

Mother? Or should I demonstrate love and forgive her thus running the risk of the whole tribe adopting thievery? With a broken heart, the chief decided that his mother must be punished. He marched his mother out in front of the tribe and tied her hands to a whipping post. The whole tribe stood around breathlessly wondering what the chief would do. He took off his shirt, exposing his muscular body, and held the whip in his right hand. At the last moment, he handed the whip to a young brave. The chief then covered his mother with his own body and gave the command to begin the whipping. A hundred lashes later, the chief was dead but his mother was alive. Because of the chief's love for his mother, he died in her place. Because of the chief's commitment to justice, the penalty for breaking the law was paid. This is exactly what Jesus Christ did for us. He died on the cross to pay the penalty for sin that we deserve to pay. To satisfy His justice, He died in our place and He did it because of His love for us.

The **second** part of the Gospel is that Christ rose from the dead in order to give us His life. The resurrection of Christ proves that (1) He is the Son of God, and (2) His payment for the sins of the world was acceptable to God. But His resurrection also makes it possible for us to share in His resurrected life. We need someone to make us alive spiritually because the Bible says we are dead spiritually without Christ.

“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world . . .” Ephesians 1:1

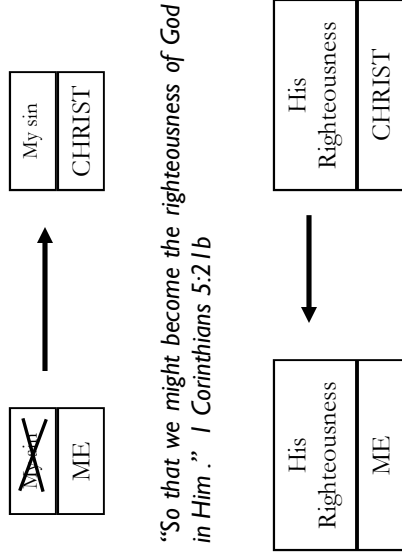
As an illustration of what Christ has done for us through His death and resurrection, consider the following: Imagine that a man has died of cancer. If you had the power to save the man, how many problems would you have to solve? Two. You'd have to raise him to life, and you'd also have to cure his cancer. If you cured his cancer but did nothing else, he would still be dead. On the other hand, if you raised him to life without curing his cancer, he would just die all over again. The death

of Jesus Christ was God's method of dealing with our disease called sin and the resurrection of Christ is God's method of giving life to spiritually dead people. Jesus Christ rose from the dead, never to die again. Therefore, He alone can impart spiritual life to spiritually dead people.

Third, because of Christ's finished work (through His death and resurrection) God credits Christ's righteousness to the one who trusts in Him.

God takes my sin and imputes (credits) it to Christ—He died in my place.

“He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf.” 1 Corinthians 5:21a



“So that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” 1 Corinthians 5:21b

The Bible insists that for us to be able to enjoy:

- forgiveness of sins
 - new life in Christ
 - righteousness in the sight of God
- there is one requirement that must be met.

Jesus said, **“I came that you might have life and have it more abundantly.”** But you can enjoy the abundant life He offers only if you will **honestly face the truth about yourself.**

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23 Sin means to miss the mark. The glory of God is His perfect character. He is love, truth, holy, just, etc. We all fall short of God's character.

“As it is written, there is none righteous, not even one.” Romans 3:10

The Bible asserts that sin rewards people with wages; the wages or payment is death.

“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 6:23

Many people believe that sincerely following an ethical code such as the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) is all that God requires. However, God did not give the Ten Commandments to save us but to SHOW US that we are sinners.

“...because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.” Romans 3:20

The Ten Commandments are like a **mirror**: they cannot remove the dirt of sin in our lives, they can only expose it. These moral laws are like a **thermometer** which indicates that we are sick and may have a fever but certainly cannot heal us. God demands that we are not to lie, steal, covet, take His Name in vain, etc. Which one of us has kept these standards perfectly? We can no more change our sinful nature than putting a new pump over a well of poisoned water will make the water fresh! The Bible says,

“Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point has become guilty of all.” James 2:10

Jesus gave the requirement that all of us must meet before we are qualified to enter the presence of God in Heaven:

“You are to be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect.” Matthew 5:48

The standard does not compare you to others, rather you are compared to God Himself! Will you face the truth that:

- you can't meet God's standard on your own?
- you have fallen short of God's glory?
- you are spiritually dead?
- you are guilty before a holy God?

