

We Will Overcome!

(Revelation 12:11)

Session I: 'The Blood of the Lamb'—the CROSS of Christ.

The cross is the starting point for all Christianity.

"I decided to know nothing among you, except Jesus Christ and Him crucified". 1 Corinthians 2:2

But if we're not careful it can become a cliché that we don't really understand.

Eg. '...the blood of the lamb...' – what does that mean?

There's a story about John Wimber: *not long after he had begun attending church, someone walked over to him and said, "Brother, have you been washed in the blood?" With a quizzical look on his face John replied, "Yuck, when do they do that around here?"*

So we want to unpack what we mean when we talk about 'the cross'.

To help these truths about the cross stick in your mind I'm going to use an acrostic ('a-cross-stick!').

Hat-tip: I first found this acrostic in a little book called Truth to Tell, by David Pawson.

With regards to <u>the devil</u> ,	it was a	Conquest.
With regards to <u>the world</u> ,	it was a	Reconciliation.
With regards to <u>God</u> ,	it was an	Offering.
With regards to <u>the law</u> ,	it was a	Satisfaction.
With regards to <u>the believer</u> ,	it was a	Substitution.

1. Conquest

a) The problem of evil.

Evil is often thought of as a problem for Christianity/theism:

Eg. the classic trilemma: "If God were all-good, He would only will good; if He were all-powerful, he would be able to do all that He wills. But there is evil. Therefore God is either not all-good, or all-powerful, or both."

But in fact evil is just as much—if not more!—of a problem for atheism: If there is no God, then there are no moral absolutes. And if there are no moral absolutes, we have no foundation to claim that anything is truly wrong. But this is not satisfying in the face of horrific evil: rape, genocide, ...

The cross demonstrates the evil of sin, and the justice, goodness, love and (with the resurrection) power of God.

Book Recommendation: UNSPEAKABLE: Facing Up To The Challenge of Evil, by Os Guinness.

b) Genesis 3: The Fall.

The Devil challenges and misquotes God's Word.

*Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "**Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"** Genesis 3:1*

Eve's (or Adam's?) mistake: Legalism. Puts extra fences around God's simple truth.

*The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, **God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'**"* Genesis 3:2-3

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*The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil **you shall not eat**, for in the day that you **eat** from it you will surely die."*
Genesis 2:16-17

How do we understand 'The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil'? Two options:

- i. Relational Life versus Mere Knowledge

*"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is **they that bear witness about me** [said Jesus]"*

John 5:39

- ii. God-given Morality versus Moral Relativity

*"In those days there was no king in Israel. **Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.**"* Judges 17:6; 21:25

'Desirable'. The problem of passion.

*"So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that **the tree was desirable** to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate"* Genesis 3:6a

*"**More to be desired** are they [the words of God] than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb."*

Psalm 19:10

Book recommendation:

Desiring God, John Piper

(free download available from <http://www.desiringgod.org/books/desiring-god>)

'Her husband with her'. Passivity, and the Call to Men to Take Action!

*"...and she also gave some to **her husband who was with her**, and he ate."*

Genesis 3:6b

*"And it was not Adam who was **deceived**, but the woman who was deceived and fell into transgression."*

1 Timothy 2:14

Aside: This isn't about denying the call of women to ministry. Here's a [complementarian](http://thinktheology.co.uk/blog/article/women-preachers-a-response-to-john-piper) argument that 1 Timothy 2 allows women "preaching a sermon in a local church" <http://thinktheology.co.uk/blog/article/women-preachers-a-response-to-john-piper>

*"Therefore, just as **sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin**, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— for sin indeed was in the world before the law [of Moses] was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like **the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.**"*
Romans 5:12-14

*"I have written to you, **young men**, because **you are strong**, and **the word of God abides in you**, and **you have overcome the evil one.**"*

1 John 2:14b

God's first question: 'Where are you?' (v.9) not 'What have you done?' (v.13)

*And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "**Where are you?**"*
Genesis 3:8-9

*He said, "Who told you that you were naked? **Have you eaten of the tree** of which I commanded you not to eat?" ... Then the Lord God said to the woman, "**What is this that you have done?**" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."*
Genesis 3:11,13

The First Gospel Promise: The 'Protoevangelion'. Genesis 3:15 comes before John 3:16!

*"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; **he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.**"*
Genesis 3:15

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'Clothed with animal skin'. V.21 The first sacrifice.

