

Salvation

THE DILEMMA OF SIN

Romans 3:23 (NIV) tells us: *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.* **Psalm 14:2-3** (NLT) also affirms this truth.

Psalm 53:2 (NLT) *God looks down from heaven on the entire human race; he looks to see if anyone is truly wise, if anyone seeks God. But no, all have turned away; all have become corrupt. No one does good, not a single one!*

- In the Old Testament, God gave the Israelites 100s of laws and rituals to follow. As the above Scriptures reveal, not one person kept those laws. God told the prophet Jeremiah that if he searched all through the holy city of Jerusalem, he wouldn't find one person who was righteous. Moses and David were murderers, Abraham was a liar, Jacob was a deceiver and Samson rarely did what was right.
- The dilemma is that sin separates us from God. God is pure and righteous and Holy. When Adam and Eve sinned God withdrew His presence from them.

Scripture reference:

Isaiah 59:2 (NLT) *It's your sins that have cut you off from God. Because of your sins, he has turned away and will not listen anymore.*

Romans 8:3 (NLT) *The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature.*

- There are many fine people in the World who comparably are good people. However even the most wonderful people sin against God at times. Nobody is good enough to earn God's based on our good deeds alone.
- As we said in a previous lesson, God is not only a loving Father but He is also a righteous Judge. The Bible teaches that we will all individually be judged by God for our sins. Anyone of us standing on our own actions and lifestyle before the Judge of this World would be condemned.

The fact is that if left on our own without God bailing us out, every one of us would be lost forever. Fortunately, God had a solution to bring us to Him

GOD'S SOLUTION

Humankind was lost in their sin and without hope. In His love and mercy God created a plan to rescue us from our sin.

God the Father sent His Son Jesus the Son of God.... to Earth, to be born in the town of Bethlehem in Israel. God Himself chose to become one of us in order to save us. He did this in 2 major ways:

1 – Jesus lived the perfect life that we could never live.

- He perfectly kept all God's laws and moral statutes. He was perfect in all of his ways. When anyone, anywhere chooses to follow Jesus a great exchange happens. The sinful life we have led, with all our failures and messes and rebellion against God's ways is removed and in return the perfect sinless life Jesus lived while on Earth is attributed to us by God.
- Yes, we still sin and mess up at times, as Christians, but we have been justified by God. Justified is a word that means "just as if I never sinned". I can have a relationship with God because the sin that was standing as a barrier between us has been removed. Yes, God sees our sins, and disciplines us at times but according to **2 Corinthians 5:19** (NLT):

For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation.

2 – Jesus died on the cross to pay the price for our sin.

- In the Bible, the penalty for sin and disobedience is death. Not just physical death, but death in a greater sense is eternal (forever) separation from the presence of God.
- Many people ask the question: "If God is so good why doesn't He just overlook the evil that people do"? Imagine you're a judge. Your job is to uphold and execute the law. One day a man stands before you—a vile, wicked murderer. The evidence against him is ironclad. There's no doubt about his guilt—he openly admits it. He confesses what he did and says he's very sorry. Then he asks you to forgive him. And in spite of what the law says, in spite of your responsibility to dispatch justice, you grant him complete forgiveness and let him walk free. We'd certainly be horrified if human judges operated that way.
- God as a righteous Judge must uphold true justice and righteousness. As the first half of **Romans 6:23** says: *For the wages of sin is death*
- To sum it up, everyone on Earth stands before God as a sinner..... separated from any relationship with Him by sin. The penalty for that sin is death. Fortunately, the answer to our dilemma is found in probably the most famous verse in the New Testament **John 3:16**:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

- The ultimate mission in the life of Jesus was His death. We are the sinners. We should be the ones dying to pay the penalty for our own sins. However, in His love God sent His Son who was perfectly innocent of wrongdoing and evil to take the punishment for our sins and die in our place. The innocent dying for the guilty. God's love said "no" to our eternal separation from Him. God loves you so much that He was willing to watch His own Son suffer, bleed and die because He couldn't stand the thought of being forever separated from you.

Scripture References:

Romans 3:23-24 (NLT) *For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.*

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NIV) *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

WHAT IS SALVATION?

To say that I have received salvation or that I am saved is to say that the sin that once separated me from God is removed and I am at peace with God. I am saved from the ultimate consequence of my sin which again would totally remove me from any possibility of having a relationship with God. It also means that I receive Eternal life.