The Bible says that we have three major needs that must be met before we can have a relationship with God.

FIRST, because we are guilty, we need someone who can pay the penalty for our sin. A holy God can never overlook a violation of the Law and He insists that sin's penalty must be justly paid.

“He who believes in the Son, has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” John 3:36

What is the wrath of God? The wrath of God is His constant unchanging hatred of, resistance to and judgment on sin.

SECOND, because we are spiritually dead (remember the wages of sin is death), we need someone who can give us a new life. The Scripture says only Jesus Christ the Messiah is qualified to pay for the sin of the world and give His new life to those who believe in Him.

Would you like to believe in Jesus Christ today as the one who paid the penalty for your sins, the one who can give you His resurrected life, and the one who can make you righteous before God?

If so, I urge you to pray the following prayer:

“Lord Jesus, I need You. I believe you died on the cross in order to pay the penalty for my sin. I believe that You rose from the dead in order to give me eternal life. I believe you alone can make me righteous before God. I now turn from my sins and trust you completely as my Savior and my Lord. Come into my life and make me the kind of person you want me to be. Amen.”

If you have genuinely turned from your sin and trusted in Jesus Christ alone as your Savior and Lord, the Bible assures you that:

- You have become a child of God (John 1:12)
- You are forgiven (Heb. 10:14; Col. 1:13-14) and
- You will spend eternity with Him in Heaven (John 14:1-3).

You are now **“in Christ”** and have a new identity, passion and purpose. Paul used the phrases “in Him” and “in the Lord” over 160 times. A study of these phrases reveal over 50 things that are true about you “in Christ!”

Daily shift your trust from yourself to Jesus Christ (Proverbs 3:5-6). Daily seek God through prayer and Bible study and join in the fellowship of our local church where Christ is honored and the Bible is taught (Heb. 10:24-25). Jesus promised,

“I came that they might have life and have it more abundantly.” John 10:10

The life He offers is His own resurrected life. As you walk with Christ, make your purpose in life the one He gave us.

“To love the Lord with all your heart, soul, and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself.”

Matthew 22:37-40

That essential requirement is **belief**.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son; that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have life eternal.” John 3:16

The word believe is used 98 times in the Gospel of John and many other times in the New Testament as the one requirement for salvation. Please don't think this is a simple affirmation. For example: Satan believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that He died to pay for the sins of the world, and that He conquered death and is alive today (James 2:19). Yet Satan will not spend eternity in Heaven because this kind of belief will not save him. Belief that brings salvation is belief that submits the will.

The New Testament word believe means to rely on or trust in.

New Testament belief transfers trust from self to Christ.

“Nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.” Galatians 2:16

This belief involves repentance, a forsaking of trusting self and a beginning of trusting Christ.

The Bible declares that everyone is not a child of God.

“But as many as received Him (Christ), to them He gave the right to become the children of God, even to those who believe in His name.”

Note that we become children of God when we receive Christ or believe in Him; we are not naturally children of God.

THIRD, because God's standard is perfection, we need to be made righteous in the sight of God.

The Gospel (Good News) explains how Christ alone can meet our three needs.

The Bible teaches that in order to begin a relationship with God you must believe the Gospel (Good News) about Jesus Christ.

The Gospel is that Christ died for our sins and that Christ rose from the dead.

“Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day.”

First, Christ died for your sins. Unfortunately, many people hear these words but do not understand their significance.

The following true story illustrates the meaning of these wonderful words “Christ died for our sins.” Many years ago, there was a large native American tribe in the midwestern United States that survived by raising chickens. The chief discovered that someone in the tribe was stealing their chickens. In order to ensure justice and to stop the thievery he declared, “if we find the thief, the penalty will be 30 lashes with a whip.” Each day they searched for the thief without success, and each day the chief made the penalty higher – until it was 100 lashes. Everyone knew that the culprit would suffer death. Finally the thief was apprehended, but this only created a greater problem for the chief; the thief was his own mother!

The tribal leader struggled with this dilemma: Should I uphold justice and condemn my own

*I came that you might
have life and have it more
abundantly. John 10:10*

3 Needs Only Jesus Can Meet . . .

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