

Jesus, The Way

Jesus, The Way To Forgiveness of Sin

INTRODUCTION:

- I. Last month we began a brief series of lessons that we've entitled "**Jesus, The Way.**"
 - A. The purpose of this series of lessons is to examine all the ways in which Jesus Christ IS "**The Way.**"
 1. On the evening before His crucifixion, Jesus met one last time with His disciples.
 - a. Among the things Jesus said was this: **John 14:1-4** – *"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And where I go you know, and the way you know."*
 2. The disciples still had not grasped the fact that Jesus was about to be crucified on the cross.
 - a. Therefore, this statement didn't make any sense.

3. And so, Thomas, who thinks in such absolute terms, asks, **John 14:5** – *"Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?"*
 4. Therefore, Jesus replied, **John 14:6** – *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.."*
 - a. Jesus was simply telling his disciples that He's going to return to the Father in heaven – that's WHERE he's going.
 - b. And the WAY to the Father is ONLY THROUGH Jesus Christ.
 - c. And the reason WHY Jesus Christ is the ONLY WAY to the Father is simply because he is TRUTH PERSONIFIED, and he is LIFE PERSONIFIED.
 - d. Which is another way of saying that Jesus is the only TRUE AND LIVING WAY to the Father in heaven.
- B. However, as we pointed out in the introduction to this series, the way to the Father in heaven starts here on earth.
1. And so, the Lord offers all we need to live a faithful, full and productive life.
 2. And the Lord ALSO provides all we need to enter heaven when this life is over.
- C. And so, this morning we're going to examine Jesus as ***"The Way to Forgiveness of Sin."***

1. By this, we mean Jesus is The Way to Forgiveness of our sins –
WITHOUT WHICH we would NEVER see God.

BODY:

- I. To understand why we NEED forgiveness sins and HOW Jesus provides the way to forgiveness of sins it's important we begin by FIRST understanding what SIN really is.
 - A. Believe it or not, there are a number of misconceptions about sin – even among those who are BELIEVERS.
 1. Some people see sin as nothing more than doing HARM to another person.
 - a. For example, some simply define sin as:
 - (1). Doing physical violence or harm against another.
 - (2). Depriving someone of their liberty or freedom.
 - (3). Stealing or robbing someone of their possessions.
 - (4). Being dishonest, or betraying a trust.
 - b. In other words, something is sinful ONLY if it disturbs the peace, safety or well-being of others.
 - c. This view of sin ALSO means that NOTHING is wrong or sinful if it is STRICTLY a matter – as they say – between consenting adults.

2. This view of sin also leads many to COMPLETELY MISUNDERSTAND how sin can be corrected.
 - a. Many believe the way to CORRECT sin is to simply MAKE THINGS RIGHT with those against whom they have sinned.
 - b. THIS misconception of sin leads people to believe they can be FORGIVEN of wrongs when they make things right and are forgiven by those whom they've wronged.
- B. However, GOD has a completely different definition of sin.
 1. Through divinely inspired scripture, the BIBLE defines sin at least THREE WAYS.
 - a. Sin is a direct violation of GOD'S LAW (deliberately violating GOD'S COMMANDMENTS) – a sin of COMMISSION.
 - (1). **1 John 3:4** – *Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.*
 - b. Sin is also a FAILURE to do WHAT IS RIGHT – a sin of OMISSION.
 - (1). **James 4:17** – *Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.*
 - c. And finally, the Bible defines sin as violating one's own conscience.

- (1). **Romans 14:22-23** – *Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves. 23 But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.*
2. So, sin is a lot more than simply doing something that violates or denies the peace, safety or well-being of others.
3. While sin certainly INVOLVES those things, it is MORE a matter of violating the LORD'S WILL for us.
4. And to truly understand the SERIOUSNESS of sin, consider it's CONSEQUENCES.
 - a. **Romans 6:23** – *...the wages of sin is death...* (meaning, sin SEPARATES US from GOD)
 - b. **Revelation 21:8** – *"But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars-their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."* (this means, sin will ULTIMATELY bring about eternal punishment in hell)
- C. But this raises a question in the minds of most people. Why is sin SO BAD that unforgiven sinners will be condemned to eternal and everlasting punishment in hell?

