


the  Venues  
Go Deep  
Did God Kill Jesus?  
What Does the Cross Mean?  
3.24.19

*Do you have any crosses in the form of artwork or jewelry?  
What to you is the most recognizable logo? Nike? McDonalds? Apple? Other?  
What stories have you heard preachers tell to explain the meaning of Jesus' crucifixion?*

Read 1 Corinthians 15:3  
*What does it mean that Jesus died for our sins?*

Christians have been trying to answer that question since the beginning of Christianity.  
*Do you think they came up with the same answer?*

Here are the main theories throughout the years:

1. **Christus Victor (Latin for Christ the Victor) Theory** - was the main view for the first 1000 years said that the purpose of Jesus' death on the cross was to beat down the devil, evil, and death.
2. **The Ransom Theory** - Yep, it means how it sounds. Jesus' death on the cross was the payment of a ransom to... THE DEVIL!
3. **The Satisfaction Theory.** A Benedictine monk named Abelard (1033-1109) didn't like the devil having power of God so he introduced a twist: This time the payment of Jesus' death was paid to God. God's honor had been violated by humanity's sin and needed to be satisfied. This theory made sense in the days of feudalism - with peasants and knights and Kings.
4. **The Moral Influence Theory.** About 100 years after Anselm, Peter Abelard reacted against Anselm's theory and focused on changing our perception of God as not harsh and judgmental, but as loving. The cross, to Peter, is for us an example of love.
5. **The Penal Substitution Theory.** This is the Satisfaction Theory on steroids. It was developed by Martin Luther and John Calvin so people who have grown up in a Protestant church, like I (Phillip) did, were probably taught that this is the only theory, or that this is the right one and the other ones are heresy. This theory says we deserve to be punished for our sin but Jesus took our place and the punishment (wrath of God) went to him.

RC Sproul, a Reformed (Reformation) theologian, put it like this: "*Jesus is our asbestos suit from the hot wrath of God against sinners.*"

*Which theory do you hold? As you think about that question, ask yourself these questions:  
What does this model say about God?  
Does it fit with the image of God we see in Jesus?  
Does it create in us a love for or a fear of God?*