

# Talk 3 – Why Did Jesus Die?

Duration 30 Minutes  
HTB Transcripts



## Key:

**P – Personal story** that Nicky Gumbel tells in his Alpha talk. These may be replaced with a live speaker's personal story or the speaker may tell the story about Nicky in the same way Nicky tells stories about others.

**S – Story** that Nicky tells about someone else (about a friend or a story he heard or read about).

**Q/Q\* – Quotes** are key to the talk to emphasise a point and to enable guests to engage and relate the material. We acknowledge that some of the people quoted may not be well known in your local context, however, please be mindful of the value of what is said in the quoted material; not just the guests' knowledge of the person being quoted. If you choose to replace a quote, it should be replaced with something equally effective to maintain the balance of teaching, story, and references to other information sources. In general, we encourage you not to omit or replace quotes unless absolutely necessary. Quotes marked in the margin with a \* symbol are key quotes and should not be omitted from the talk.

**Key Bible Passages** are identified and you may wish to display these visually for your guests.

**Red type** identifies a part of the key teaching text that could be removed or altered for contextualisation.

Text left untouched is the standard key message content of the Alpha talk.

## Talk summary:

- The cross is the symbol for Christianity. Why?
- 'The Son of God' – that is, Jesus – 'loved me and gave himself for me'. If you had been the only person in the world, Jesus would have died for *you*. He loves *you* that much.
- Why did Jesus die?
- The problem: 'All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.' We've all fallen short of God's standard
- Sin is powerful: (4 P's – pollution, power, penalty, partition) – it destroys our lives and separates us from God
- Jesus came to die for us – to take our sin upon himself – so that we can be free to have a relationship with God
- What are the results of the cross (pollution is cleansed, power is broken, penalty has been paid, partition is removed): Relationship with God and with others restored – forgiveness is possible.

**NOTE:** Parts of the talk may need to be contextualised for other contexts or cultures but make sure you maintain the key elements of humour and personal testimony. Notice how quotes, and stories are

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used throughout to add emphasis to the main points of the talk (theology and testimony).

	You are loved. That's the message at the heart of the New Testament, and that's the message at the heart of this
<p><b>P</b></p> <p><i>Find an example of the cross used in popular culture or a similar picture of a tattoo, posing the question, 'why?' – what is so special about the cross + the death of Jesus</i></p> <p><i>The picture shows Myles holding his baby son in his arms. If you do not have a similar example, omit the line in red.</i></p>	<p>Our daughter Becs is married to a guy called Myles. He's a rapper, he's a great guy, and he has a tattoo of a cross on his back. And I asked his permission to take a photograph of it, and he was delighted for me to take the photograph, and he was particularly thrilled with the definition on his shoulder muscle! <i>[photo on screen]</i></p> <p>The cross is the symbol of Christianity. It's kind of like the 'logo' of Christianity. <b>And in this picture there's a clue to why Jesus died and to why it's become the symbol of Christianity.</b></p>
<p><b>P</b></p> <p><i>Use your own personal example of how your understanding of the meaning of the cross changed as you discovered the real message of the cross in the verse</i></p>	<p>I was an atheist. Neither of my parents were churchgoers. And it was through reading this, through reading the New Testament, that I had an encounter with Jesus. And then I discovered this: I'd heard, in R.E. lessons and things, about the fact that 'Jesus died for the sin of the whole world', and it didn't really mean anything to me. But then I discovered this, and this <b>blew my mind</b></p>
<p><b>Galatians 2:20</b></p>	<p>There's a verse in the New Testament where Paul says this: <b>'The Son of God' – that is, Jesus – 'loved <i>me</i> and gave himself for <i>me</i>'.</b></p>

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	<p>So, why? Why would that be necessary? What's the problem? Well, you are created in the image of God. That means you are a masterpiece! There's something amazing about every human being, something noble, something beautiful, something magnificent. Human beings are capable of such extraordinary creativity, because they're created in the image of God, and God is creative. They can produce great music, art, literature. Human beings are capable of great self-sacrifice, devotion, kindness.</p> <p>But there's also another side to the coin. We are also capable of bad stuff. You only have to open the newspaper, look at the news – there are some terrible things going on around the world. There is evil going on around the world. But the world is more complex than just saying, 'Well, those are evil people, and these are the good people,' because it's more mixed. People who are capable of great love and devotion and kindness can also do some bad stuff.</p>
<p><i>Personalise the text in red.</i></p> <p><b>Romans 3:23</b></p>	<p>I've done some stuff in my life that I deeply regret. I've hurt some people. I've even hurt people that I love.</p> <p>And the apostle Paul puts it like this. He says: 'All of us have sinned...'</p> <p>Now, sin. Sin: that's kind of a word that's changed meaning in our culture. 'Sin' has almost become like a good word: One advert for ice-cream used the slogan, 'It's so good, it's sinful!'. But sin in the Bible is the bad stuff. And Paul says: 'All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.' What does that mean?</p> <p>Well, <i>all</i> of us have sinned. I personally find it so hard to admit I do anything wrong. Those words 'I am sorry', they just won't</p>

