

3 nails that caused him to stay on the cross.

1. The Nail of Sin.

The prophet Isaiah, probably more than any other prophet, seemed to comprehend the sacrificial ministry of Christ: *“Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed”* (Isaiah 53:4-5). Had there been no sin in the world, there would have been no need for the cross. But sin did enter the bloodstream of humanity. It was the nail of sin that held Jesus to the cross. We read in 2 Corinthians 5:21, *“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”* It not only was universal sin that held Jesus to the cross – it was your sin my sin. It’s the principle of vicarious sacrifice [taking the place of another]. He took my place and your place of death on the cross. God, knowing the hearts of all people, and knowing that they were evil, offered his Son to die for all people: those living and those yet unborn. The second invisible nail that kept Jesus on the cross was the nail of loyalty.

2. The Nail of Loyalty.

Jesus always lived in the shadow of the cross. As a boy he spoke of his Father’s business and referred to his sacrificial work on the cross. His entire ministry pointed to the cross and the fulfillment of the divine purpose for his life. Jesus said, *“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”* (Luke 22:42). Jesus’ loyalty to the Father’s purpose for his life and his acceptance of the cross qualified him to be our example, but these days it seems that loyalty is rarely seen. We need a new loyalty to Christ. It is a loyalty of action, not mere words; it’s a loyalty that will enable us, regardless of the cost, to take our stand for Christ and for his word. We need a new loyalty to our moral and ethical convictions. Our world and society is leading us to moral bankruptcy and we are lacking the moral strength to resist. Jesus said, *“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me”* (Matt. 16:24). If we would adopt Jesus’ way of life, the way of the cross, then we need to be willing to accept his way of death. If we lived as Jesus lived, then we need to be willing to die as Jesus died. In a supreme demonstration of loyalty to God’s will, Jesus died on the cross. His loyalty should inspire us to be loyal to the cross and *“take up our cross”* and follow him. It was the nail of loyalty that held Jesus to the cross. The third nail that kept Jesus on the cross was the nail of love. Can you hear the hammer ring as it hits the nail, skin rips and blood begins to drip and finally pour. Then the question is asked, even by his enemies, *“Why? Why didn’t Jesus resist?”* Why didn’t those hands that healed the blind and make the lame to walk deny the pain that was felt? Why? *“Because he loved us.”* That’s the third nail that kept Him on the cross.

3. The Nail of Love.

Prior to Jesus’ coming into the world, people did not know the love of God nor the kind of love that Jesus had. Slaves hated masters, subjects hated rulers, races hated each other – the noise of gnashing teeth was exceeded only by the sound of clashing swords raised to destroy the hated enemy. And in the midst of this hatred, bitterness, intolerance and bigotry, God allowed his Son to be born. But hatred pursued Christ. At Jesus’ birth, Herod, full of hatred, sent out a decree that all male infants, from newborn to two years old, were to be destroyed. Most Pharisees hated Jesus because the truth of his Gospel brought their hypocrisy to light. The high priests hated Jesus because his popularity with the multitudes threatened to lure people from the Temple and the established rituals. Unperturbed by these existing prejudices, and with the cross his ultimate and determined goal, Jesus declared, *“To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the*

world” (John 18:37). The world never had seen such a manifestation of selfless love as was demonstrated by Christ on the cross. Having not seen it before, the world had no ability to comprehend it. It was the nail of love that held Jesus to the cross.

The cross is the place of decision. It is the eternal divider - it separates people into 2 classes, the saved and the lost. Embrace the truth of the cross and be saved. Reject it and be lost. Today the cross still casts its shadow across the world, and the cry, “Crucify him” still lurks in those who would crucify him rather than own him as Lord of their lives.

Conclusion

Christ’s greatest work was dying for us and his rising victorious over death. His purpose was to die, to shed his blood as a substitute in your place and in my place. We must accept Christ’s death as our substitute, there’s no other way to salvation – eternal life”.

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“Not nails, not politics, not soldiers. Nothing earthly held our savior and redeemer to the rough wood of Calvary. It was love, wondrous love”. (Jeffrey Pulse)

Scripture: 1 Peter 1:17-21 **Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 1:17-25

A. The cross is a message about the justice of God.

1. God is the epitome of holiness and righteousness, so He must punish sin.
2. Every other religion teaches that people reach God through their works.
3. God placed all the sin of humanity on Christ in order to provide a substitute in our place.
4. God deals not only with our actions; He changes us from the inside out.

