous stigma; no formal education; tradesman; associated with outcasts, undesirables.
- C. Divine spirit in human form. Just being “*in the likeness of sinful flesh*” (Rom 8:3) suggests a condescension unfathomable to us.
 - 1. Physically unremarkable (Is 53:2).
 - 2. Subject to effects, limitations of earthly conditions (illness, temperature, hunger, exertion, etc.); confined by laws of nature (except on miraculous occasions, but these not whimsical); not extensively traveled.
 - 3. In such a form **Jesus experienced temptation**, something foreign to God in His pure, divine state (Jas 1:13; Heb 4:15). Perhaps the greatest temptation involved this very disrespect for who He truly was: “*if You are the Son of God*” is hurled at Him in the wilderness (Mt 4:3, 6) and on the cross (Mt 27:40).

2. Jesus' Death in Perspective

- A. Making abstract into concrete: John 3:16.
 - 1. Abstract – “*For God so loved ...*”.
 - 2. Concrete – “*That He gave His only begotten Son*”.
 - 3. Response – “*Whoever believes ...*”.
- B. Principles that we must come to terms with:

1. In sin we were hopelessly condemned to eternal doom (Eph 2:1-3; Rom 5:6-10). Man ruined everything God made and rebelled against His laws. We all at times have shown utter contempt and disregard for our Creator.
 2. God had the only solution but was not obligated to offer it (Rom 11:34-36). The wages of sin is death, and God had every right to impose the penalty.
 3. To provide the solution would cost God an inconceivable price. *God, Himself, must suffer the penalty of death.* We do not need to understand the “mechanics” of this; simply, transgression requires death (Heb 9:22).
 4. God was willing to accept a vicarious offering on behalf of the sins of all mankind (Rom 3:23-25; Heb 9:11-14; 23-26).
 5. The price having been paid by Jesus, we are obligated to live for Him (Gal 2:20).
- C. **Illus:** Child caught in serious misdeed. Father made child spank *him*. To strike one's own parent for offense was more traumatic than any punishment inflicted.

3. The Everyday Significance of Christ's Life and Death

- A. Every day is a new, fresh beginning.
- B. Every day presents joy of living with unburdened conscience.
- C. Every day a proper self-image is reinforced. I am valuable to God, but by virtue of my accomplishments but the humble exercise of faith.
- D. Every day I am reminded of the hope of heaven. This keeps my earthly existence in perspective.
- E. Every day I appreciate the spiritual significance of the church. Jesus did not die for a social agency but a spiritual body devoted to the salvation of souls.

Conclusion: Modern churches downplay the sinfulness of man and the need for a dying Savior who sacrificed Himself for their salvation. Instead, they offer recreation, secular education, physical fitness and other amusements. They play upon man's carnal appetites and tastes and seek to indulge man's need for approval and self-esteem. The death of Jesus stands in stark contrast to such a carnal view of the gospel. We must keep preaching that **men are lost in sin** and will be saved only by a Savior who sacrificed Himself.