

# The Cross

## (Bridge Diagram)



At the heart of our faith is Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection 3 days later. But why did Jesus have to die and what is the relevance of his death and resurrection for our lives?

### Scripture

Read the following Bible verses about the significance of Jesus' death and his resurrection. What stands out to you?

Romans 5:6-8 (Paul writes about Jesus' death)

John 3:16-17 (Jesus talks about why he came)

Colossians 1:21-22 (Paul explains what Jesus' death achieved)

1 Peter 3:18 (Peter explains what Jesus' death achieved)

What is your understanding of why Jesus died for you?

How does this make you feel?

### Story

'A long time ago, a farmer was pulling a wagon into town with two horses. Stopping in front of one of the shops, he was about to enter when something startled the horses and they took flight. The farmer sprang in front of them and heroically seized the reins. However, the horses continued to dash off down the street pulling the wagon behind them. The man clung to the bridles as they rushed on, until the horses, who were still wild with frenzied, rose on their haunches and crashed down on the man injuring him fatally.

When the people came and rescued the bleeding body of the man, and found him at death's door. A friend bent over him and tenderly asked him: "Why did you sacrifice your life for just these horses and wagon?" He gasped with his breath as his spirit departed, "Go and look in the wagon."

They turned, and there, asleep on the straw, lay his little boy. As they laid the mangled form of the hero in his grave, no one said, "The sacrifice was too great."

[Adapted from [www.moreillustrations.com](http://www.moreillustrations.com)]

How does this story deepen your understanding of what Jesus did for you through the cross?

## Shape

The **Bridge Diagram** illustrates a key part of what Jesus accomplished for us through his death on the cross.

Imagine you have two cliffs with a chasm in the middle. On one side of the chasm stands **fallen humanity**. Existence on this side of the chasm is characterised by brokenness, sadness, despair, hatred, etc. - which is summarised in the word **death**.

On the other side of the chasm is **God**. Existence with God is characterised by peace, hope, joy, love, etc. - which is summarised in the word **life**.



Fallen humanity is unable to get across the chasm by their own efforts and so cannot restore their relationship with God or experience the life that is in him. But God has been able to do this, by sending his own Son, Jesus Christ, to bridge the gap. Those who turn to God, relying on Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, can step across the chasm and receive a restored relationship with God, experiencing the full life that is in him.

## So What?

In groups, discuss the following questions:

In what ways have you experienced 'death' as a result of broken relationship with God?

In what ways did you try to restore the relationship with God through your own efforts? How did this go?

How did you come to trust in Jesus' sacrifice and a restored relationship with God through him?

Since trusting in Jesus' work on the cross, in what ways have you experienced 'life' in God?

Spend some time as a group thanking and praising Jesus for his amazing love demonstrated through the cross and praying for one another to sacrificially love him in return.

## Grow Further

### Memory Verse:

1 Peter 3:18

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.

**Other Bible passages:**

- Isaiah 53:3-7
- Mark 15:21-41
- Romans 5:6-17
- Hebrews 10:16-25

**Other resources:**

Alpha Course Video – Why did Jesus die? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IIHqYqIjKVw>