



No gift can be paid for or be earned or deserved. The same is true for eternal life. It is not earned or deserved. God refuses any payment for it because He offers it to all men as a gift. In fact it is an insult to try and pay for it. It can only be received on a free gift basis.

Why can no one earn their way to heaven? It is because MAN IS A SINNER. The Bible makes it clear that we are all guilty in the sight of God, for:

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

Our own experience tells us that we often fail to come up to our own standards, let alone God’s standard of perfection.

What is Sin?

Sin is anything that displeases God and transgresses His law. It is not just crimes like murder, rape or robbery. There are sins in DEED, for instance: cheating, losing our temper, stealing and immoral behaviour; and sins in WORD such as lying, gossiping, cursing and swearing; as well as sins in THOUGHT such as lust, pride, bad thoughts and hatred. Sins of COMMISSION are things we do that we should not. As well as these, there are sins of OMISSION, such as failing to love God, to pray to Him and worship Him, as well as failing to love our neighbour as ourselves.

All these sins show that each of us is a sinner by nature and undeserving of eternal life in heaven. Even if I am really good and only commit three sins a day, then in one year that would be 1000 sins! In a lifetime, 70,000 sins. In fact it would be worse than this. What do you think would happen to an habitual offender in a court with 70,000 transgressions on his record?

This means that MAN CANNOT SAVE HIMSELF. YOU CANNOT SAVE YOURSELF. No amount of good works, religious rituals or trying hard will impress God enough to allow you into heaven. You cannot earn your way into heaven.

God’s Standard

What is the standard that God sets? If you wanted to save yourself by good deeds, do you know how good you would have to be?

Jesus said:

“Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).

God has only one standard - PERFECTION! A perfect God, in a perfect heaven, requires perfection. But imperfect man does not meet the standard and so he cannot save himself. With such a high standard, no one can save himself, for God also says,

“Whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10).

It just takes one sin to make us guilty.

In exams, there is a pass grade. God has a pass grade in His class of life. Some of us may get 5%, others 20%, but it makes no difference, we all fail! Why? God’s pass grade is 100% - PERFECTION. Because of sin no one can pass on their own performance. God gave His Laws in the Bible to show man His high standards, and in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus showed that God requires perfection in our heart attitudes as well as in our actions.

“Cursed is every one who does not continue to do all the things that are written in the book of the law” (Galatians 3:10).

It’s as impossible to reach heaven by our own efforts as it is to swim the Atlantic! Some may get further than others but all would fall a long way short of the goal. So, even though some people are better than others, we all fall short of God’s standard. The gulf between us and heaven’s glory is far greater than the Atlantic Ocean.





Do you now see why it is impossible for us to save ourselves? In spite of our sin, however... GOD IS MERCIFUL and therefore does not want to punish us. This is because:

“God is love” (1 John 4:8).

He says:

“I have loved you with an everlasting love” (Jeremiah 31:3).

He wants us all to go to heaven.

But the same Bible that tells us that God loves us also tells us that GOD IS JUST, therefore He must punish sin. He says:

“I will by no means clear the guilty” (Exodus 34:7)

and

“The soul who sins shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4).

We all believe in justice. If a criminal robs and murders someone, then we know he should be punished. We would be outraged if he were let off. He must pay the penalty for his actions. Just as a human judge must pronounce sentence upon a criminal, so God also must punish the guilty. God cannot turn a blind eye to sin. If a human judge is required to punish law-breakers because of justice, how much more must the Just and Holy Judge of the universe punish every sin? Otherwise God would be unjust. Therefore all men are under the sentence of death.

We have a major problem - we have all sinned and the penalty for sin is eternal death. We need forgiveness so that we can have a right relationship with God. On the one hand, God loves us and does not want to punish us - He wants us to go to heaven; on the other hand He is Just and must punish our sin, which would mean us going to hell.

God solved this problem for us in the person of JESUS CHRIST. Who exactly would you say Jesus Christ is? A good man, a great teacher, a prophet perhaps? The Bible tells us He is all these things but also so much more. He is God - the Creator of the whole universe. He created you. He also became a man and lived among us. Jesus Christ is the unique God-Man, both fully God and fully man.

“In the beginning was the Word (JESUS) and the Word (JESUS) was with God and the Word was God ...and the Word (JESUS) became flesh (a man) and dwelt among us” (John 1:1,14).

So you see, He was and is God!

2000 years ago, God became a man, clothing Himself in human flesh. God loved us so much that He sent His own Son, Jesus Christ, to come and save us from our sin and from hell and give us life. As a man, Jesus lived a perfect sinless life and did many miracles that proved He was the Son of God, but it is what He did in His death that is of supreme importance.

