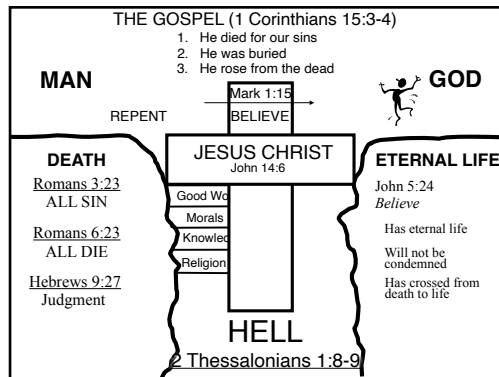


Our Response



Jesus died to save all men from their sin so they can spend eternity in a relationship with Him. Yet, all men are not saved. Why? Because God gives you the freedom to make the decision about your salvation, and that decision will determine your eternity. How then can you be saved?

Jesus says, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe in the gospel." (Mark 1:15 ESV) We can't continue to live a life of sin. We must be willing to repent or turn from our sin and live a holy life like Jesus. But we don't have the power to change ourselves. So we must believe that God provides the power for us to change through His grace in the gospel.

The Bible says, "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my words and believes Him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life." (John 5:24 NIV) Believe what? That the Lord Jesus fully paid for your sins through His death on the cross. To believe is to put your full faith or trust in the Lord Jesus to save you from your sins instead of trusting in good works, morality, knowledge, religion or anything else to save you. When you do, you have eternal life. You will not be judged by God in the future to spend eternity in hell because all of your past, present, and future sins have been forgiven by God through the blood of Jesus. You have indeed already passed from death to life the moment you believe. When you believe, God places His Spirit in your heart (Ephesians 1:13-14) to empower you to overcome sin in your life. You are made a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Now that you have heard the gospel, let me ask you three questions:

1. Do you understand this?

If you don't understand the basic truth of the gospel, you have no basis for faith. "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ." (Romans 10:17 ESV)

If you understand the gospel, then...

2. Are you willing to repent and believe right now?

You must be willing to repent and exercise faith. It is a personal decision of your will. True faith results in a changed life. If you are willing to believe now, then...

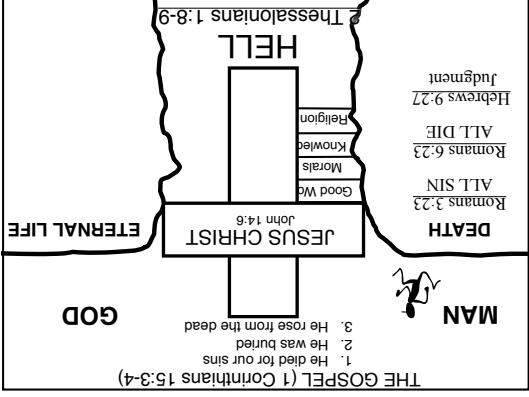
3. Will you express your faith in prayer that the Lord Jesus died for you and rose again and that you are trusting in Him to forgive you and save you from your sins?

"For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (Romans 10:13 ESV)

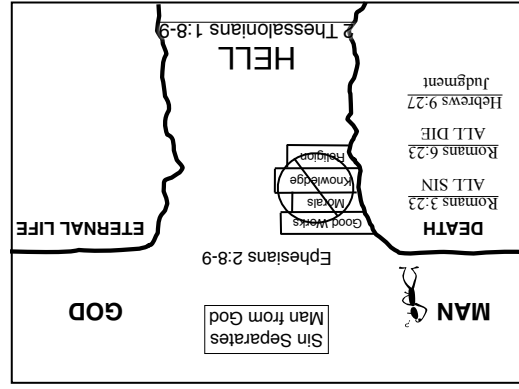
Pray in your own words something like this: "Dear God, I admit that I am guilty of living a sinful life and deserve Your judgment. But I believe that You love me and sent Your Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for my sins. I am willing to turn from my sinful way of life and I put my full trust in Jesus alone to save me. I ask You to forgive my sins and give me eternal life. Amen."



