

How and Why Did Christ Suffer and Die?

[1 Peter 2:22-25](#)

1 Peter, Day 12

He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

- 1 Peter 2:22-25, ESV

When you hear that someone accomplished something really amazing, you usually have two questions about it: How did he do it and why?

On my flight to Uganda for a mission trip last month, I watched the documentary *Free Solo*, about Alex Honnold's free solo climb of El Capitan in Yosemite. Alex's feat was one of the most amazing, scary, incredible things I've ever seen anyone do. It was incredible to see how he did it, methodically and quickly. It was also fascinating to try to understand why he would do it, what would drive him to risk his life for such feats.

Well, the greatest thing anyone has ever done in the history of the world, far greater than Alex's free solo of El Capitan, was the death of the Jesus Christ on a cross outside the walls of Jerusalem almost 2,000 years ago. Alex's climb may have inspired many people to rethink what human beings are capable of doing, but Jesus' death on the cross changed the world forever, including the lives of millions and millions of people.

Jesus did not have to die. He chose to. Knowing how He chose to die and why He did it deepens our understanding of God, of ourselves, and our lives in the world and in eternity.

Jesus died humbly, gently, willingly and sinlessly. "*He committed no sin.*" That's a statement that could not be made about anyone else in the history of the world. Everyone sins, all the time. Not Jesus. He never sinned, not even once. And yet He quietly and willingly submitted Himself to death on a cross, a death He did not deserve.

So, why did He do it? 1 Peter 2:24 tells us in simple, clear language: "*He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.*" Even though Jesus had never sinned against God, we know that we have all sinned. Our sins stand against us as a clear record of our wrongdoing that deserves just punishment. But we cannot bear that punishment, for it would bring us eternal death, separation from God forever. So, Jesus took our sins upon Himself.

If Jesus had been a mere man - even a sinless man - He could not have borne all of our sins in His body. It would have been too much for anyone to bear. The fact that He could bear all of the sins of all of God's people for all time shows that He is the Son of God.

What was Jesus accomplishing by taking our sins upon Himself? It wasn't just to take our punishment, though that was a large part of it. He also died to set us free from the tyranny of sin over us. He died to break the power of sin as a curse hanging around the necks of His people. He died that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

Finally, Jesus died to bring us back to God. He died to reconcile us to our estranged Heavenly Father and bring us back into the fold of God's sheep. His death is so powerful because it removes the punishment of sin, breaks the enslaving power of sin, and brings wayward sheep back to God. Nothing short of the death of the Son of God could have accomplished this for us. Knowing He was willing to do this for us should overwhelm us with the power of the love of God and cause us to hate sin and love Jesus more deeply day-by-day as we walk with Him and worship Him.