Did God Kill Jesus? UNDERSTANDING THE CROSS — Sermon Series — Feb. 24 ~ April 21

Okay, I admit that I was trying to be provocative with the title Did God Kill Jesus? I promise, during the series, we will talk about why I used this question, but hopefully, you also noticed that subtitle of the sermon series: Understanding the Cross. Throughout history, Christians have contended that through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, humans are reconciled to God. The cross has been considered a focal point of that reconciliation.

In theological terms, this is called the atonement. The word atonement literally means at-one-ment. Atonement is the process by, which God makes humanity one with God; it is the process of reconciliation. So, Christians agree that through Jesus we are reconciled to God but exactly how that act of God actually works- its mechanics- has never been agreed on in Christian history. There is no consensus about how it works!

Some Christians have taught that reconciliation happens because Jesus Christ died as a ransom sacrifice, paid either to Satan (the most dominate view), or to God. And, Jesus' death then acts as a payment to satisfy the debt on the souls of the human race. Because this debt is paid, we are reconciled. Other Christians have taught that reconciliation happens because Jesus Christ death defeated the powers of evil (such as sin, death, and the devil) in order to free humankind from their bondage. Throughout Christian history, different models or lenses have been used to explain how reconciliation happens-- the two I just mentioned are called The Ransom Model and Christus Victor Model.

So, this sermon series is going to be a serious theological study of the cross and atonement. I think you will find it informative, fascinating and hopefully it will deepen your appreciation for what Christ did for us. At the same time, because of how weighty the series is, we are going to offer some small group opportunities to unpack what we are learning about. You will hear more about these in the coming weeks. I really hope you will participate!

Pastor Carol McEntyre