

Why God sent Jesus

Part 3 – Discovering from Jesus what the Father is all about

In Jesus' last recorded prayer, he prays to his Father in **John 17:4**, "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do." His closing words in that prayer explain clearly what that "work" was too, **verse 26**, "I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them, and that I myself may be in them."

Jesus came to make his Father known. "I have revealed you" he prayed in **verse 6**, and you can almost hear his pleasure when he says in **verse 7**, "Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you." His disciples now understood that the Father was behind everything Jesus had said and done, and that was what counted.

Notice where Jesus' focus was? It was on his Father. Everything he did revealed his Father. Why? Because, **verse 3**, "this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God." Jesus was speaking from an eternity of knowing the Father, and that was his conclusion – that there's nothing greater or more wonderful for all eternity than knowing God. "Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you," he prayed in **verse 25**, and what Jesus knew of his Father was so marvelous that it's *still* his life's work and pleasure to reveal his Father to us, **verse 26** – "I have made you known to them and will continue to make you known."

This is what Jesus lived for, still lives for - and what he died for as well - and by the time John wrote **1 John 5:20** it was clear the church was beginning to understand this about Jesus too, for "We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true." John now understood clearly what it was that Jesus had come for: it was to help us know the Father. And why is that so important? Because to know the Father is to love him, **1 John 4:19** – "We love because he first loved us." When we see the Father as he truly is, that's the starting point for us *seeking* a relationship with him – the relationship with God that Jesus also came to reveal (as mentioned in Part 1).

So that's what Jesus prayed for, that we know the Father "in order that the love you have for me may be in them," **John 17:26**. It was Jesus' ultimate goal for us, that we experience the love of the Father just as he does. This is the "glory" Jesus experiences that he so dearly wants us to experience; it's the love of the Father that Jesus has always known, **verse 24**. To Jesus, there's no greater glory than knowing the Father's love, and he willingly became his Father's witness so that WE can know that love as well.

But how, through Jesus, does God reveal his love for us? I **John 4:9-10** – “**This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.**” Here’s the vital clue to seeing and knowing the Father’s love; it’s in the sacrifice of his Son for our sins.

But how does that work exactly? Surely it’s the love of *Jesus* that we see in his sacrifice, because *he* was the one sacrificed, not the Father, right?

Fortunately, Jesus himself answers that for us in **John 14:6-7** when he says. “**I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me you’d know my Father as well.**” So when Philip says to Jesus in **verse 8** “**Show us the Father,**” Jesus replies in **verses 9-10**, “**How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me?**” Whatever happened to Jesus, then, and whatever he said and did, was an exact and perfect reflection of his Father. “**Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father,**” Jesus said, because that’s what the Father had sent him for, to be a clear and visible witness to himself. And where do we see the Father’s witness to himself at its best? In the atoning sacrifice of his Son for our sins. That’s what we zero in on, then, to know the Father.

And what exactly **do** we learn about the Father in Jesus’ sacrifice? We learn in **Isaiah 53:10** that “**it was the Lord’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer.**” By the Father’s design Jesus’ sacrifice would involve a lot of suffering. Why? Because it would reveal the suffering the Father was going through. See Jesus, we see the Father. What was happening to Jesus, then, was a direct reflection of what was happening to the Father, meaning the Father was crushed and suffering too, and Jesus was totally willing to be crushed himself to show that. Why? Because it would reveal his Father’s heart. HE knew his Father’s heart, and by accepting his Father’s will to be a visible witness to him WE could know his Father’s heart too.

So when we read in **verse 3** that Jesus was “**a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering**” - meaning our sins broke Jesus’ heart - then we know that’s what our sins did to the Father. They broke **his** heart too, because how our sin affected Jesus is exactly how it affects the Father.

But that’s why Jesus came, to be a witness to his Father’s heart. The sorrow and suffering Jesus experienced, therefore, was visible evidence of the sorrow and suffering of the Father. Jesus was a “Man of Sorrows,” because when he came up against the misery and enmity of humanity it produced a visible sorrow in him – to show those who saw it what our sin does to the Father.

