



JESUS AND THE CROSS

BOTTOM LINE: Jesus died on the cross for our sins.

OBJECTIVE:

You will learn that because Jesus died and rose again, we can have a good relationship with God.

KEY PASSAGE:

Genesis 3:2-6, John 19:30, 38-40, 20:11-18

MEMORY VERSE:

“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” - Romans 5:8 (NIV)

“But here is how God has shown his love for us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” -Romans 5:8 (NIRV)

INTRO

When you hear the word “Easter” it might bring to mind baskets full of jellybeans and chocolate bunnies. Or maybe Easter egg hunts in the backyard. Or maybe even putting on your Sunday best to come to church.

But what is Easter all about? That's what we're going to talk about today. To understand what Jesus did at Easter, we must go all the way back to the beginning of time, when God created everything.

God made the world and everything in it. He created Adam and Eve - the first people and he put them in a beautiful garden to live. The world was perfect. Adam and Eve had a good relationship with God - they got to see him and talk with him. The garden was filled with gentle animals and great food to eat. There was only one tree in the garden which God had said “do not eat from this tree.”

God had given humans only one rule. And as we read, they couldn't even obey that one rule.

(READ Genesis 3:2-6)

MAIN POINT

In following the serpent's advice and eating the fruit, Eve and Adam had disobeyed God. The perfection that had been in the world was destroyed. People had brought sin into this world. Sin took away the good relationship that Adam and Eve had with God.

Sin separates us from God. It creates this great distance between us - a gulf, a chasm. For thousands of years, people have tried to cross that distance. But we can't do it. That's the bad news.

But here's the good news. We may not be able to cross the distance, but God can. And he did. God loves us so much. He wants to have a good relationship with us, like he had at the beginning with Adam and Eve. He doesn't want our sin to keep us away from him.

So, the Father sent his son, Jesus, to earth. Jesus left heaven. He came to earth so that he could make a way for us to have that good relationship with God again. But how could he do that?

Remember, back in the garden? God had told Adam and Eve that eating of the tree would cause them to die. Sin brings death and separation from God.

Jesus came to take our death for us. The word for that is sacrifice. Jesus died on the cross as the sacrifice for our sins. (READ John 19:30, 38-40)

When Jesus said "it is finished" he didn't just mean that his life was finished. He meant the work that he came to do was finished. Jesus came to die for us, and he succeeded in his mission.

After his death on Friday, he was taken down from the cross and placed in a tomb that belonged to Joseph of Arimathea. For everyone involved, they thought that was the end of the story.

Then on Sunday, Mary Magdalene went to visit the tomb. It's like when people go visit a cemetery. They go to visit the place where a loved one's body is buried.

But when Mary got to the tomb, it was empty. There was nobody to visit. Mary did not understand what had happened. (READ John 20:11-18)

DRIVE IT HOME:

Jesus is alive! He conquered death. He destroyed sin.

Jesus is alive! If we put our trust in Jesus, he will give us new life with him. He will take away our sin. He will give us back that good relationship with God.

Do you know Jesus today? Do you believe that he died for you and rose from the dead? Do you put your trust in him?

If you answered “yes” then remember that Easter is a time to celebrate what Jesus did for us. Every time we come to church; we can celebrate that. In fact, you can celebrate that all the time, wherever you are. This news is too good not to celebrate all the time. And to share with others.

If you haven't met Jesus yet, but you want to know him, today is your day. Pray to him. Ask him to come into your heart. Ask him to take away your sin. Ask him to give you a good relationship with God.

God loves us. He wants to have a good relationship with us. He sent Jesus to die for us and take away our sin. Jesus rose from the dead. This is happiness. This is good news. This is Easter.

SUMMARY:

The story of Easter begins in the book of Genesis, when God created a perfect world. Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and their sin messed up their relationship with him. Since that time, there has been a distance between God and humans. Then God sent Jesus, who was perfect, to bridge the distance. Jesus died on the cross for our sins, taking the punishment for us. Because Jesus died and rose again, we can have a good relationship with God again.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read Genesis 3:2-6, John 19:30, 38-40, 20:11-18.
2. How did Adam and Eve disobey God in the garden?
3. What were the last words Jesus spoke before he died?
4. Who took and buried the body of Jesus?
5. When Jesus spoke to Mary outside the tomb, who did she think he was at first?
6. What did Jesus instruct Mary to do?

CLOSE WITH A SIMPLE PRAYER

Dear God,

Thank you for sending Jesus to earth. Because of his death and resurrection our sins can be forgiven, and we can have a good relationship with you. In Jesus' name, Amen