1. To understand this, it's necessary for us to understand some very important things about the nature of JEHOVAH GOD.
- II. So, what IS it about the NATURE OF GOD that demands sinners be punished with everlasting destruction?
- A. Not only is God the creator of the universe and the very giver of life itself (we would not exist were it not for God), the NATURE of God is the very ESSENCE OF PURITY and HOLINESS.
 1. "Holiness is a general term used to indicate sanctity or separation from all that is sinful, impure, or morally imperfect; i.e., it is moral wholeness." (Unger's Bible Dictionary)
 - a. Therefore, God's HOLINESS makes it IMPOSSIBLE for Him to have fellowship with that which is SINFUL, IMPURE or IMMORAL.
 - b. **Psalm 5:4-6** – *You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil; with you the wicked cannot dwell. 5 The arrogant cannot stand in your presence; you hate all who do wrong. 6 You destroy those who tell lies; bloodthirsty and deceitful men the LORD abhors.*
 - c. **Isaiah 59:1-2** – *Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. 2 But*

your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.

- B. Not only is God the ESSENCE of PURITY AND HOLINESS, He is a God who is SUPREMEPLY JUST.
1. God's justice demands that He be fair and equitable in His treatment of others in relationship to His commandments.
 - a. In other words, those who KEEP His commandments are REWARDED, and those who do NOT KEEP His commandments are PUNISHED.
 2. However, the PUNISHMENT of God is not ALWAYS done in retribution for wrong.
- C. Not only is God the essence of purity and holiness and supremely just, He is a God of INFINITE LOVE.
1. Therefore, God also punishes out of His DEEP LOVE for those who have done wrong, in an effort to get them to SEE their sin and TURN from it.
 2. After the LORD delivered the people of Israel OUT of Assyrian and Babylonian captivity, the people looked back on that terrible experience as an example of God's JUSTICE in punishing the sins of their forefathers, and yet as an example of God's GRACE and

MERCY in ultimately delivering them and returning them to their land after the people repented and turned back to God.

- a. **Nehemiah 9:29-31** – *Yet they acted proudly, and did not heed Your commandments, but sinned against Your judgments, 'Which if a man does, he shall live by them.' And they shrugged their shoulders, stiffened their necks, and would not hear. 30 Yet for many years You had patience with them, and testified against them by Your Spirit in Your prophets. Yet they would not listen; therefore You gave them into the hand of the peoples of the lands. 31 Nevertheless in Your great mercy You did not utterly consume them nor forsake them; for You are God, gracious and merciful.*
- b. **Nehemiah 9:33-34** – *However You are just in all that has befallen us; for You have dealt faithfully, but we have done wickedly. 34 Neither our kings nor our princes, our priests nor our fathers, have kept Your law, nor heeded Your commandments and Your testimonies, with which You testified against them.*

D. All of this points up the real SERIOUSNESS of sin.

1. Because the NATURE of God is the essence of PURITY and HOLINESS, He can have no fellowship with that which is IMPURE and UNHOLY.
2. And because the NATURE of God demands JUSTICE against those who VIOLATE God's commandments, the SINNER stands CONDEMNED before God.
3. But the PROBLEM is this:
 - a. **Romans 3:23** – *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*
 - b. Not only have we all SINNED in the PAST, we CONTINUE to sin.
 - c. That means we are all SEPARATED from God as SINNERS, and we will be PUNISHED for our sins at the end of time.
4. And the BIGGEST problem about all this is that there is ABSOLUTELY NOTHING WE CAN DO to CHANGE our condition.
 - a. We are COMPLETELY UNABLE to FREE ourselves from the guilt of our own sin, and RESTORE our broken RELATIONSHIP with God.
 - b. We can't REDEEM OURSELVES from our sins by changing our lives and living RIGHTEOUS LIVES from this day forward –

even if we COULD live RIGHTEOUS LIVES from this day forward.

- D. Since we are the creation of God, and since we all sin, does this mean that God created us to eventually end up being tormented forever and ever?
1. Why doesn't God just forgive those who realize that have sinned and who honestly try to do better in the future?
 2. The answer is this.
 - a. When those who are guilty of committing a crime or breaking the law are allowed to walk away without suffering the consequences of their crime simply because they're sorry and promise to do better in the future, we would call that an miscarriage of justice.
 - b. We would protest that the SANCTITY of the LAW has been MOCKED, and JUSTICE has been PERVERTED.
 - c. We would have NO RESPECT for the LAW, nor for those who ENFORCE or are sworn to UPHOLD the law.
 - d. NOR would we have any respect for the LAWGIVER – their effort to define right and wrong would mean NOTHING at all.
- E. So, are we COMPLETELY without ANY HOPE whatsoever?
1. The answer to that question is YES and NO.