We also see In the middle of **verse 10** that the Father made Jesus' "**soul an offering for sin (KJV)**¹." The Father wanted Jesus' "soul" - his entire being - involved in his atoning sacrifice. Why? Because the Father's love for us involves HIS entire being, too. To properly witness to the Father's love, therefore, involved total self-sacrifice on the part of Jesus, and he fulfilled that part of his Father's will perfectly, as well. **Hebrews 9:26** tells us that Jesus came "**to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself,**" and in the last part of **Hebrews 1:3** that "**by himself (he) purged our sins (KJV),**" because in that very personal act of self-sacrifice on Jesus' part he gave a perfect witness to the Father's heart.

That's why, **Isaiah 53:4**, Jesus "**took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows**" and willingly carried the entire burden of our misery on himself. It was in love for us that he did that, yes, but primarily it was in love for his Father, to show his Father's heart. Because what we see in Jesus carrying our sorrows is the Father carrying our sorrows. It shows how deeply involved the Father is in what we're going through, which Jesus, in love to his Father, was a perfect and willing witness to.

We also see in **verse 5** that Jesus "**was pierced for our transgressions (and) was crushed for our iniquities.**" And what does that tell us about the Father? It tells us HE's pierced and crushed by our sins. He hates what sin has done to us. That's why in **verse 12**, Jesus willingly "**bore the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors,**" because in the severity of his sacrifice it would give visible witness to his Father's utter condemnation of sin, and how it pierces and crushes him to watch the misery that sin has caused us.

But he's had to watch terrible things happening to his beloved children because of sin - open rebellion, believing he's a liar, breaking his law, taking on the Devil's nature - all of which put together made us fall pathetically short of the glory he created us for. And now we live in fear of him, that one day he's going to unleash on us what we deserve, because, we believe, "divine justice must be satisfied and punishment must be served." Most of humanity is now stuck with that jaundiced and fearful view of God. And how many Christians share that view too, that God is angry at us and full of wrath at our sin, and that's why he sent Jesus, to take out his anger against us on him?

But John made it clear in **John 3:17** that "**God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world.**" God isn't into condemning anybody. He's not angry at us, he's angry at sin. So he wasn't expressing his anger at us through his Son's death, he was expressing his anger at sin. And Jesus was in total agreement with his Father's anger. That's why he died. His death perfectly expressed what the Father felt toward sin, that IT had to die - and die by a death severe enough to show the Father's utter contempt for sin, which Jesus provided perfect witness to as well, **Isaiah 53:7**: "**He was led like a lamb**

¹ King James Version of the Bible

to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, he did not open his mouth.”

But that’s what Jesus lived and died for, to be a perfect witness to his Father, because he loved and honoured his Father, and he knew through his witness that we would love and honour the Father, too. So he trusted his Father that the only way this could work was by submitting himself to a life of being “**despised and rejected by men,**” **Isaiah 53:3**, because it would effectively and brilliantly display the Father’s heart, in how immensely sorrowful our Father is at what sin has done to us, and how it grieves him terribly.

And that’s important for us to realize because in the Father’s grief we see his love, just as a wayward child realizes how much his parents love him when he witnesses their grief at what he’s done. It’s in their grief that he sees their love, and that’s what stirs him to love in return – which is exactly what the Father sent Jesus for, to show us in the most visible and personal way in the sufferings of his Son just how much he, the Father, grieves for us. Why? To show us how much he loves us, because it’s when we see his love that it stirs love in us for him, and at last our relationship with him - the relationship he made us in his image for - can begin.

So in everything the Father sent his Son to do, it was designed to show his love for us, because it’s love that creates love in return. The idea, then, that the Father sent Jesus to suffer and die to assuage his anger at us, wreak his vengeance on our sins and take it out on Jesus to meet the demands of divine justice, simply doesn’t add up. Yes, the Father “crushed” Jesus and caused him to suffer, but as punishment for our sins? If that was true, though, what would it tell us of the Father’s heart? That only by punishment is he satisfied, and only by inflicting pain can he forgive?

But think how many parents make that mistake when dealing with a rebellious child. The child disobeys and the parents immediately think what? Punishment: because punishment is what the child deserves for disobedience, punishment is what corrects the child’s behaviour, and only through punishment comes forgiveness. How awful, that it’s only by taking out their anger on their child that the parents are able to forgive, yet that’s exactly the picture given of God when Jesus is presented as the object of his Father’s wrath, and it’s only by inflicting excruciating death on his Son that God’s attitude changes toward us and he’s able to forgive us.