John 3:16 speaks of eternal life. Eternal life has significance for my now and my future

1 - Eternal life in my present:

John 17:3 (the Passion Translation) *Eternal life means to know and experience you as the only true God, and to know and experience Jesus Christ, as the Son whom you have sent.*

- At the moment that I give my life to Jesus, that is when eternal life begins. I become alive to God and His Word and His plans for my life. The life of God flows through me and I can experience His love for me.
- Regardless of my past or present circumstances, I can daily experience the peace and joy of the Lord
- I no longer live just for my own pleasures and desires. I live to do God's will and serve Him

Scripture Reference

ROMANS 5:10 (NLT) *10 For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.*

2 – Eternal life in my future

- In **John 11:25** Jesus said, *“I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die.”* How could He say that whoever believes in Him would never die? We all know that we each have a day coming when we will leave this life leave this life.
- Jesus was not speaking about physical death. He was letting the listener know that, for a child of God) even when you come to the end of this life, that is just a new beginning. Eternal life means that this body will perish, but my spirit will live forever with Jesus. In 10 million years or 50 billion years I will still be alive with Jesus.
- **2 Corinthians 5:8** states that to be absent from our Earthly bodies is to be present with the Lord. In other words, at the moment of death, one’s body is left on Earth to decay but the spirit of the person is ushered into the presence of God in Heaven, to never die again.
- In Heaven there is no more pain or sickness or rejection or sin, or death. No more trouble or sorrow or heartbreak. Now we walk with Jesus by faith but in Heaven we shall see Him face to face.

Scripture References

Revelation 21:4 (NKJV) *And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”*

2 Corinthians 5:1 (The Passion Translation) *We are convinced that even if these bodies we live in are folded up at death like tents, we will still have a God-built home that no human hands have built, which will last forever in the heavenly realm.*

HOW DO I RECEIVE SALVATION?

Romans 6:23 (NLT) *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.*

- Salvation is given by God as a free gift. You can’t earn it no matter how many good works you do or how holy you think your way of living is. People claim all of the time that they deserve to go to Heaven based on their being “a good person.” Even little sins will keep you out of Heaven because God is so pure that there can be no sin in His home.
- The only way an individual can receive the free gift of salvation is through the grace of God.
- Grace means that God loves and forgives me even though I have done nothing to deserve it. Every sin is washed away by grace
- We receive God’s grace by faith. It is a free gift open to everybody everywhere.

Scripture Reference

Romans 5:1-2 *Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory.*

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NLT) *God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.*

- Faith doesn't only mean that I believe that God exists. Saying I believe in Jesus isn't what saves me. True faith means that I put my hope and trust in Jesus, and so I surrender my life to His leadership. I commit to follow Him as He leads me.
- At the moment that I receive God's gift of grace a great miracle occurs. The Holy Spirit comes inside of me and makes me His home. God the Holy Spirit lives in me. This is called the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit
- Because the Holy Spirit lives in me, He changes me and makes me new from the inside. He gives me the power and strength to become more and more a reflection of the love, purity and overcoming power of Jesus.

Scripture Reference

1 Corinthians 6:19 (The Passion Translation) *Have you forgotten that your body is now the sacred temple of the Spirit of Holiness, who lives in you? You don't belong to yourself any longer, for the gift of God, the Holy Spirit, lives inside your sanctuary*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Jesus claimed in **John 14:6** (NIV) "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. How would you respond to someone who claims that many roads lead to God and Jesus is merely one of them?
2. True or false test to be answered as a group
A - T or F | The Bible teaches that Christ takes the righteousness I have and then gives me what I lack.
B - T or F | The Bible teaches that Christ takes my sin and gives me His righteousness in sin's place.

C - T or F | The Bible teaches that Christ will only accept me after I've proven myself through good works

D - T or F | The Bible teaches that I can never become righteous enough on my own and must be declared righteous by God.

E - T or F | The Bible teaches that grace allows me to live any way I desire since I'm forgiven

F - T or F | The Bible teaches that God loves the unrighteous so much that He punished His one and only Son in the sinner's place.

G - T or F | The Bible teaches that having Christian parents and growing up in Church is enough to receive salvation

H - T or F | The Bible teaches that God's love is so vast that, in the end, everyone on Earth will make it into Heaven regardless of whether they are believers in Jesus

Answers – F – T – F – T – F – T – F - F