*"And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife **garments of skins** and clothed them."* Gen. 3:21

c) Christ's accomplishment: Regaining humanity's authority over creation.

*"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and **have dominion** over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and **over every living thing that moves on the earth.**"* (Genesis 1:27-28)

But that original sin gave our dominion away to the devil:

*"And the devil took him [Jesus, during the wilderness temptation] up and showed him **all the kingdoms of the world** in a moment of time, and said to him, "To you I will give **all this authority and their glory**, for it **has been delivered to me**, and I give it to whom I will."* (Luke 4:5-7)

*"Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For **only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death**. Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying."* (Hebrews 2:14-15, NLT)

But after his death and resurrection, *"Jesus came and said to them, '**All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me**. Go **therefore**...'* (Matthew 28:18)

Jesus is fully God, and as God he has always had ultimate authority. But the authority he is speaking about here is regained human authority. This is why he can say 'therefore' – he is recommissioning the disciples with the original mandate of humanity to extend God's kingdom.

d) The battle goes on!

*"What is man, that you are mindful of him... you have crowned him with glory and honor, putting everything in subjection under his feet." Now in putting everything in subjection to him [ie. to 'man'/humanity], He left nothing outside his control. **At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection** to him. But **we see... Jesus**, crowned with glory and honour..."* (Hebrews 2:6-9)

Jesus' victory is decisive, yet incomplete.

Second World War analogy:

D-Day -- 6 June 1944 : Allied forces regained a foothold in Western Europe

V-Day -- 8 May 1945: formal acceptance of Nazi Germany's surrender

On the one hand, "It is **finished!**" (John 19:30) ; but

"The God of peace will **soon** crush Satan under your feet" (Romans 16:20)

(Notice the reference to Genesis 3:15!)

Which is of course what we are talking about:

"And they have overcome the enemy..." (Revelation 12:11)

2. Reconciliation

a) The Word of Reconciliation

"For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

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*Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of **God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ**, and has given us the **ministry of reconciliation**, that is, that **God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself**, not imputing their trespasses to them, and **has committed to us the word of reconciliation**.*

*Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you **on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.*** (2 Corinthians 5:14-20)

*"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if **when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son**, much more, **having been reconciled**, we shall be saved by His life."* (Romans 5:8-10)

*"...through Him **to reconcile to Himself all things**, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. And **you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, He has now reconciled** in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him..."* (Colossians 1:19-22)

b) Some helpful distinctions

I think it's helpful to distinguish forgiveness (personal), pardon (legal), and reconciliation (relational).

Forgiveness is the intentional and voluntary process [and decision!] by which a victim of injustice undergoes a change in feelings and attitude regarding an offense, lets go of negative emotions such as vengefulness, with an increased ability to wish the offender well. Forgiveness is different from condoning (failing to see the action as wrong and in need of forgiveness), excusing (not holding the offender as responsible for the action), pardoning (granted by a representative of society, such as a judge), forgetting (removing awareness of the offense from consciousness), and reconciliation (restoration of a relationship). <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forgiveness> (10/10/2015)

So in God's case, His eternal nature means He has always been immediately forgiving—but He could not legally pardon sin until Jesus died for our sins.

*And the Lord passed before Moses and proclaimed, "The LORD, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, **forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin**, but **by no means clearing the guilty**, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."* (Exodus 34:6-7)

Transgression: Breaking a rule or law.

*"...where there is **no law there is no transgression**"*

Romans 4:15b

Sin: Falling short of a standard.

*"for **all have sinned and fall short** of the glory of God"*

Romans 3:23

Iniquity: The consequences of sin: including brokenness, guilt, punishment—and more sin!

*"Behold, **I was brought forth in iniquity...**"*

Psalms 51:5a

*"We have sinned **with our fathers**, We have **committed iniquity**, We have done wickedly."*

Psalms 106:6

(Hence iniquity is 'visited upon' the third and fourth generation. Ex.34:7b)

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c) The Power of Salvation

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for **it is the power of God for salvation** to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed **from faith to faith**, as it is written, “The righteous by faith shall live.”* Romans 1:16-17

The gospel message actually has the power to change people’s hearts and reconcile them to God!

Stories: Sharing the gospel with a dejected man from Glasgow and seeing his eyes light up.
 DTS evangelism with Rose: speaking to three Spanish girls and one starts weeping.

People just need to hear the message:

*Now **when they heard** this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”* Acts 2:37

*And **when the Gentiles heard** this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.* Acts 13:48

*Now **when they heard** of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, “We will hear you again about this.”* Acts 17:32

In particular, we never know how people will respond to the gospel until we tell them.

