

CRUX | krəks; kroŏks |

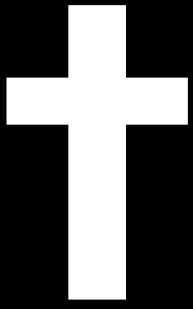
noun (pl. **cruxes** or **cruces** | 'kroō ,sēz |) (the **crux**)

† the decisive or most important point at issue

† from Latin, literally 'cross'

† a 4-week Easter Series at HTD 6pm

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COMMUNITY GROUP SCHEDULE

MONDAY 4/4 – THURSDAY 7/4

† SUBSTITUTION

MONDAY 11/4 – THURSDAY 14/4

† RANSOM

MONDAY 18/4 – THURSDAY 21/4

† EXAMPLE

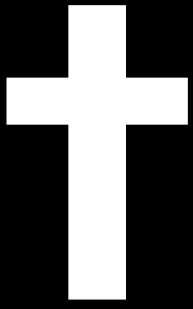
MONDAY 25/4 – THURSDAY 28/4

× EASTER BREAK

MONDAY 2/5 – THURSDAY 5/4

† RESURRECTION





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WEEK ONE: SUBSTITUTION

ROMANS 3:21-26 (NRSV)

INTRODUCTION

One of the major reasons Jesus died on the cross was to absorb the righteous wrath of God. Though we deserved to die because of our wanton sin and rebellion, Jesus died in our place and suffered the consequences of our sin. God's wrath wasn't averted, but rather absorbed by Jesus on our behalf. Jesus is our substitute.

DISCUSSION

It's unpopular today to talk about God's wrath. Why do you think this is?

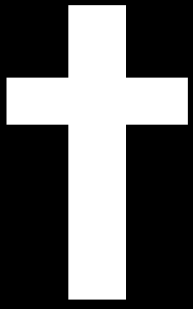
EXPLANATION

- Read Isaiah 53:4-12. Discuss the themes of *substitution* in that passage.
- Read Romans 3:21-26.
- What does it mean that God's righteousness is being 'discolored'?
- Explain what it means to be "justified".
- Why did God put Jesus forward as a "sacrifice of atonement" or *propitiation*?
- How does this sacrifice "show God's righteousness"?
- Why is the sacrifice "effective through faith"?

APPLICATION

- How does Jesus' substitutionary death make you feel about God the Father?
- How does Jesus' substitutionary death make you feel about God the Son?
- How does knowing that God's wrath is satisfied effect the way you relate to Him?
- How is the doctrine of *substitution* a motivation to do evangelism?





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WEEK TWO: RANSOM

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-7 (NRSV)

INTRODUCTION

We saw last week that Jesus died as a substitute – in *our* place, for *our* sin. This week we'll focus on the price that Jesus paid to *ransom us* from the consequences of our sin.

DISCUSSION

What's the most common usage of the word *Ransom* today?

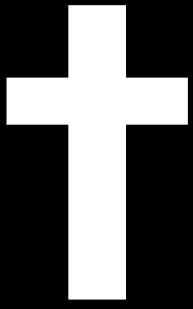
EXPLANATION

- What is the link between *Ransom* and *Redemption*?
- Read Mark 10:45 and 1 Timothy 2:1-7.
- Is there a contradiction between Mark's use of the word "*many*", and Paul's use of the word "*all*"?
- Traditionally, this doctrine has been explained in terms of Jesus' death paying a debt to Satan for the ransom of God's people. This is the picture we see in C. S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, where Aslan dies to ransom Edmond from the Witch. To what degree do you agree with this theory of the atonement?
- In light of last week's sermon, why do we need to be ransomed, and what does Jesus' death ransom us from?

APPLICATION

- Why do you think it's hard for the average person to see themselves as being in need of rescue/ransom?
- Some say that the incredible cost that Jesus paid to ransom us reflects how valuable we are. To what degree is this true/helpful?





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WEEK THREE: EXAMPLE

1 PETER 2:21-25 (NRSV)

INTRODUCTION

The imitation of Christ won't bring salvation, but salvation must bring with it the imitation of Christ. We've seen that, first and foremost, Jesus died to bring forgiveness of sin – but that's not *all* he died for. Jesus also died to provide the example by which we should live – that is, the example of humble, costly love.

