

## “He Did This Just For You” By Max Lucado

The cross. Can you turn any direction without seeing one? Perched atop a chapel. Carved into a graveyard headstone. Engraved in a ring or suspended on a chain. The cross is the universal symbol of Christianity. An odd choice, don't you think? Strange that a tool of torture would come to embody a movement of hope.

Would you wear a tiny electric chair around your neck? Suspend a gold-plated hangman's noose on the wall? Would you print a picture of a firing squad on a business card? Yet we do so with the cross.

Why is the cross the symbol of our faith? To find the answer look no farther than the cross itself. Its design couldn't be simpler. One beam horizontal--the other vertical. One reaches out--like God's love. The other reaches up--as does God's holiness. One represents the width of His love; the other reflects the height of His holiness. The cross is the intersection. The cross is where God forgave His children without lowering His standards.

How could He do this? In a sentence: God put our sin on His Son and punished it there.

"God put on him the wrong who never did anything wrong, so we could be put right with God" (2 Corinthians 5:21 MSG).

Or as rendered elsewhere: "Christ never sinned! But God treated him as a sinner, so that Christ could make us acceptable to God" (CEV).

Envision the moment. God on His throne. You on the earth. And between you and God, suspended between you and heaven, is Christ on His cross. Your sins have been placed on Jesus. God, who punishes sin, releases His rightful wrath on your mistakes. Jesus receives the blow. Since Christ is between you and God, you don't. The sin is punished, but you are safe--safe in the shadow of the cross.

This is what God did, but why, why would He do it? Moral duty? Heavenly obligation? Paternal requirement? No. God is required to do nothing.

Besides, consider what He did. Just for you He gave His Son. His only Son. Would you do that? Would you offer the life of your child for someone else? I wouldn't. There are those for whom I would give my life. But ask me to make a list of those for whom I would kill my daughter? The sheet will be blank. I don't need a pencil. The list has no names.

But God's list contains the name of every person who ever lived. For this is the scope of His love. And this is the reason for the cross. He loves the world.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (John 3:16 NLT).

As boldly as the center beam proclaims God's holiness, the crossbeam declares His love. And, oh, how wide His love reaches.

Aren't you glad the verse does not read:

"For God so loved the rich...?"

Or, "For God so loved the famous...?"

Or, "For God so loved the thin...?"

It doesn't. Nor does it state, "For God so loved the Europeans or Africans..." "the sober or successful..." "the young or the old..."

No, when we read John 3:16, we simply (and happily) read, "For God so loved the world."

How wide is God's love? Wide enough for the whole world. Are you included in the world? Then you are included in God's love. God's love is just for you.

It's nice to be included. You aren't always. Universities exclude you if you aren't smart enough. Businesses exclude you if you aren't qualified enough, and, sadly, some churches exclude you if you aren't good enough.

But though they may exclude you, Christ includes you. When asked to describe the width of His love, He stretched one hand to the right and the other to the left and had them nailed in that position so you would know He died loving you.

But isn't there a limit? Surely there has to be an end to this love. You'd think so, wouldn't you? But David the adulterer never found it. Paul the murderer never found it. Peter the liar never found it. When it came to life, they hit bottom. But when it came to God's love, they never did.

They, like you, found their names on God's list of love.

Because God loves you, He has invited you to enjoy eternal life with Him in Heaven. Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6 NIV). Jesus made a way to accept God's invitation, and He did it just for you. Accept God's invitation by believing that Jesus received the punishment for your sin by His death on the cross. Confess that you've sinned and ask His forgiveness. Invite Him into your life and ask for God's help to turn from your sin. You can pray something like this:

Dear God, I admit that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. Thank You for sending Jesus to suffer the punishment deserved for my sin. Please come into my life and help me live a life that pleases You. Amen.

If you have just accepted God's invitation to you, write your name below as a testimony of your decision. Then write to us and we'll send you free literature to help you grow in your new life with Christ.

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