

Why Jesus

An in-depth look at who Christ is, what He did, and how we experience Him personally

Even though I grew up a pastor's son and became a disciple of Christ at age twelve, sometimes I go through Easter without remembering the significance of the actual event.



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You know what I mean? We hear about God's son all our lives and, yes, we can quote verses about who He is and why He came to earth and died and rose again, but it's easy for the story to become rote and soon the deep, earth shaking truths glide over our heads while our hearts wrestle with the faith conflicts we experience every day while living on this earth.

I do a good job of looking like a good Christian. I've grown up in Christianity—I know what is expected. I know that we all have a tendency to perceive the truth about one's heart condition by how they look on the outside, and I've figured out how to maintain a

good look. But sometimes my heart is asking two frightening words that threaten to destroy everything I've ever known: *why Jesus?*

Too many people are doing okay on the outside, but feel lost when their hearts ask scary questions. Questions such as, "Why Jesus?" "Who is God, really?" "Am I truly saved?" and "Have I ever actually *known* God?" aren't that acceptable in Christian culture. We're supposed to have that all figured out. Yet, the more I hear people's stories, the more I realize many of us—those that look like good Christians—are wrestling with these very issues.

If we don't have a sure conviction of who Christ is and believe deeply within our hearts that He really did what is said of Him in scripture, it is impossible to experience Him. Yet, Christ said in the book of John that is how we gain eternal life.

I don't know where you're at in your walk with God, perhaps you never wrestle with questions and doubts about your faith. But I know this Easter season I needed to take a look and remember who Christ is, what He did for us, how He did that, and how we can experience Him personally. For the rest of this post, I'm going to share what I discovered as I looked again at what God's word says about these four key questions.

I'll warn you, though, I'm going to use a lot of scripture, so this is quite long. If you're ready, grab your Bibles and dig in!

Who Is Jesus?

"For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the Lord of hosts." – Malachi. 4:1-3

"Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell

securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.'" –Jeremiah 23:5-6

"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." –Isaiah 7:14

"And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." –Luke 1:31-33

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me. '") For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known." –John 1:1-5, 14-18

Perhaps it is too simple. We've heard it all our lives, but we brush over it as if it's no big deal. It's normal. In the New Testament dispensation, we're used to having the presence of God within us and not needing to go through all kinds of ritual in order to meet with Him. But hold up for a moment! Reread the passages above. Do you realize who Jesus is?

God with us.

Almighty, most Holy God, Creator of the universe, sinless to the core, all-consuming fire *came* to live with us—wretched, adulterous fornicators of our faith.

This sets Christianity apart from every other religion. No other god has ever knelt down, as it were, to play with his dirty and broken creations in order to bring healing and

wholeness again. Jehovah God sent His son to experience everything you and I face daily. He sent Him to know us and make Himself known to us.

Jesus is our righteousness. (Jer. 23:6)

Jesus is our intercessor. (Heb. 7:25)

Jesus is our great high priest. (Heb. 4:14-15)

Jesus is our bridegroom. (Matt. 9:15; 25:10)

Jesus is our perfect sacrifice. (Heb. 10:9-14)

Jesus is our counselor, mighty God, Father—He is our peace. (Is. 9:6)

Jesus is our hope. (Eph. 1:12)

And so much more He is. (Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3)

But most of all, Jesus is God with us. (Matt. 1:23; John 1:14)

It's only natural to wrestle with the intellectual questions of whether or not Jesus truly is who He says He is. The purpose of this post is not to delve into those questions, rather simply to remind those of us who believe about (1) who the Bible says He is, (2) what He did when He came to earth and died, rising again three days later, and (3) how we can personally experience Him.

If you find yourself curious of the actuality of His claims in scripture, or whether the Bible is even true, I recommend checking out the following resources.

- [*Why Jesus?*](#) by Ravi Zacharias
- [*Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus*](#) by Nabeel Qureshi
- [*More Than a Carpenter*](#) by Josh McDowell
- [*A Case for Christ*](#) by Lee Strobel
- [*Jesus Among Other God's*](#) by Ravi Zacharias

What Did Jesus Do?