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S

I was amused to see some of the things people have written on their accident claim forms when they're trying to explain to their insurance company why they had the accident:

One man wrote this: 'Going home, I drove into the wrong house and collided with a tree that wasn't there.'

Another man wrote this: 'The other car collided with mine without giving warning of his intention.'

Another person wrote this: 'The guy was all over the road. I had to swerve a number of times before I hit him.'

Someone else wrote this: 'I'd been driving my car for forty years when I fell asleep at the wheel and had an accident.'

Someone else wrote: 'The pedestrian had no idea which way to go, so I ran over him.'

And finally this: 'I pulled away from the side of the road, glanced at my mother-in-law, and headed over the

But I think, if we're honest, we've all done stuff that we know is wrong. And Paul says '**all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**'.

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John Collins was the vicar at Holy Trinity Brompton, the home of Alpha in London, from 1980–1985. He's now ninety years of age. He's a very holy, amazing man – a very gracious, very loving, very kind, very humble man. Also has a great gift of explaining the Bible. And sometimes a rather arrogant young guy would come to him and say, you know, 'I have no need of God. I lead a good life.'

So John would use this illustration. He'd say: 'Supposing there's a scale here on this pillar of all the people who've ever lived. Who would you put at the top?' And they'd say, 'Well, maybe Mother Teresa' or their mother would go at the top. And he'd say, 'Well, who would you put at the bottom?' And they'd say, 'Well, maybe Adolf Hitler' or their boss would go at the bottom. And then John would say, 'Well, I think you'd agree we're all of us somewhere between there and there.' And John being a very humble man, he'd say: 'I'm probably somewhere down there, and you're probably somewhere up there,' and the guy would nod and say, 'Yeah, that's probably the case.'

And then John would say: 'Well, what do you think the standard is?' And the guy would say: 'Well, maybe the standard's the ceiling.' And John would say: 'No, look at the

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<p>Omit text in red if the four P's does not work in your local translation.</p>	<p>The glory of God was revealed in Jesus. And compared to him, we all fall a very long way short.</p> <p>So you might say, 'Well, if that's the case, we're all in the same boat. Why does it matter?' It matters, according to the New Testament, for these reasons, <b>and I've put them under four Ps to make them easier to remember:</b></p> <p>First of all, the <i>pollution</i> of sin. The things we do wrong spoil our lives. It's like the pollution of the environment is a big problem at the moment, but Jesus says it's possible to pollute your soul. The stuff that we do wrong can spoil our relationships.</p> <p>And then there's the <i>power</i> of sin. The bad stuff in our life, the bad habits, they're very addictive. Jesus says: <b>'Whoever sins is</b></p>
<p><b>P</b></p> <p>Replace this story with your own example. Your example should be light-hearted, while effectively illustrating how easily addiction can take hold.</p>	<p>When our elder son was working in London and living with us: he's got a very sweet tooth, and one time he came home with a tray of Krispy Kreme doughnuts. He had sixteen Krispy Kreme doughnuts. And I thought, 'I'm going to try one of these.' And I actually only ate half of it, and I felt physically sick! And I said to him, 'You know, I just tried one of these doughnuts, and I felt physically sick.' He said, 'Yeah, they do make you feel a bit ill.</p> <p>But you kind of feel the only thing that might make you feel better is to eat another one!' And I thought, 'That is a great definition of addiction: it's the stuff we do that kind of makes us feel terrible, but we feel the only way to feel better is to do</p>
	<p>And then the third P is the <i>penalty</i> of sin. There's something within us that cries out for justice. When we see these kind of horrific things that are going on around the world, we say: 'That ought not to happen. They should be stopped. They should be brought to justice.'</p>

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P

*Use your own  
example of a time  
when you've had  
double standards.*

But personally speaking, I have a very different standard for other people than I have for myself. Let me give you a trivial example.