Consider the Apostle Paul!

*...formerly **I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent**. 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**. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience **as an example** to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.* 1 Timothy 1:13-16

Who are the people you know who you think least likely to respond to the gospel?

_____, _____, _____, _____.

Maybe they’re the ones who most need to hear it!

3. Offering to God – Sacrifice

*And John looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, “**Behold, the Lamb of God!**”* John 1:36

a) The Sacrifice of Isaac (Genesis 22:1-14)

*After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” He said, “**Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love**, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.” So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. Then Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; **I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you.**” And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. And Isaac said to his father Abraham, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” He said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but **where is the lamb for a burnt offering?**” Abraham said, “God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” **So they went both of them together.***

When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the

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wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and **took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son**. So Abraham called the name of that place, "The Lord will provide" ['Jehovah Jireh']; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided."

The sacrifice of the 'beloved son' 22:2

"Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love..."

The first mention of the word 'worship' in the Bible

...I and the boy will go over there and worship... 22:5

Note: Isaac is a voluntary participant—he offers no resistance.

...So they went both of them together. 22:8

Isaac could have been as old as thirty-seven! (cf. Genesis 23:1) He is at least old and strong enough to carry the fire-wood – and thus to resist Abraham, who is more than one hundred years old.

Abraham exercises resurrection-faith (cf. Heb. 11:17)

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." **He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead**, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. Hebrews 11:17

God provides a substitute. (22:13)

Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and **took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son**.

Thus Abraham was shown a prophetic picture of the Cross:

"Your father **Abraham rejoiced to see my day. He saw it** and was glad." John 8:56

b) Passover Lamb (Exodus 12:3-13)

Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. Your **lamb shall be without blemish**, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.

"Then they shall **take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses** in which they eat it. They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's

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*Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. **The blood shall be a sign** for you, on the houses where you are. And **when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you**, when I strike the land of Egypt.*

*It was **just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come** for him to leave this world and go to the Father...*

John 13:1b

*Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. **For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.***

1 Corinthians 5:7

c) Day of Atonement

*Now the LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered profane fire before the LORD, and died; ²and the LORD said to Moses: “Tell Aaron your brother **not to come at just any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die**; for I will appear in the cloud above the mercy seat.*

³“Thus Aaron shall come into the Holy Place: with the blood of a young bull as a sin offering, and of a ram as a burnt offering. ⁴He shall put the holy linen tunic and the linen trousers on his body; he shall be girded with a linen sash, and with the linen turban he shall be attired. These are holy garments. Therefore he shall wash his body in water, and put them on. ⁵And he shall take from the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats as a sin offering, and one ram as a burnt offering.

⁶“Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house. ⁷He shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. ⁸**Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat.** ⁹**And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the LORD’s lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering.** ¹⁰**But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, and to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness.**

¹¹“And **Aaron shall bring the bull of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house**, and shall kill the bull as the sin offering which is for himself. ¹²Then he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from the altar before the LORD, with his hands full of sweet incense beaten fine, and bring it inside the veil. ¹³And he shall put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on the Testimony, lest he die. ¹⁴He shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the mercy seat on the east side; and before the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.

¹⁵“**Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people**, bring its blood inside the veil, do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat. ¹⁶**So he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins**; and so he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness. ¹⁷There shall be no man in the tabernacle of meeting when he goes in to make atonement in the Holy Place, until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself, for his household, and for all the assembly of Israel. ¹⁸And he shall go out to the altar that is before

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the LORD, and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and some of the blood of the goat, and put it on the horns of the altar all around. ¹⁹Then he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times, cleanse it, and consecrate it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.

²⁰“And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place, the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat. ²¹**Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. ²²The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.**

²³“Then Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of meeting, shall take off the linen garments which he put on when he went into the Holy Place, and shall leave them there. ²⁴And he shall wash his body with water in a holy place, put on his garments, **come out and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people, and make atonement for himself and for the people.** ²⁵The fat of the sin offering he shall burn on the altar. ²⁶And he who released the goat as the scapegoat shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp. ²⁷The bull for the sin offering and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the Holy Place, shall be carried outside the camp. And they shall burn in the fire their skins, their flesh, and their offal. ²⁸Then he who burns them shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp.