Christ on Earth

God with Us
God came and dwelt among us. Jesus is the exact representation of God and He bore witness to the Father.

TRUTH 01



TRUTH 02 **Tempted Like Us**
Christ knows what we go for because He experienced everything we do.



Lived Sinlessly
He overcame the world in that He was tempted as we are, yet never sinned.

TRUTH 03



TRUTH 04 **Perfect Sacrifice**
As a sinless lamb, Christ offered a perfect sacrifice for our sins by dying our death.



Defeated Death
The grave could not hold Him, and now He is seated with God.

TRUTH 05



"So if Christ is God with us, why did He come to earth? Just to be with us? If that's the case, why did He die?"

Well, let's look at a few more scriptures.

Jesus came to bear witness of the Father

“Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.” –John 3:10-15

“Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.” – John 5:19

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.” –Colossians 1:15

God cared about the fact that we can't see Him. Throughout the whole of scripture, we see God at different times inviting man to come and meet with Him, the most memorable of all being Moses meeting God at the top of Mount Sinai in Exodus 19. But God did something radical when He decided He would go meet man.

It changed everything when Christ came as the exact representation of the Father. Jesus said over and over again, if you saw Me, you saw the Father. (John 14:7)

Christ came and bore witness of the Father, Creator of the world.

Jesus came to do the works of the Father

“For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will.” –John 5:20-21

“If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.” –John 10:37

As part of revealing Himself to the mankind, God the Father sent His son to do His works. The book of John focuses on cultivating belief that Jesus is the Anointed Son of

God--the Christ. He spends more time seeking to convince His disciples and the religious leaders to *believe Him* than He does calling anyone to repentance or obedience. He cultivates belief in Him by doing the works of the Father.

Jesus came to fulfill the Father's will

"For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me." –John 6:38

Without His Father's will being the mission of his life, how could He prove to be His son in the first place? (Think of implications for those of us who also call ourselves sons and daughters of Christ. Is His will the mission of our lives?)

Jesus came to know man so He can sympathize with us

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin." –Hebrews 4:15

We have confidence in the presence of Almighty God because when He calls us to holiness He personally knows the conflicts and temptations we will face on earth. He's not calling us to something that isn't possible through Him.

Jesus came to make a way to know the Father

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." –John 14:6

Why did God come to earth to dwell among man? So that men of all tribes, tongues and nations could know Him.

Remember Adam and Eve? Remember the children of Israel? Man had fallen away from God. Completely separated. Was it that they couldn't be saved through their sin offerings? The Old Testament is full of men and women of faith who will be in Heaven one day because they followed the practices and sacrifices God had commanded them to do in hope that one day He will send a redeemer to be a once for all sacrifice for them. But that's just it. Without *Jesus*, without that once for all sacrifice there was no relationship with the Father.

Jesus came to give eternal life

“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.” –John 5:24

What is eternal life? In His high priestly prayer in John 17, Jesus said that eternal life is knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He sent. Not that they knew *about* God. This isn't a knowing as in knowing facts and sciences, or memorizing portions of scripture and being able to recall them in an instant's moment. As good as that is, God wanted much more. He wanted *man* to *experience* Him. *That's* the kind of knowing this is. To “find out for oneself.”

Jesus came so that man could experience the only true God, and in that experience, radical transformation happens.

Jesus came to set people free

*“So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, ‘If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will **know the truth**, and the **truth will set you free.**’ They answered him, ‘We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, “You will become free”?’*

*“Jesus answered them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So **if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.** I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father.’”* –John 8:31-38

By knowing experientially the truth incarnate (Jesus—the Son), we are free indeed! We couldn't be free, under the old law. That was imperfect. But Christ came to fulfill that law and establish a new and better covenant that *frees* us for all time from the control of our flesh, bondage to the enemy, and allows us to love God with lives of holiness. Our desires are set free to be aligned with His desires. Our will is freed to be one with His will. We are freed to chain ourselves to His chariots and serve Him with gladness, as Paul did. We are not under compulsion to obey; we are *free* to obey in love.