For years I biked in here from Clapham, and there's a bike-and-bus lane – which is wonderful, because in the morning it was always very – huge amount of traffic and it would take about forty-five minutes in a car; fifteen minutes on a bike. And I would sail past all the traffic, and I loved it. Occasionally, cars would come into the bike lane, the bus-and-bike lane, and it would infuriate me: these wretched cars! What were they doing in this lane? And I happened to know there was a police trap, and I'd think: 'I hope they get caught! So irritating.'

Sometimes it would rain and it wasn't convenient to come in by bike, and I'd come in by car. And I'd look at these two lanes: there's this lane with all these cars and a completely empty bus-and-bike lane. I mean, why have a completely empty bus-and-bike lane? So I'd nip into the bus-and-bike lane, whizz down it in the car, and cut in just before the police trap. And I thought that was fine for me to do it. After all, it did say 'Buses and Cyclists', and I am a cyclist!

Romans 2:1

And what St Paul says is this:

**'You, therefore, have no excuse, when you pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.'**

KEY: **Personal Story**

**Story**

**Quotes**

**Key Bible Passages**



<p>Personalise text in red according to the story you use above.</p>	<p>And for me it's not just biking; it's a whole lot of other things as well.</p> <p>And then the fourth P is the <i>partition</i> of sin. You know how it is when we have offended someone, or someone has offended us, we don't want to look them in the eye. We try and avoid them because something's come between us. And what the New Testament says is the stuff that we do wrong has caused a partition between us and God.</p> <p>That's, if you like, the bad news. But the good news is this – this is the solution: God loves <i>you</i>; the Son of God loved <i>me</i> and gave himself for me. God has come to this earth in the person of his Son to do something about it, to die for you and</p>
	<h2>Talk Point 2</h2> <p>THE SOLUTION</p>
<p>1 Peter 2:24</p>	<p>The apostle Peter put it like this:</p> <p><b>'He himself' – that is, Jesus – 'bore our sins' – that's your sins and my sins – 'in his body on the tree' – on the cross – '...by his wounds you have been healed'.</b></p>
	<p>If you like, it's been described as like the 'self-substitution of God'. God substituted himself for you. What does that mean?</p>

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S

In July 1941, a prisoner escaped from Auschwitz, and as a reprisal the Gestapo selected ten men arbitrarily to die in a starvation bunker. And one of the men selected, his name was Francis Gajowniczek [*Guy-ov-nicheck*]. And when he was selected, he cried out. He said, 'Oh,' he said, 'my poor wife and my children – they'll never see me again!' And at that moment a little guy, a Polish man in glasses, wire frames, stepped out of line, he took off his cap, and he said: 'Look, I'm a Catholic priest, so I don't have a wife or children.' He said, 'I would like to die instead of that man.'

To everyone's amazement, his offer was accepted, and he was taken to the starvation bunker. And on 14 August he was the last one to die. He kept up an amazing atmosphere, apparently. He got them singing hymns and praying. But on 14 August they needed the bunker for other people, and they gave him a lethal injection of carbolic acid, and that's how he died.

Forty-one years later, his death was put in its proper perspective. There, in a crowd of 150,000 people, 26 cardinals, 300 archbishops and bishops, St Peter's Square, Rome, in that crowd was Francis Gajowniczek. And the Pope said on that occasion about his death: 'The death of Maximilian Kolbe' – that Polish forty-seven-year-old priest who stepped forward to give his life – 'that was a victory like the one won by our Lord Jesus Christ': because he gave himself – he gave up his life out of love.

Francis Gajowniczek died at the age of ninety-three: he'd spent the rest of his life going round telling everybody about the love of this man who died in his place.

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	<p>The cross was the height of pain, depth of shame. And yet the New Testament never concentrates on the physical suffering of Jesus. Because other people have suffered crucifixion. Even today people are being crucified. What it focuses on is what was unique about Jesus' death, and that is that he was suffering spiritually because he was bearing on himself your</p>
<p>Isaiah 53:6 (ESV)</p>	<p>There's a verse in the Old Testament which prophesied the death of Jesus, and it goes like this:</p> <p><b>'We all, like sheep, have gone astray, we have turned – every one – to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.'</b></p>
<p><i>For visual reference of this illustration, download Nicky's version of this talk from <a href="http://alpha.org/run">alpha.org/run</a> or refer to the Alpha with Nicky Gumbel DVD.</i></p>	<p>And I heard someone explaining this verse like this. He said: 'Let this hand represent you and me, and let this book represent the bad stuff, the stuff that we do that separates us from God. <b>"All we, like sheep, have gone astray, we've turned – every one – to our own way."</b> Let this hand represent Jesus. Jesus never did anything wrong. There was nothing between him and his Father. And what the verse says is: on the cross <b>"the Lord has laid on Jesus the iniquity of us all"</b>. He was bearing my sin, my guilt, my shame on the cross.'</p> <p>'Do you see where that leaves <i>you</i>?' It leaves you free to have</p>
	<h2>Talk Point 3</h2> <p>THE RESULT</p>