²⁹“This shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you. ³⁰For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. ³¹It is a sabbath of solemn rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. It is a statute forever. ³²And the priest, who is anointed and consecrated to minister as priest in his father’s place, shall make atonement, and put on the linen clothes, the holy garments; ³³then he shall make atonement for the Holy Sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tabernacle of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. ³⁴This shall be an everlasting statute for you, to make atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year.” And he did as the LORD commanded Moses. Leviticus 16:1-34

Hebrews is all about how Christ fulfils the sacrifices and priesthood of the Mosaic covenant – and in particular the Day of Atonement.

But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood **He entered the Most Holy Place once for all**, having obtained eternal redemption. Hebrews 9:11-12

Therefore, brethren, **having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus**, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, **through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God**, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Hebrews 10:19-22

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Aside: **FAITH** = Full Assurance In The Heart

For **the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.** Therefore **let us go forth to Him, outside the camp,** bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come. Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. Hebrews 13:11-15

d) Burnt Offering (in particular, the Morning & Evening Sacrifice)

Now **this is what you shall offer on the altar: two lambs of the first year, day by day continually.** One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight... This shall be **a continual burnt offering throughout your generations** at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the Lord, where I will meet you to speak with you. Exodus 29:38-39,42

*'If his offering is **a burnt offering** of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the Lord. Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him. He shall kill the bull before the Lord; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of meeting. ... And the priest shall burn all on the altar as a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a **fragrant aroma** to the Lord.* Leviticus 1:3-5,8b

Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, **a fragrant offering** and sacrifice to God. Ephesians 5:2

e) Sin Offering

And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the people of Israel, saying, If anyone sins unintentionally in any of the Lord's commandments about things not to be done, and does any one of them, or if the anointed priest sins, thus bringing guilt on the people, then he shall offer for the sin that he has committed a bull from the herd without blemish to the Lord **for a sin offering.** Lev. 4:1-3

For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh **to be a sin offering** ... Rom 8:3

f) And there's more...

And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of... Hebrews 11:32

The Grain Offering (Leviticus 2) ; Fellowship Offering (Leviticus 3) ; Trespass Offering (Leviticus 5)

4. Satisfaction of the Law

For **the wages of sin is death**... Romans 6:23a

Truly **no man can ransom another, or give to God the price of his life, for the ransom of a soul is costly** and can never suffice... But **God will ransom my soul** from the power of the grave, for he will receive me. Psalm 49:7-8, 15

"For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and **to give his life as a ransom for many.**" Mark 10:45

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*For **God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do.** By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, **in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled...*** Romans 8:3-4

The Policeman Illustration

Suppose there are two good friends, one of whom is a policeman. Suppose one steals from the other.

Because of their friendship, the policeman wants to forgive his friend's crime.

But because of his responsibility as a policeman he has to arrest him.

Particularly because there is also an enemy, who has been falsely accusing the friend already—now there is substance to his accusations.

And if the policeman does not act, the enemy can also accuse the policeman of failing in his duty.

So the policeman must put his friend in prison.

But because he knows the law better than the enemy (after all, he is a policeman!),

he knows that there is an alternative to being in prison—if you pay a substantial fine.

So in sacrificial friendship, he pays the fine – at even greater cost than that which was stolen from him.

And so the friend is now free to choose to walk out of prison, for the just requirement of the law has been satisfied, and so the enemy is silenced!

5. Substitution

We are all Barabbas

*Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. And they had then **a notorious prisoner called Barabbas.** So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, **"Whom do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?"***

*For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up... Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor again said to them, **"Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas."** Pilate said to them, **"Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?"** They all said, **"Let him be crucified!"** And he said, **"Why, what evil has he done?"** But they shouted all the more, **"Let him be crucified!"***

*So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, **"I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves."** And all the people answered, **"His blood be on us and on our children!"** Then **he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.** Matthew 27:15-26*

Isaiah 53: The High Point of Biblical Prophecy

Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;

Yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

*But **He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities;***

The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way;

*And **the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.***

Isaiah 53:4-6

In Acts 8:26-40 we find Philip being led to an Ethiopian eunuch reading this passage:

*and **beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.***

Acts 8:35

We Will Overcome!

(Revelation 12:11)

Substitutionary Controversy

But in recent years the idea of substitution has been mired in controversy.

Steve Chalke, The Lost Message of Jesus

"The fact is that the cross isn't a form of **cosmic child abuse**—a vengeful Father, punishing his Son for an offence he has not even committed. Understandably, both people inside and outside of the Church have found this twisted version of events morally dubious and a huge barrier to faith. Deeper than that, however, is that such a concept stands in total contradiction to the statement: 'God is love'. If the cross is a personal act of violence perpetrated by God towards humankind but borne by his Son, then it makes a mockery of Jesus' own teaching to love your enemies and to refuse to repay evil with evil."