2. YES – we are completely without any hope of getting OURSELVES out of this situation.
 3. And NO – we are NOT completely without hope because GOD has chosen to do something about our situation.
- III. During OLD TESTAMENT times, God required the SINNER to offer a SACRIFICE for his sin.
- A. These sacrifices for sin ALWAYS required the DEATH of the animal sacrifice – they required that the LIFE of the sacrifice be taken, and its blood shed.
1. And yet, the blood of these sacrifices could not TAKE AWAY the sins of the sinner.
 2. So WHY would God require sinners to sacrifice a living animal, and yet the BLOOD of that sacrifice could not forgive the sinner?
 3. The writer of the Hebrew letter provides us an answer.
 - a. **Hebrews 10:1-4 (NIV)** – *The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming-not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship.
2 If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would*

no longer have felt guilty for their sins. 3 But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, 4 because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

b. In other words, THOSE SACRIFICES were designed to remind the SINNER of his SIN.

c. Every time a worshipper offered a sacrifice for his sins and for the sins of his family, the sacrifice served to remind the worshipper of the seriousness of sin.

(1). The just demands of the LAW requires that the sinner be put to death.

(2). God's PURITY and HOLINESS has been OFFENDED by our sin, and His very NATURE demands that He separate Himself from us because we ARE sinners.

(3). Therefore, when the worshipper-sinner offers a sacrifice, that sacrifice is to remind the sinner that the sacrifice has taken HIS place – the sacrifice has DIED in HIS place.

B. But, we have a problem here. The Hebrew writer says the blood of these sacrifices could never take away sins – otherwise they would have no need to offer those sacrifices year after year on the Day of Atonement.

1. So just how DO we get forgiveness of our sins?

2. **Hebrews 10:5-10 (NIV)** – *Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; 6 with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. 7 Then I said, 'Here I am-it is written about me in the scroll - I have come to do your will, O God.'" 8 First he said, "Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them" (although the law required them to be made). 9 Then he said, "Here I am, I have come to do your will." He sets aside the first to establish the second. 10 And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*
- C. Remember the statement of the apostle Paul: **Romans 3:23** – *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God?*
 1. Well, that wasn't ALL he said.
 - a. **Romans 3:24-26** – *being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, 26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

2. What does this mean?
 - a. It means God has JUSTIFIED US – made us HOLY and ACCEPTABLE in His sight – by His grace and mercy, THROUGH or BECAUSE OF the REDEMPTION OF OUR SINS that comes THROUGH Jesus Christ.
 - c. It means Jesus was able to do this for us because He became the PROPITIATION for our sins – He died in OUR PLACE, paying the price for us by shedding His blood – as a result of our faith in Him.
 - d. It means God is able to JUSTLY FORGIVE US of our sins, just as He overlooked the sins of those in Old Testament times, because we have FAITH in Jesus Christ.
 - e. It means we are JUSTIFIED by God’s GRACE through OUR FAITH in the BLOOD of Jesus Christ.
3. In fact, later in the FIFTH chapter of Romans Paul added this:
 - a. **Romans 5:6-11** – *For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His*

blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. 10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

D. And do you want to know the real BEAUTY of all this? The sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins has ALWAYS been God's plan for redeeming us from our sins, and Jesus Christ has ALWAYS planned on giving Himself for our sins by dying on the cross.

1. Hundreds of years before Jesus Christ came into the world to offer Himself on the cross, the prophet ISAIAH wrote this about Jesus:
 - a. **Isaiah 53:7-12** – *And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. 8 He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken. 9 And they made His grave with the wicked — but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth. 10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His*

seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. 11 He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

- E. Therefore, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary:
1. God is able to:
 - a. Preserve His HOLINESS when we come into His presence because our sins have been forgiven by the blood of Jesus Christ.
 - b. Maintain His JUSTICE and uphold the RIGHTEOUS DEMANDS of the LAW because Jesus suffered the punishment WE were due as sinners – He gave HIS LIFE for OURS.
- F. Now let me ask you this VERY SOBERING question. What do you suppose the reaction of God and Jesus will be toward those who simply BLOW ALL THIS OFF – who simply turn their back on what Jesus did and continue to live their lives the way they want?

1. **Hebrews 10:26-31** – *For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. 28 Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people." 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

CONCLUSION:

- I. Jesus is not just THE WAY to FORGIVENESS of our sins, He is the ONLY WAY to FORGIVENESS.
 - A. This is why Jesus charged His apostles with the responsibilities of going into all the world to preach the gospel.
 1. They fulfilled that responsibility by preaching salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ beginning on the day of Pentecost.

2. And they continued to fulfill that responsibility by preaching and teaching salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ through their inspired writings continued in the New Testament.
- B. It's now up to US to make certain we have ACCEPTED this indescribable gift of God's love by coming to Jesus Christ in complete faith and obedience.
1. Have you done that?
 2. And if you have, are you continuing to faithfully follow Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, and continuing to trust in the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ every time you sin?
- C. Whatever you do, DON'T reject the GRACE and MERCY of God and the SAVING BLOOD of Jesus Christ.
1. If you DO, the consequences will be that you will fall into the hands of God.
 2. Remember – *"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."*