Only through Jesus. Only by experiencing Him.

Jesus came to save sinners

“But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.” -1 Timothy 1:13-15

What does it mean that He “saved sinners”? Saved them from hellfire? Sure. Perhaps that’s what Paul is addressing. But I think it’s drastically incomplete to stop there. Christ’s main concern was not keeping us out of hell. (Some argue that was possible under the Old Covenant) He was concerned with us *knowing God*. He wanted us to have a life of *relationship* with the only true God. He wanted us to *believe*.

He knew that from unbelief flows all kinds of ignorant acts, and that from *belief* comes true love of God and relationship with Him. He didn’t want obedience done in unbelief, He wanted obedience done in belief.

Sinners are people living in separation from God because of a lifestyle of ignorant acts they do as a result of unbelieving hearts. Christ came to save us from such unbelief.

Jesus came to reconcile mankind to the Father

“For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.” -Romans 5:10-11

There are two ways people can become alienated. The captain of the team alienates his fellow players when he yells at them in shaming tones. People don’t want to hang around him. They’d rather be on another team. They are alienated from him.

Another way people can become alienated is when a dad tells his son to go clean his room. But the son, more eager to go play, ignores his dad and runs outside. When he’s done playing he isn’t going to go running to dad and say, “Daddy, I just won our game of basketball!!” because he knows his room is still not cleaned. He will be quite hesitant to enter his father’s presence because of his disobedience.

That is an alienation brought on by conscience, not the misbehavior of another person. And that is exactly how we were alienated from God. We sinned. We separated ourselves from His presence. And because of our guilt, we withdrew and hid ourselves.

But God, in His rich mercy and because of His great love came to us and reconciled us back through His son Jesus Christ. Now we come boldly to His throne of grace to receive mercy and find grace in time of need. (Eph 2:4-6; Heb 4:16)

Jesus came to overcome the world

“I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech but will tell you plainly about the Father. In that day you will ask in my name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf; for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father.”

“His disciples said, ‘Ah, now you are speaking plainly and not using figurative speech! Now we know that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you; this is why we believe that you came from God.’ Jesus answered them, ‘Do you now believe? Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” –John 16:25-33

In Christ, *NOTHING* can separate us from God and His love! (Ro. 8:35-39) Why? Because Christ became sin for us, carrying the full weight of the world on Himself to the Cross so that the **justice** of God might be fulfilled through the punishment of death and the **glory** of God magnified through the salvation of sinners (and their radically changed lives). (Ro. 8:1-4)

Christ suffered. He was shamed and put to death, yet through it all He lived righteously overcoming every earthly and fleshly obstacle as He paved for us a way of life aligned with His Father’s original plan.

We don’t live by our own strength, but we take heart because Jesus overcame what threatens to overcome us.

How Did Jesus Do All of This?

Every moment of Christ's life mattered. It isn't necessarily all recorded in the Bible because it isn't needed for us to be able to know the Father. But what Christ experienced on this earth and how He responded to each experience was absolutely vital in breaking the law of our flesh and establishing a new law, the law of the Spirit. However, all of Christ's life hangs on two significant events: His death and resurrection.

If Christ had died and never risen again, he would have proven to be a liar and just another man.

If Christ had resurrected without dying, aside from the obvious fact that He would not have actually risen again, He would not have fulfilled our punishment.

Relationship with the only true God is only possible because justice has been administered for our sins. It's just that it wasn't administered to us. Jesus took that blow.



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The ability to walk in power and victory over sin is only possible because Christ rose again. He defeated death and therefore, sin no longer has dominion over us. (Ro. 6:9, 13-14)

Good Friday, the day we remember the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, and Easter, the day we celebrate His resurrection are more monumental to the Christian faith than Christmas because it is in the death of Christ we learn to love others and in His resurrection we learn to live without fear because of the glorified Son of God. Sadly, Christmas has done more to cultivate selfishness than worship, which is what people did when they realized God was truly with them.

