

The Divine “Must” of a Crucified Christ

Luke: All Things New



Series Goal

That Mercy Hill Church would be made new as we follow the One who is making all things new!



Sermon Text

Luke 9:18-22



Big Idea

Jesus tells His disciples that, contrary to their expectations, the Christ must suffer, be rejected, be killed, and be raised. When we ask why must such things be so, we are left with three basic answers: (1) God has planned it from all eternity; (2) God has promised it in all the Scriptures; and (3) God has been forgiving sinners on the basis of it since Adam.

(1) The Plan from Eternity

Here is perhaps the most difficult reason to grasp but it is the most fundamental, it is the starting place for this “must” that Jesus speak of here. I’m referring in this to a plan that began in the mysterious relation of the trinity, even before the first day of creation. It’s a plan that stands outside of time in God’s mind but is being worked out in time even as we sit here this morning. It’s what I’m calling The Plan from Eternity, but many theologians in years past have referred to it as the Covenant of Redemption. It is God’s covenant, not with man, but with Himself—Father, Son, Spirit. It is the solemn agreement between the persons of the trinity that, in view of the coming fall of humanity, they would work to redeem and restore. Before men ever fell, God knew, drew up a plan, and committed Himself to seeing it through—the Father planned it, the Son would execute it, and the Spirit would apply it to the elect to the praise of the glory of His grace!

(2) The Promise in Scripture

With the plan of God you have something from all eternity, something outside of time. But with the promises of God you have words concerning that plan spoken into history, into real time and space. From outside time He plans our redemption. But then within the bounds of time He promises to redeem. And what God promises must come to pass. Jesus Himself grounds the certainty, the necessity, the must-ness of His death and resurrection in the fact that it was written, or promised, of Him before (cf. Luke 18:31-33; 22:37; 24:44-46). And God never lies (cf. Titus 1:1-3).

(3) The Problem of Forgiveness

Now at first you might not understand what I mean by this, but I think the issue is made most plain in Rom 3:25-26. The crux of the matter is brought out there at the end of v. 25, where we read that God “in His divine forbearance . . . had passed over former sins.” In other words, God’s been forgiving sin since Adam. And this passing over of former sins makes God look unrighteous. It makes Him look unjust. It makes Him look like He has no concern for His own name or glory because He has so freely forgiven people who trample His own name and glory in the dirt. That’s a problem. That’s a massive problem. The righteousness, the justice, the name, the glory of God is at stake in all of this. And it’s this problem of forgiveness that necessitates the cross of Christ. Jesus must die if God’s glory would be vindicated.

Reflection Questions



- When’s the last time you really spent a bit of time “praying alone”? Is this a regular habit of yours? Why or why not? Why is such a thing of utmost importance? Why are we prone to neglect it?
- How does the reality of God’s plan bring security for you? Apply this truth to a current trial. How would it change things for you?
- In what ways are you tempted to feel God has lied to you? Be honest. We all feel this sometimes. How do you fight this temptation?