But even Isaiah knew we’d get the wrong idea about Jesus’ suffering. In **Isaiah 53:4** he writes how Jesus “**took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows**” as a willing act on his part, “**yet WE considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.**” We’d take Jesus’ death and suffering to mean God was angry at Jesus - and how many Christians believe exactly that today too, that God sent Jesus to unleash his wrath and vengeance on him, as a substitute for us?

You mean God can only bring himself to forgive us by taking out his anger on his Son? But the relationship between the Father and Son would never allow that to happen. Jesus loved his Father. He knew his Father loves his children, hates what's happening to us, and he only wants to rid us of what's destroying us; so that's what Jesus came willingly to bear witness to. The Father, meanwhile, loved his Son for trusting him and acting out what the Father knew would work in turning our hearts to him. And we see that part of the Father's heart too, in the JOY that Jesus experienced. Jesus wasn't all "sorrows," he was also full of joy, because that too reflected the Father and HIS joy at knowing his plan would work in saving us from our sins.

The Father's attitude to Jesus was never anger and vengeance. How could it be? He loved his Son, as Isaiah clearly explains in **verse 12**: "Therefore I (the Father) will give him (Jesus) a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death and was numbered with the transgressors." The Father loved his Son for what he did.

But what of that statement Jesus cried out on the cross in **Matthew 27:46**, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Is that not evidence of the Father's rejection of Christ? Is it not that the moment when all our sins were loaded on Jesus, making him so repulsive that the Father abandoned him, cut him off and left him in agony as just punishment for our guilt and sufficient punishment for his forgiveness? Isn't that what it's saying?

If it is, then what does it tell us of the Father? And is that what Jesus wanted to convey by crying out like that, that the Father turns his face away from us in disgust at our sins? But to a Jew in Jesus' day those words would have triggered quite different thoughts. They were but the opening sentence to an entire Psalm, **Psalm 22**, THE great Psalm describing Jesus' death and agony on the cross. And what does that Psalm say in **verses 23-24**? "You who fear the Lord, praise him...For he has NOT despised or disdained the suffering of the afflicted one; he has NOT hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help."

Never for a moment did the Father forsake his Son. So why did Jesus cry out the opening sentence to that Psalm, then? Because to a Jew, to whom that Psalm was so familiar, the rest of the Psalm would have immediately come to mind. And what the Psalm in its entirety tells us is two things: First, the despair and mental agony that we humans go through (verses 6-18) because we think God's not listening and he's totally forsaken us. And second, the absolute assurance that God hasn't forsaken us. It's a Psalm of both understanding and assurance, and by Jesus crying out the opening sentence, the mind of anyone familiar with that Psalm would fill in the rest.

What a perfect witness it was to the Father's heart, of his understanding of the agonies we go through, and his assurance that he'll never forsake us, no matter how bad our sins are. Through that statement of Jesus, then, the Father not only expresses

his utter sympathy with the cries of all humanity in its endless throes of agony, he also wants us utterly reassured that he has never deserted us and he never will, no matter how much it looks like he has.

The Psalm in its entirety is a wonderful witness to the Father's heart. But what we see in EVERY part of Jesus' life and death, is that we're utterly loved by the Father, who expresses his love through Jesus in every way possible to convince us of that. And Psalm 22 is one such witness, expressed in the greatest agony of all, when upon Jesus was loaded the entire mess of sin, and HIS reaction was the opening sentence to the greatest Psalm of his Father's understanding and assurance.

It wasn't the only thing he said at that point, too. He also said in **Luke 23:46**, "[Father, into your hands I commit my spirit,](#)" as witness yet again that we're utterly safe in our Father's hands. And to anyone thinking their sins are too great for God's forgiveness, the Father again expresses his heart through Jesus, when again on the cross Jesus says in **verse 34**, "[Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.](#)" No condemnation, just forgiveness. No guilt trip, but instead understanding that we really haven't got a clue what we're doing to ourselves. Such is the Father's heart, that Jesus was such willing witness to, as well.

No wonder the Father says, "[This is my beloved Son in whom I'm well pleased,](#)" because Jesus revealed his Father's heart perfectly. And what we see in Jesus - in his willingness to expose himself to our misery, enter into it, feel it, understand it, suffer for it and joyously defeat it - is the Father. See Jesus, we see the Father. But that's why Jesus came and why his Father sent him. They were in this together so we can see God for who he truly is.