



SERMON REFLECTION GUIDE

Christian Doctrine, Part 8: God Crucified (The Doctrine of the Atonement)
1 Corinthians 1:21-25, Hebrews 10:1-14 - October 4, 2026

SERMON OUTLINE

Intro - Does Theology matter? Do we need theology in order to follow Jesus? What do we mean when we say, "Jesus loves you" or "**Jesus died for you**"?

A. The Cross as Defeat

Jesus Christ was crucified - this mode of execution is extremely important. He was not assassinated and he did not die in battle.

To die by crucifixion is a **total loss**. It existed to highlight the power of Rome, and to utterly humiliate and defile the person being crucified.

Since crucifixion was debasement in extreme, worshipping a crucified man is unheard of.

Illustration: *The Alexamenos Graffiti*

The cross was viewed as **weakness/foolishness**, yet was God's **power/wisdom** (1 Cor. 1:22-26)

B. The Cross as Victory

The death of a sinless sacrifice turns everything upside down. In God's hands, the picture of merciless power becomes a picture of merciful love.

Paul writes that through the cross, Jesus is not losing, but rather triumphing over all the powers of sin and death. (Col. 2:14-15)

Christ suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God.

- 1 Peter 3:18

When we say "**Jesus died for you**", each word has meaning & significance. That includes the "FOR", since the doctrine of atonement requires a "**substitute**".

C. The Cross as Atonement

From the establishment of the Hebrew people under the Torah, God provided a way for sins to be covered/removed so that the people could be reconciled to him.

This took place on the "**Day of Atonement**", fully described in **Leviticus 16**. It included 2 goats:

- **The Sacrificial Goat**: this goat was killed, and its blood was a covering for sin
- **The Scape Goat**: this goat had sins placed on its head, and it carried them away.

The language of a substitutionary sacrifice that covered & carried sins was then used in **Isaiah 52-53** to describe a future "servant" of God who would fulfill those roles.

In the New Testament, we see clearly that the death of Christ on the cross served these functions. Consider these verses: **Matthew 26:26; John 15:13; Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:19; Galatians 3:13; 1 Peter 2:24, 3:18; 1 John 2:2**

When we say "**Jesus died for you**", we mean that Jesus died (1) in your place, (2) for your sins, (3) to reconcile you to God.

D. The Cross as Sufficient

Hebrews 9-10 is unparalleled in showcasing Jesus as the fulfillment of OT atonement rituals.

Jesus appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Hebrews 9:26

Hebrews 10:1-4 shows the inadequacies in the Day of Atonement, why it was incomplete.

Hebrews 10:11-14 shows Jesus as the completion.

Jesus "sits down" because he knows that "*it is finished.*" (**John 19:30**)

Christianity calls sinners to repent of their sins and to rest in the finished, once for all, eternally effective death of Jesus Christ for our sins.

This is theology that we cannot water down or ignore in the interest of keeping things simple!

It is crucial for our salvation, our assurance, and our ability to share our faith.



SERMON REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. As you think about the phrase “Jesus died for you”, did this sermon affect the way you think about it?
2. To help you consider the nature of crucifixion, can you imagine being Mary or John at the foot of Jesus’s cross? What would you feel if a loved one was being crucified?
3. Why was crucifixion the lowest possible death for a person? How did something so defeating turn into a symbol of victory for Jesus followers?
4. When we say “Jesus died for you”, what do we mean by the word “FOR”? What is substitution biblically?
5. What does the word atonement mean? How does Jesus’s crucifixion fulfill the old testament rituals on the Day of Atonement?
6. In what ways does the sufficiency of Jesus’s death give you assurance of salvation? Do you believe Jesus has covered and carried all your sins away?
7. Do you have any self-atonement tendencies or ways that you hope to earn your salvation? Can you repent of those and trust fully in Jesus’s work?