God's Solution



Our Problem



Man was created by God to enjoy a close relationship with Him. Adam and Eve walked together with God in the Garden of Eden. But Adam and Eve both sinned by disobeying God's command. God is holy and does not dwell with sin so Adam and Eve's sin separated them from God's presence. The great chasm between the two cliffs above represent that separation. Not only did Adam and Eve sin but the Bible teaches that all people sin by disobeying God's commands. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23 ESV)

Separated from the God he was created to know, man desperately tries to build his own bridges to Him. The most common one is the bridge of good works. But our own good works are like polluted garments in the sight of a Holy God (Isaiah 64:6).

Others try to reach God through living a moral life. But man can't live up to his own moral standards, much less the perfect standards of God (Matthew 5:48). Man is not able to keep the "Ten Commandments", which are only the elementary laws of God. The problem lies in man's

deceitful heart (Jeremiah 17:9).

Nor is knowledge the bridge to God. Knowledge increases our feelings of guilt. God doesn't excuse our sin merely because we have learned the truth. "For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified." (Romans 2:13 ESV)

"But surely practicing religion can bridge us to God," some will say. No, not even religion will bring us back into relationship with the living God. Religion is helpful. It helps guide us in what we should and should not do. But religion, whether Buddhism, Daoism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, Catholicism, or Protestantism, cannot bridge us to God. Man doesn't need to be more religious. He needs God to save him from his sin.

Not only have all sinned, but the result of sin is death. "For the wages of sin is death..." (Romans 6:23) Man was not created to die but to live forever in relationship with God. Yet, because of Adam's sin, man is born with a corrupted body that will die and that has an inclination to sin. Man's decision to sin leads ultimately to spiritual death.

And that is not all. The Bible tells us, "And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes the judgment." (Hebrews 9:27 ESV) Every person will face God after they die and those whose sins are not forgiven are judged to spend eternity in hell, a place where man is punished with eternal destruction and separated from God forever (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9).

It's a terrible picture. Man can't bridge the gap to God. Left to his own means, he is helpless. Cut off from God because of his sin, man's condition seems hopeless (Ephesians 2:12).

Because of God's justice, He must punish sin. But because of His great love, He provides a way for man to be saved from his sin. God had a wonderful plan designed before the world began to bridge the gap that sin caused to bring man back into relationship with Himself. We can only be saved by the grace of God, by His own free gift (Ephesians 2:8-9). God's grace came to us through Jesus Christ.

Because He loved the world so much, God sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to be born as a man. Jesus is the son of Mary, and the Son of God. He was not born of a physical union between God and Mary. It was a miraculous conception through the power of the Holy Spirit of God. Jesus is not part man and part God, but fully man and fully God. The Lord Jesus Christ alone is qualified to be our Savior. If He is not man, He cannot represent us. If He is not God, He cannot save us.

Jesus did many wonderful miracles, but we are not saved by the miracles of Jesus. He taught many beautiful lessons, but we are not saved by following the ethical teachings of Jesus. He healed many people of their sickness, but the healing of the body does not guarantee the healing of the soul. Jesus lived a perfect life among us to show us how to live and to reveal that He is the Son of God. But more than His perfect life is necessary to save us.

Jesus Christ had to die. The wage that must be paid for sin is death and Jesus paid it for us all through His death on the cross. God required a perfect sacrifice as payment for sin and Jesus is the only sacrifice that meets His righteous requirement. Jesus became our substitutionary sacrifice. We deserve to die for our sins, but Jesus died in our place. On the cross, He took all our sin upon Himself and God punished our sin in Him. "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Corinthians 5:21 ESV) Not only did He pay for the sins of the world, His perfect righteousness is credited to those who place their faith in Him.

After Jesus died and was buried, He rose again from the grave for our justification (Romans 4:25). His resurrection proves that He is the Son of God who makes us right with God. We need not be uncertain about who is our Savior. There is only one Bridge that can restore us to relationship with God, the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:6).

This is the Good News, the Gospel, "...that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures." (1 Corinthians 15:3-4 ESV) Through Jesus' death and resurrection, God's love provided the way for God's justice to be satisfied. He died to pay for my sins so I don't have to pay for them eternally in hell. Oh, how great is the love of God. Jesus died for you, and for me!