DISCUSSION

Assess this phrase: *Imitation is the highest form of flattery*

EXPLANATION

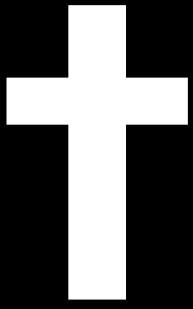
- Read 1 Peter 2:21-25 and Philippians 2:5-8
- What is it specifically about Jesus that Peter and Paul hold up for us as an example to imitate?
- Traditionally, the doctrine of *example* or *Christus Exemplar* has been used by liberal theologians to minimize or erase the doctrine of *Substitution* (along with the notion of God's righteous wrath). Do the above passages affirm, minimize or neglect to mention Jesus' sacrifice of atonement?

APPLICATION

- Jesus is God. We are not. How can we say that Jesus is our example?
- Jesus never had to deal with modern problems like strip clubs, internet porn or credit card debt. How can he be our example in this day and age?
- The focus in our passages seems to be on imitating Jesus in humility and suffering. Why is it so hard for us to do this?
- WWJD wrist bands aside, how can we remind ourselves to look to Jesus as our example in day-to-day life?

PTO





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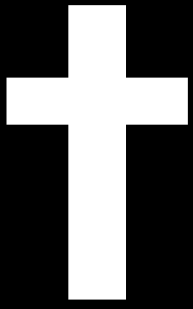
WEEK THREE: EXAMPLE (cont.)

Take some time to think about/discuss these words from Francis Chan:

You passionately love Jesus, but you don't really want to be like Him. You admire His humility, but you don't want to be that humble. You think it is beautiful that He washed the feet of the disciples, but that is not exactly the direction your life is headed. You are thankful He was spit upon and abused, but you would never let that happen to you. You praise Him for loving you enough to suffer during His whole time on earth, but you are going to do everything within your power to make sure you enjoy your time down here.

In short: You think He is a great Savior, but not a great role model.





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WEEK FOUR: RESURRECTION

1 CORINTHIANS 15:12-58 (NRSV)

INTRODUCTION

We've spent three weeks looking at the literal *crux* of our faith: the Cross of Jesus. But the story doesn't finish there. If Jesus had died and remained in the grave, his death would mean nothing. This is why the Resurrection is so important – why Easter Sunday is the most important day of the Christian calendar. Resurrection is our great, eternal hope.

DISCUSSION

What are some popular cultural understandings of life after death?

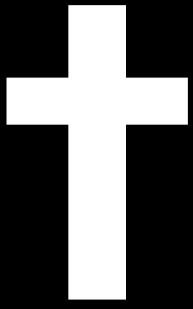
EXPLANATION

- Take the time to read through 1 Corinthians 15:12-58
- Paul says that if Christ hasn't been raised, then both his proclamation and our faith have been in vain... why?
- Assess this quote with reference to v.19: *"The reality of heaven is immaterial; I would be a Christian with or without the afterlife"*.
- Summarize v35-50. How does the seed metaphor work?
- What is *the sting of death*, and how has God given us the victory?

APPLICATION

- *"Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die"* was a common saying in the first century among those who didn't believe in a final judgment or afterlife. In what sense is this saying alive and well today? Have you ever been tempted to live this way?
- How does the *Resurrection* encourage us to live for Jesus each day? (v58)
- How should we live if we want Paul's words to be true for us: *If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.*





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FURTHER READING

(Ranked from least difficult to most difficult)

Fifty Reasons Why Jesus Came to Die – John Piper

Death By Love – Mark Driscoll & Gerry Breshears

The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views – Beilby & Eddy (eds)

The Cross of Jesus – Leon Morris

The Cross of Christ – John Stott

The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross – Leon Morris

Pierced for Our Transgressions – Jeffreery, Ovey & Sach (eds)

NEXT 6PM SERIES

Fields Of Grace

A 4-part journey through the Book of Ruth