KEY: Personal Story Story Quotes Key Bible Passages

The cross; the results of the cross. The cross and resurrection are really like one event. And it's like a beautiful diamond: you could look at it from so many different facets, all the different things that the death of Jesus achieved. God revealed how much he loves you.

Guilt is feeling bad about the stuff we do. Shame is feeling bad about who we are. And Jesus bore our guilt and our shame. And you never need to feel bad about yourself in that sense, because you are loved. Your worth is what you're worth to God. What are you worth to God? Jesus died for you! You are so infinitely valuable to God.

And then Jesus revealed what true love is. True love is not just a feeling. Love involves more than words; it involves actions. And Jesus showed us the supreme example of love, by sacrificing himself for you and for me.

The answer to suffering is very complex. Why does God allow suffering? Theologians and philosophers have struggled for 2,000 years, and no one's come up with a complete answer. But what the cross tells us is this: God is not sitting in a deckchair in heaven watching all the suffering down here. No, he has come into our world to suffer for us, and he now suffers alongside of us.

And then it tells us this: that evil has been defeated. The powers of evil have been defeated on the cross, and that there's going to be a good ending! The resurrection was not the reversal of a defeat; it was the manifestation of a victory. And it tells us that the story ends well.

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<p><b>2 Corinthians 5:19</b></p>	<p>First one: the partition has been removed. You can come home! What St Paul says is that <b>'God was in Christ, reconciling the world'</b> – that is, you and me – <b>'to himself'</b>.</p> <p>You see, the cross was not God sort of punishing an innocent third party – that would be barbaric. No, <b>God was in Christ</b>. God himself came to die for you and for me. <b>God was in Christ, reconciling</b> you and me to himself.</p> <p>Reconciliation is amazing.</p>
<p><i>Images of this sculpture can be found at <a href="http://charliemackesy.com">charliemackesy.com</a></i></p>	<p><b>I love this sculpture that Charlie Mackesy did of the Prodigal Son: that's what Jesus made possible. That is the loving Father welcoming you and me back, hugging us, holding us, loving us. That's reconciliation.</b></p>
<p><i>Personalise the text in red.</i></p>	<p>And reconciliation with God leads to reconciliation in marriage, in relationships, between parents and children, in friendships.</p> <p>And then the penalty has been paid. The guilt has been removed. <b>There's no condemnation</b>. The word that's used is 'justified'. 'Justified' means 'just-as-if-I'd never sinned'. It's a term from the law court: if you were justified, you were acquitted.</p> <p><b>I really found it difficult to understand how Jesus' death could really make a difference to me today.</b> Someone used this</p>

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Alternatively, you could use the cartoon version of this story: 'The Judge and His Friend' at [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

There were two friends – friends at school, friends at university. And when they left, they went their separate ways. One became a lawyer, he was very successful, became a judge. The other one went into a life of crime. And one day the criminal appeared before his old friend the judge. And the judge had a dilemma: what was he to do? He loved this friend, who had pleaded guilty to the crime because he'd done it. But he couldn't just let him off, because he was a judge. He had to be just.

That's God's dilemma, if you like. God is a God of justice. If there was no justice in the world, the world would be a terrible place. But he also loves you. So this is what the judge did: he fined his friend the appropriate penalty – let's say **£20,000**. That was justice. Then he took off his robes, he went

**John 8:36**  
**[paraphrase]**

And what Jesus has done is even more amazing, because the cost was not just **£20,000** – it was his death on the cross. We were in a much worse situation – it needed a much greater solution. And the love was far greater. It wasn't just two friends; it was the love like a father and a son, greater even than that.

And then the power of sin has been broken. Jesus said: **'If the**

P

Personalise this by giving an example of something that you were set free from when you encountered Jesus.

My father had a terrible temper. And I had a terrible temper – I inherited it. And I thought that all the way through my life I'm always going to have a terrible temper – that's just me. But when I encountered Jesus, the power of that was broken in my life. I was set free.

But other things in my life, it's been a much longer process. There are many things I still struggle with.