B. The cross is a message about the wisdom of God.

1. The cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. The Jews and Greeks saw the cross as a sign of weakness, shame, and punishment for crime.
2. Because salvation is a gift of God, we can’t take credit for what God has done in our lives.
3. God’s redemptive plan is unique in human history.
4. People who attempt to work for their salvation never know if they have done enough to go to heaven. In contrast, those who receive God’s forgiveness have assurance of their salvation.

C. The cross is a message about the love of God.

1. God is love, but that doesn’t mean He overlooks sin.
2. If you receive salvation but then live a disobedient, rebellious life, God will discipline you in love.
3. No one deserves to go to heaven. A 90-year-old man and a 10-year-old boy are both saved by grace.

D. The cross is a message about the power of God.

1. Paul writes that the cross is about God’s power (1 Cor. 1:18).
2. God's power transforms anyone who will accept salvation.
 - Example: Prisoners who are incarcerated for life but have never felt freer

- Example: A drug addict whose life was eventually transformed after he heard one sentence about God's unconditional love

The message of the cross is that the Lord is willing to save anyone who asks. Once you ask Him to forgive your sins, He instantly begins to change your life. Live every day in the assurance that you are in God's loving hand, and that He will take care of you for all eternity.

The power of the cross is in the blood of Jesus

Apart from the blood of Christ, you and I could not have a relationship with our heavenly Father.

Jesus' sacrificial death made it possible for sinful man to approach holy God. Because of His blood, believers are redeemed, forgiven, justified, and sanctified, and they have access to their Creator. No wonder we call it the *precious* blood of Jesus.

The blood of Jesus is precious because of who He is.

Christ was not just a man, but the Son of God, born of a virgin. Because Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, there was no sin transferred to Him through an earthly father. In the Old Testament, any animal offered as a sacrifice had to be perfect, without spot or defect. That perfection represented holiness. Scripture tells us that the sacrifices described in the Old Testament were a foreshadowing of Christ's death. In order for Jesus to take the punishment for the sins of the world, He had to be morally perfect—without a sin nature.

The blood of Jesus is precious because of why He came.

From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible has one main theme—the Father's redeeming love for mankind. Christ came as the Son of God with the purpose of dying for the sins of humanity. The blood of Jesus Christ is absolutely essential to our relationship with God. Those who refuse it will spend eternity in the lake of fire, forever separated from the Father (Rev. 20:15).

The blood of Jesus is precious because of what it provides.

A. Redemption

To redeem means *to buy back* (1 Peter 1:18-19). No matter how moral we are before accepting the gift of salvation, our nature is sinful (Ezek. 18:20; Rom. 3:23). Jesus went to the cross for the primary purpose of purchasing us from a life of slavery to sin.

B. Forgiveness

You and I can be forgiven, not simply because God is merciful, but because Christ went to the cross and shed His blood for me and for you (Eph. 1:7). Salvation is not something we earn through good deeds or bargain for in exchange for promising to improve.

C. Justification

God is holy and must punish sin. Because Christ shed His blood in our place, the Father not only forgives our sin but also declares us righteous (Rom. 5:17). We call this process "justification." Romans 5:9 says, "Having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him." Even though you and I may not always act like it, we are declared holy in God's eyes.

D. Reconciliation

When a married couple separates, they occasionally reunite. We call that process reconciliation. This human example provides a good picture of one part of salvation. Scripture says, "It was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Christ, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross" (Col. 1:19-20). This happens only in response to God's call—no one is saved by his or her own initiative.

E. Sanctification

Sanctification, *the process of being set apart for God's purposes and being made holy*, is possible only because of the blood of Christ (Heb. 13:12). It is both a one-time event that happens at salvation and a life-long process. God continues to prune us so that we become more and more fruitful for His kingdom. You and I should never stop growing in holiness and purity.

F. Access to God

The Old Testament explains that God chose to make the Holy of Holies His earthly dwelling place (1 Kings 8:27-30). This area of the temple was so sacred that just one priest was allowed in—and only once per year. He had to prepare himself carefully by performing sacred rituals. One of the requirements was that he be sprinkled with the blood of a sacrificed animal. Today, the only reason Christians can approach God is because, spiritually speaking, we are covered in the blood of Jesus (Heb. 10:19). The Father listens to and answers our prayers because we are allowed to draw near to Him through the righteousness of Christ.

G. Daily Forgiveness

After salvation, believers will still do some things that are unacceptable to God. But if we confess our sins to the Lord with a sincere heart, He faithfully forgives us over and over (1 John 1:7, 9). The basis for that forgiveness is the blood Christ shed when He died in our place (1 John 2:1-2).