What did Jesus Do?

When Jesus died on the cross, all our sin was laid on Him.

“All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord has laid on him (Jesus) the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6).

God hates our sins but because of His love for us, He has placed them ALL on His Son. Christ bore our sins in His body on the cross. When He cried, **“It is finished”**, He announced that He had paid the price for our forgiveness in full. He died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins in our place and to purchase a place in Heaven for us. He was buried and our sin was buried with Him.

On the third day He rose from the dead and is alive forevermore! He now offers you the gift of eternal life that He purchased through His death.





Receiving this gift

This gift is received by faith.

Faith is the only key that opens the door to heaven. Many try to use the key of their good works to get in, but will fail. The Bible says that

“God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

But what is saving faith? FAITH IS BELIEVING THE GOOD NEWS. Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God? Do you believe that He died for your sins? Do you believe He rose again on the third day? Do you believe He offers you forgiveness and eternal life?

If you said “Yes” to these questions you have the first ingredient of faith, called intellectual assent, which is believing certain historical facts. But this alone will not save you, for the Bible says the devil believes in God and in these facts. So just believing in God is not saving faith. Something else is required and that is a personal response to Jesus Christ. Faith must be from the heart as well as in the head. SAVING FAITH IS TRUSTING IN JESUS CHRIST ALONE FOR ETERNAL LIFE. FAITH means TRUST. If you really believe someone, you put your trust in them.

Now perhaps you have prayed and trusted God for temporary crises such as financial, family or physical needs. Now this is good, but it is not saving faith. Saving faith is trusting in Jesus Christ alone for salvation, forgiveness and eternal life. It is entrusting your whole being to Him for your eternal destiny. It means resting, depending and relying upon Christ alone and what He has done, rather than what you or I have done to get us to heaven.

“Believe (trust) on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31).

Faith is like the hand of a beggar receiving the gift of a King. We don't deserve the gift of eternal life and we cannot pay for it, but we can have it today if we reach out and receive it by faith.

You have just read the greatest story ever told about the greatest offer ever made by the greatest Person who ever lived - Jesus Christ. The question God is asking you now is: “Would you like to receive the gift of eternal life?” It's up to you! It is the most important choice you will make. Because this is such an important matter, let's clarify what this means: It means putting all your trust in the resurrected living Jesus Christ, receiving Him into your heart and life as your Saviour and Lord.

Jesus said:

“Behold I stand at the door (of your heart) and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and dine with him and he with Me” (Revelation 3:20).

When He comes in, He comes as your Saviour. He forgives your sins and gives you eternal life. He also comes into your life as your Lord for He is God. There is a throne-room in your heart, and that throne is rightly His. He made you. He bought you with His blood and He wants to take His rightful place on the throne of your life. So trusting in Jesus Christ as your Saviour also means surrendering to Him as your Lord.

Prayer of Salvation

If this is what you really want, you can come to God in prayer right where you are. You can receive His gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ right now.

“For all who call on the name of the Lord Jesus shall be saved” (Romans 10:17).

If you want to receive Jesus and His gift of eternal life, then call on Him in prayer, asking Him for this gift right now, and He promises that you will be saved.

Say this prayer from your heart to God...





“Dear God, I come to You, I confess that I have sinned. I have gone my own way. I do not deserve eternal life. But I believe you sent Jesus to save me. I believe He is the Son of God. I believe that on the cross He paid the penalty for my sins. I believe that He rose from the grave on the third day. Right now, Lord Jesus, I invite you into my heart. I receive you as my Saviour and Lord. Please forgive my sins and take control of my life. I receive your free gift of eternal life. I give my life to you. I trust you alone for my salvation. Thank you for saving me. Amen.”

If you have genuinely prayed this prayer, look at what Jesus promises to those who truly believe in Him:

“Truly I say to you, whosoever believes (trusts) in Me has (possesses now) eternal life” (John 6:47).

If you have received Christ as your Lord and Saviour, you are now a child of God!

WELCOME TO THE FAMILY OF GOD!

“For as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born of God” (John 1:12,13).

Today is your spiritual birthday, a day that you will always want to remember!

The Bible says you are a brand new person on the inside.

“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away; behold all things are become new” (2Corinthians 5:17).

You are now alive to God and your past is forgiven. Your inner-man (your spirit) has been reborn, and you now have God’s life and love-nature in you.

“The love of God has been poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us” (Romans 5:5).

You now have a new capacity to love God and other people. Isn’t it wonderful what God has done for you! You are the love-child of a love-God and you should seek to express that love.