I wonder why the death and resurrection of Christ don't get as much attention as His birth? Does it make us feel uncomfortable? When we do talk about it, we often glory in the fact that God loves us so much to die for us, but we don't finish the story. I don't think we understand what actually happened when He died and rose again. At least, I don't always fully understand. Writing this out has been an exercise of faith and worship for me, but I know I missed so much more that could have been included. I also have many questions; things I don't understand as I study different passages.

But what I know for sure, is that without the death and resurrection of Christ, He would not have perfectly represented the Father, He would not have completed the works that the Father gave Him to do, He would not have fulfilled the Father's will, he could not sympathize with us in our suffering or make a way to know the Father and have eternal life, He would not have set anyone free nor would he have reconciled mankind to God, and most importantly, He would have failed to overcome sin and death.

He did all of this by becoming a high priest and perfectly fulfilling the law through death and resurrection, and establishing a better covenant by putting His law into the hearts of anyone who believes that He is the Christ and was sent by the only true God.

“Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; thus it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying,

'See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain.' But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second.

"For he finds fault with them when he says:

'Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord,

when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel

and with the house of Judah,

not like the covenant that I made with their fathers

on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt.

For they did not continue in my covenant,

and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord.

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel

after those days, declares the Lord:

I will put my laws into their minds,

and write them on their hearts,

and I will be their God,

and they shall be my people.

And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor

and each one his brother, saying, "Know the Lord,"

for they shall all know me,

from the least of them to the greatest.

For I will be merciful toward their iniquities,

and I will remember their sins no more.'

“In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.” –Hebrews 8

How Can I Personally Experience Jesus?

“So Christ is God with us, and He has made a way to experience relationship with God the Father through coming to earth and paying our penalty and defeating sin by rising again. I get that, now. But how do I know Him *personally*?”

I wish I had an easy three-step plan you could follow to discover God intimately for yourself. But I don't. Sadly, we tend to disciple people that way.

“Read your Bible and obey what it says! And pray!”

But that doesn't cultivate belief in God; it cultivates behavioral changes.

Right behavior regardless of belief in Jesus and love of God is nothing more than ignorant manipulation. Christ wants you to believe Him and the One who sent Him. He wants you to know Him and discover Him for yourself so that He can radically transform your life and be glorified in and through you.

I only have one simple answer for how I have personally experienced Jesus. And that is, through faith.

Your right, it's kind of vague. It's not that measurable. It means that I can be doing something and God is still not showing up. At least, not in any real tangible way. It takes me out of control and allows Him the freedom to show Himself whenever He wishes. I don't like that. I'd rather He show Himself whenever *I* wish.

But here's the thing: when I by faith say, “God, I believe you are who you say you are and I believe you actually sent your son to take the punishment I deserved and that He not only died as a result, but conquered sin and death by rising again and now I can

experience relationship with You because I am free to walk in newness of life.”—when I say that, *in faith*, and let God transform my heart and begin to reveal Himself on His timetable--as He *does*, my belief grows deeper and I have a greater love for Him and fuller worship of Him.

That’s the only way I have experienced Jesus. And as I have deeper experiences with Him, they are all through faith.

FAITH

VERSUS

FORMULA

COMPARING 2 APPROACHES TO
EXPERIENCING CHRIST

 <p>Faith says I read the Bible because I believe it is Your word to me</p>	 <p>Formula says read your Bible and pray and you will experience Christ</p>
Faith is belief focused	Formula is behavior focused
Faith is worship of God followed through with obedience	Formula is manipulation of God through obedience
Faith produces transformed hearts that love God	Formula produces a cold dislike for God's word

“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.” –Hebrews 10:19-23

Jesus Is the Founder and Perfecter of Our Faith

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.” –Hebrews 12:1-2

Hallelujah! Thanks for reading this! I believe it is the longest single post I have ever written. :) I'd love to hear from you (if you actually read the whole way through). What does Christ's death and resurrection mean to you? How have you experienced Jesus personally in the last year? Week? Today? Disciples of Christ ought to have current testimonies of His work in their lives. Let's share them together! Leave a comment by [clicking here](#).

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