



**Justice**

**& Mercy**



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**Good Friday**

## Did Jesus deserve to die?

Did Jesus deserve to suffer the most horrendous and brutal death by crucifixion?

**'Yes'** according to His accusers, the Jewish religious leaders.

They refused to believe that Jesus was who He claimed to be: the Son of God, the Messiah and King of the Jews.

**'No'** according to Pontius Pilate, the judge at His trial.

He concluded that Jesus was innocent of all the charges. And yet, he gave in to the demands of the religious leaders and of the crowd that they had stirred up.

He washed his hands in front of the crowd, declaring that he was 'innocent of this man's blood'. He then had Jesus flogged before handing Him over to be crucified.

Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent but treated Him as guilty.

**'No'** according to one of the men also being crucified.

He said, 'We are getting what we deserve but this man has done nothing wrong.' He could see what the religious leaders failed to see.

**'No'** according to the centurion.

As the centurion observed Jesus dying, he declared, 'Surely this man was the Son of God!'

And the 'man in the street', what did he think? Probably most were undecided. We know that passers-by hurled insults at Jesus and told Him to save Himself if He really was the Son of God.

So, for Jesus it was a gross injustice. He was – and is – the Son of God and innocent of all the charges. He didn't deserve to die. But justice *was* done. God needed to punish *our* sin. And Jesus willingly took the punishment we deserve.

**... justice was done ... Jesus willingly took the punishment we deserve.**

You can read the account of Jesus' trial, crucifixion and resurrection in Matthew's Gospel, chapter 27:11-28:8.

## From the Bible

Jesus said:

*I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.<sup>1</sup>*

The Apostle Paul wrote:

*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – of whom I am the worst.<sup>2</sup>*

*But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.<sup>3</sup>*

*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.<sup>4</sup>*

*So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith,<sup>5</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>John 14:6   <sup>2</sup>1 Timothy 1:15b   <sup>3</sup>Titus 3:4-5a

<sup>4</sup>2 Corinthians 5:21   <sup>5</sup>Galatians 3:26



**Easter Sunday**

## **Life through Resurrection**

Two days after being crucified Jesus rose from the dead. That was what Jesus was referring to – His own bodily resurrection – when He claimed that He could destroy the Temple of God and rebuild it in three days.

Was any further proof necessary that Jesus truly was who He claimed to be: the Son of God, the Messiah?

Easter is a time for celebrating the resurrection of Jesus, who is now in heaven with God the Father.

## **So, why did Jesus have to die?**

God hates sin and it prevents us from having a right relationship with God. He cannot simply ignore our sin.

But God is full of compassion and mercy and wants us to be reconciled with Him. He made that possible by punishing Jesus in our place.

God's demand for justice has been met by Jesus paying the penalty for our sin. God now offers forgiveness to everyone willing to receive it by believing in Jesus, repenting of their sin and choosing to live to follow Jesus.

There was both justice and mercy – the greatest possible act of mercy – in the death of Jesus. He endured that cruel and barbaric crucifixion for you and for me. How will you respond to the sacrifice that Jesus made for you?

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## **Sin and Repentance**

Sin is our rebellious and disobedient nature, which causes us to want to live our own way and disregard God's rules. It separates us from God.

Repentance means having a change of mind which leads to a change of behaviour. To repent of our sin means to be truly sorry for living our way and to decide to start living God's way.

## **What next?**

It was more than 2,000 years ago that Jesus was raised from the dead. After forty days, He was taken up to heaven to be with His Father.

Jesus' resurrection was the most significant event in the whole of history. And our response to it is the most crucial decision we have to face in life. It will determine whether God welcomes us or rejects us.

One day Jesus will return to earth, without warning, to judge everyone who has ever lived. It will be a time of immense joy for everyone who has become a child of God, by putting their faith in Jesus and having lived to please Him.

For all who have not accepted Jesus, it will be a day of judgment and everlasting punishment.

## **What next for you?**

If you have questions about what you have read, do speak to someone you know who is a Christian or please write to us (at the address given on the back of this booklet).

Please do not treat lightly the warning the Bible gives us that Jesus will return to earth to judge each one of us.

If you are ready to receive God's offer to you to be His child, you can do that by praying this prayer.

Dear Father God,

I am very sorry for everything in my life which is not right. I want to stop living to please myself and to start living to please You.

Thank You for sending Jesus to die in my place because of my sin, in order to save me from the punishment which I deserve.

So please forgive me and accept me as Your child. Please help me to live to please Jesus and to make Him the centre of my life.

Amen

If you have prayed this prayer, please speak to someone who is already following Jesus. They will be able to help you as you start your new life as a child of God. Or write to us.



  
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