

Episode 4

Peter Kline

Why did Jesus Die?



1. Why was Jesus sentenced to die?

Many sources of evidence support the claim that Jesus died. Try to think about Jesus' death without thinking of the resurrection.

In what ways is the death of Jesus significant to you, and your community?

Jesus suffered a humiliating and painful, yet "ordinary" death for the crimes of blasphemy and sedition. What is the equivalent in our society today? Imagine God suffering a contemporary "ordinary" criminal death and place God there. How does that illuminate our mission?

2. In particular, why does blasphemy matter?

The religious and political authorities accused Jesus of blasphemy, of declaring "holy" things that his religion and society declared "unholy".

Identify the ways Jesus would work in your community today – forgiving the unforgivable and touching the unclean.

Gather ideas for ways to "welcome the unwelcome" into our household of faith.

3. What were the details of Jesus' death?

Jesus is a "poor, peasant criminal" and his death as "ordinary". In what ways does that description challenge or stretch your ideas of Jesus?

4. Why do some people try to prove that Jesus did not die?

Peter suggests that God entered into a violent world that we created, became subject to it and then emerged to say "peace be with you!" Describe how this view informs your understanding of what it means to be a Christian.

5. Why does it matter so much to Christians that Jesus died on the cross?

Peter mentioned some of the different ways that Christians have thought about Jesus' death over the years, including Christus Victor and penal substitution. Are these new ideas for you?

How have you made sense of the death part of the Jesus story?

In what ways is the death of Jesus important to your understanding of the drama of Easter and our Christian lives?

6. Why does this matter to you personally?