

The Great Reconciliation (Colossians 1:15-20)

The Greatness of the Cross pt. 5
Pastor Tim Peck

THE BIG IDEA

As both fully God and fully human, Jesus died to satisfy justice so all creation could be reconciled to God.

OPENING

- Describe a situation where you saw two people reconciled. What happened? How did it take place?

DIGGING DEEPER

- Read Colossians 1:15-20 and 2:9. How is Jesus described as fully God. How is Jesus described as fully human?
- Today's message presented what's sometimes called the Satisfaction view of the cross. How does Christ's death satisfy justice? What does this result in according to Colossians 1:20?
- Although our debt has been paid through the cross, Jesus taught us to continue to pray, "*Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors*" (Matthew 6:12). Jesus taught us to pray this so we would forgive others. According to Colossians 3:13, what is the connection between God's forgiveness and our forgiveness of others?
- *The Greatness of the Cross* series has explained five biblical images of the cross:¹
The Great Ransom: The cross pays the ransom to rescue us from our captivity to sin, Satan, and death. This is sometimes called the *Christus Victor*

¹These are sometimes called "theories of the atonement."

view² (Latin for “Christ the Conqueror”), and it is the primary way Christians talked about the cross for the first 1,000 years of church history. We also find this image in C. S. Lewis’ writings, especially his *Chronicles of Narnia*. The Eastern Orthodox Church emphasizes this image.

The Great Exchange: The cross paid the penalty for our sins, so we could be acquitted of our guilt through Christ’s perfect righteousness. This is sometimes called the Substitution view.³ Reformed churches tend to emphasize this image.

The Great Example: The cross is an example for us to emulate, as we deny ourselves and take up our cross daily to follow Jesus as disciples. This is sometimes called the Moral Exemplar view.⁴ Mainline Protestant churches tend to emphasize this image.

The Great Gesture: The cross is the demonstration of God’s love that invites us back to God and calls us to love others. This is sometimes called the Moral Influence view.⁵ Methodist and Wesleyan churches tend to emphasize this view.

The Great Reconciliation. The cross pays the debt that satisfies justice, so creation can be reconciled to God. This is sometimes called the Satisfaction view, and it was popularized by Anselm of Canterbury.⁶ The Roman Catholic Church tends to emphasize this view.

Which of these five images most resonates with you? Which is most unfamiliar to you? What do you think of the idea that these views are like five different camera angles on a single subject?

PUTTING IT TO WORK

- Spend time reflecting on the cross of Christ this week. What emotions do you feel? What thoughts come to your mind?
- Who is God calling you to forgive this week?

PRAYER REQUESTS

²See Gustaf Aulen, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement* (Wipf and Stock).

³See Donald MacLeod, *Christ Crucified: Understanding the Atonement* (InterVarsity, 2014).

⁴See Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (Scribner, 1963).

⁵See Joshua M. McNall, *The Mosaic of Atonement* (Zondervan, 2019), chapters 11-13.

⁶See Anselm of Canterbury, *Why God Became Human*.