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<p>1 John 1:7 (NLT)</p> <p><i>Personalise the text in red.</i></p>	<p>Justification. To use two theological words, justification happens instantly: you are put right with God, you're made righteous. There's no condemnation, no guilt. Sanctification, which is becoming like Jesus, that's a lifelong process.</p> <p>And then the pollution has been removed. There is continual forgiveness. John writes that <b>'the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin'</b>. This is so amazing, this is so wonderful. Forgiveness. And when we've experienced God's forgiveness – <b>this is what I found: it made such a difference to my life.</b> Because when you are forgiven, you want to forgive.</p> <p><b>Before I was a Christian, if someone offended me, I would hold a grudge against that person.</b> But holding a grudge is like letting the other person live rent-free in your head! It doesn't do them any harm. <b>And if someone offended me, I want to get back at them by not forgiving them.</b> But unforgiveness doesn't hurt them; it hurts me, us! Someone said, 'Unforgiveness is like kind of drinking poison and hoping the other person's going to die.'</p> <p>And when we've experienced God's forgiveness, we want to forgive. And the hardest thing is to forgive ourselves. <b>That's what I find the hardest.</b> It's much easier for me to forgive other</p>
<p>Q</p>	<p>But we have to forgive ourselves, because otherwise, as C. S. Lewis pointed out, if God's forgiven us and we refuse to forgive ourselves, it's like 'setting ourselves up as a higher tribunal than God'!</p>
	<p>And we forgive others because we have been forgiven so much. Forgiveness is a choice, but it's not optional. It's really</p>
<p>Q</p>	<p>C. S. Lewis said: 'Everyone thinks forgiveness is a lovely idea until they have something to forgive, and then it's really hard.'</p>

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	<p>But it really is true: 'The first to apologise is the bravest. The first to forgive is the strongest. And the first to forget is the happiest.'</p> <p>Total unlimited forgiveness transforms all our relationships. It</p>
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3) Why Did Jesus Die? – Nicky Gumbel – HTB Alpha



# S

Corrie ten Boom was an amazing Dutch Christian who during the War hid Jews from the Nazis. And she was caught and arrested, as was her father and her sister, and they were taken to concentration camps. Her father died, and her sister Betsie, who went with her to Ravensbrück, died also in that concentration camp. But amazingly Corrie survived. And after the War she went round just talking about forgiveness, this message of forgiveness.

One time in 1947 she was in a church in Munich. And when she finished her talk, this man came up to her, and she recognised him as one of the guards in Ravensbrück concentration camp. He didn't recognise her, but she recognised him, and she could remember his cruelty. And he came up to her and he said, 'Thank you for your message, wonderful message about forgiveness. I have become a Christian, and I know that God has forgiven me. I want to know that you forgive me.' And he stuck out his hand and said, 'Shake my hand as a sign that you've forgiven me.' And Corrie said she just – all the memories of her sister dying, his cruelty, came back into her head. She wrote this:

'I stood there and I could not. Betsie had died in that place. Could he erase her slow, terrible death simply for the asking? It could not have been many seconds that he stood there, hand held out, but to me it seemed hours as I wrestled with the most difficult thing I'd ever had to do. I stood there with the coldness clutching my heart. But forgiveness is not an emotion – I knew that too. Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart. "Jesus, help me," I prayed silently. "I can lift my hand – I can do that much. You supply the feeling."'

'And so, woodenly, mechanically, I thrust my hand into the one stretched out to me. And as I did, an incredible thing took place. The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, sprang into our joined hands, and then this healing

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<p><i>Ensure you have copies of Why Jesus? available for your guests. Visit <a href="http://alphashop.org">alphashop.org</a> or contact your local</i></p>	<p>God loves you intensely. You are loved. The Son of God, Jesus, gave himself for you. <b>When I understood that, it totally changed my life.</b> And it's a gift. And it's a gift that you receive by faith. And that's what we're going to be looking at next week: what is faith? <b>But you don't have to wait till next week if you want to respond, if you want to receive the gift. I'd love to give you a copy of this little booklet <i>Why Jesus?</i> and in the back there's a prayer that you can pray as a way of receiving that gift.</b></p>
<p><b>Galatians 2:20</b></p>	<p>But I want to leave you with those words: <b>'The Son of God loved me and gave himself for me.'</b></p>

The Alpha Transcripts are taken from *Alpha with Nicky Gumbel* filmed 2014–2015, which are based on *Questions of Life* by Nicky Gumbel.

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C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, (London: William Collins, 2012)

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3) Why Did Jesus Die? – Nicky Gumbel – HTB Alpha