John Piper, in response:

"With one cynical stroke of the pen, the triumph of God's love over God's wrath in the death of his beloved Son is **blasphemed**..."

What can we say amongst all this? There are four clear truths:

i. It was Necessary; ii. It was Agony; iii. It was Voluntary; iv. It's a Mystery.

It was Necessary

We can be tempted to deny the necessity of the cross -- and this is a demonic lie.

*He began to teach them that the Son of Man **must** suffer many things... Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. But...He rebuked Peter, saying, "**Get behind Me, Satan!**"* Mark 8:31-33

The impossibility of salvation being accomplished other than by the cross is established beyond doubt by Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane:

*Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, **if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me**. Yet not as I will, but as you will."... He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, **if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done**."* Matthew 26:39,42 (cf. Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42)

It was Agony

We need to account for the extreme spiritual agony evidently experienced by Jesus on the cross:

*And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "**My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**"* Mark 15:34

We can meditate on the excruciating physical pain of crucifixion, but that alone does not account for Jesus' suffering. Christian martyrs have been crucified and remained joyful in the midst of torture.

Even contemplating the cross in prayer was agonising:

*And He knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if it is Your will, **take this cup away from Me**; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And **being in agony** He was praying very fervently; and **His sweat became like drops of blood**, falling down upon the ground.* Luke 22:44

So what was 'this cup' that Jesus was referring to?

*Thus the Lord, the God of Israel, said to me: "**Take from my hand this cup of the wine of wrath**, and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. **They shall drink and stagger** and be crazed because of the sword that I am sending among them."* Jeremiah 25:15-29

We Will Overcome!

(Revelation 12:11)

*For in the hand of the LORD **there is a cup with foaming wine**, well mixed, and he pours out from it, and **all the wicked of the earth shall drain it down to the dregs**.* Psalm 75:8

*He will rain coals on the wicked; **fire and sulfur and a scorching wind shall be the portion of their cup**. For the Lord is righteous...* Psalm 11:6-7a

(see also Isaiah 51:17,22-23 ; Isaiah 63:3-6 ; Ezekiel 23:31-33 ; Habakkuk 2:16 ; Revelation 14:6-12)

We have to face the difficult subject of divine wrath:

*...what shall we say? **Is God unrighteous to inflict wrath on us?** (I speak in a human way.) May it never be! For otherwise, how will God judge the world?* Romans 3:5b-6

Note: Jesus spoke about hell more than anyone else (Mark 9:43-48; Matt. 5:21-30; Matt. 18:8-9; Luke 16:19-31).

It was Voluntary

This is an adequate answer to the accusation of 'cosmic child abuse'. Jesus willingly, knowingly, voluntarily went to the cross to be crucified – for us!

*For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but **I lay it down of my own accord**.* John 10:17-18a

*"My Father, if possible, may this cup be taken from me. **Yet not as I will, but as you will.**"* Matt.26:39

*Jesus told Peter "Sheathe your sword! **Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given Me?**"* Jn. 18:11

*... Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, **who for the joy set before Him endured the cross**, despising the shame...* Hebrews 12:2a

It's a Mystery

Lest over-simplistic theology makes us harsh and judgemental, we also need to remember that "**Even angels long to look into these things**" 1 Peter 1:12

The problem with 'Punitive Substitution' is that, at least humanly speaking, Justice does not allow someone to be actively punished for another's crime. This is the difference between criminal law and civil law: one can pay another's penalty ('Penal Satisfaction'), but not suffer their punishment.

Part of the problem is that human analogies can only go so far to explain supernatural realities. Jesus didn't just die to pay the penalty for our sin, he 'became sin':

God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us... 2 Corinthians 5:21

And if we're honest with ourselves, we don't fully know what this means! Even Paul didn't. *To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles **the unsearchable riches of Christ**, and to make all see what is the fellowship of **the mystery**, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now **the manifold [πολυποίκιλος (polypoikilos) – 'many-coloured', 'multi-faceted'] wisdom of God** might be made known...* Ephesians 3:8-10

Fortunately, we don't have to fully understand it –

we just have to believe it, experience it, and testify to it.

*But we preach Christ crucified, a **stumbling block** to Jews and **folly** to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God....* 1 Corinthians 1:23