What’s Next?

The Christian life is all about loving God in response to His wonderful love for us.

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength” (Matthew 22:37).

What does it mean to love someone? You will want to spend time with them, enjoy their company, talk with them, get to know them and develop a close relationship with them. If we love God, we will spend time listening to Him and speaking to Him.

How do we develop this close relationship with God?

Read The Bible

The Bible is God’s Word to us. When we read it, God speaks to us. Spend some time each day reading the Bible and ask God to speak to you through His Word. A good way to start is to read the Gospel of John (at least a chapter a day). If you don’t have a Bible, buy one in a translation you can easily understand. You will find promises that God makes to you personally and commands that He gives you for your own benefit.

When you understand what God’s will is for you, then put it into practice in your life. You will learn more about Him, what He likes and dislikes. As you become aware of anything wrong in your life, repent of those sins, confessing them to God.

Pray

Spend time each day talking to God.





“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God” (Philippians 4:6).

He wants you to speak to Him, to share with Him what is on your heart. He is your best friend. He wants you to come to Him in prayer. His ears are open to you. Tell Him your needs, ask for His help, trust Him in the everyday things of life. Praise Him for Who He is and give Him thanks for every good thing in your life and for what He will do for you.

Begin to pray for others also. Talk to Him as your heavenly Father and best friend, Who loves you. Open your heart to Him. You can pray anytime but it is good to set aside a special undisturbed time to be alone with God. Through the Bible and prayer you will draw closer to God; you will enjoy being in His presence and your faith in Him will grow.

Worship Regularly

Worship regularly at a church that teaches you the Bible and honours Jesus Christ.

“I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go into the house of the Lord’” (Psalm 122:1).

When we receive Christ, we start the Christian life as a spiritual baby who needs to grow in our new relationship with God. In order to grow into strong Christians, we need to get together with other Christians and learn more about this new life.

“As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the Word of God, so that you may grow” (1 Peter 2:2).

We are not meant to live the Christian life alone but in FELLOWSHIP with other believers who will help us grow in our faith. We are all in the same family and we need to meet together regularly. Being part of a Bible-believing Church is God’s will for us.

“Not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together, as is the manner of some” (Hebrews 10:25).

The first Christians who gladly received God’s Word often joined together and

“continued steadfastly in the apostles teaching, and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers” (Acts 2:41,42).

Be a Witness

Be a witness by telling others about your faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus said:

“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father in heaven. But whoever denies me before Men, him will I also deny before My Father in heaven” (Matthew 10:32,33).

If you have recently received Christ, perhaps through reading this, please let us know and we would be pleased to send you some free literature.

Baptism in Water

All true followers of Jesus Christ desire to obey Him. He commands all those who have put their trust in Him to be baptised by full immersion in water as a testimony of their faith. This is a vital first step in your Christian life. The Church that you attend should be able to baptise you.

The Holy Spirit

We believe in the present day ministry of the Holy Spirit to enable us to live a Godly life. God wants us to be filled with the Holy Spirit because we can’t live the Christian life and be a powerful witness for Christ in our own strength. When we receive Christ, the Holy Spirit of God comes to live in us. He is called our Helper. As we depend on Him, He supplies the power we need. Jesus said:

“You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you (and fills you) and you shall be My witnesses” (Acts 1:8).





It's up to us to allow God to fill us with His Spirit.

Ask Him to fill you now, empowering you to be victorious and bold witnesses to all the world.

Two Important Promises

What Do I Do if I Sin?

You have received a new life. However, you are not perfect and at times you may sin and fail God as a Christian. God knows our weaknesses. He still loves us and wants us to run to Him at these times, not run away from Him. When you sin, you do not lose your relationship with God - you are still His child. However, your fellowship with God is broken, which hinders your prayers and blocks the flow of God's blessings to you. But God has provided a way for you to put things right. He promises:

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

As soon as you ask for His forgiveness, He will forgive you and restore your fellowship with Him. He has promised to do this. If you fail, don't give up. Confess the sin, receive forgiveness and carry on. Remember, God's life and nature is in you to enable you to overcome and live as you should, and you can also call upon God's help and strength at any time.

What About When Bad Things Happen?

The Christian life is not all a bed of roses. God does not promise that we will not face troubles and difficulties. Apart from the fact that we bring things on ourselves, we also live in a messed-up world. When bad things happen, it does not mean God has forgotten you. He promises:

“God will work all things together for good for those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28).

In the middle of troubles, keep loving and trusting God, believing that He will turn them all for your good.

This presentation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ was written by Derek Walker, Pastor of the Oxford Bible Church, England.