

STARTING POINT CLASS
Session #1
AN OUTLINE OF THE GOSPEL/WHY DID JESUS DIE?

I. The Bible Says Three Basic Things about God:

- A. He is the Creator. All life comes from Him. I am not an accident in a random universe. (Genesis 1:1; Colossians 1:16; Psalm 139:13-16)
- B. He is Love. Because He loves me, He has a plan in mind for me --specifically, that I have a fulfilling relationship with Him, who is Almighty God the Creator. (1 John 4:7-8; John 3:16; John 17:3; John 10:10)
- C. He is Holy and Just. "Holy" means set apart, pure, and without any sin or evil. "Justice" means impartial adjudication of all of our actions in accordance with a standard resulting in reward or punishment. (Isaiah 6:3; Leviticus 19:2; Romans 2:6-16)

Q: What is the relationship between holiness and justice? Justice is the gatekeeper of God's holiness.

II. The Bible Says Two Basic Things about Us:

- A. We were created in God's image: We were created with the spiritual need to have a meaningful relationship with God, but also with the freedom to have that relationship with God or to go our own independent way. Our inherent sense of life's purpose is, however, unfulfilled if this relationship with God is lacking. We are, consequently, left with an unquenchable void in our heart. (Genesis 1:26; 2:15-18; Psalm 139:13-16)
- B. We have turned away from God: Specifically, we have rejected God's authority and set ourselves up in God's place. This self-will, characterized by an attitude of active rebellion or passive indifference, is evidence of what the Bible calls sin. (Romans 3:9-12; Isaiah 53:6a; 59:2)

III. The Problems

- A. My problem: God is holy but I am sinful. A great gulf separates us two. I may be trying to reach God through my own efforts, such as good works, philosophy, or religion. However, I cannot be good enough to have a relationship with the holy God. I face permanent separation and punishment because of my sins since the wages of sin is death (spiritual separation from God). (Romans 6:23)
- B. God's problem: He still loves me. But He cannot just "let me off" without ceasing to be holy and just. He faces a conflict between love, on the one hand, and holiness and justice, on the other. He desires a way of rescuing me that preserves my nature as a person and His as God.

Q: You are a judge known to be just and loving. Someone you love is found guilty of a crime. The law mandates \$100,000 fine. But you love this person with all your heart. How would you be both just and loving to this person at the same time?

IV. God's Answer: The Bible Says Three Basic Things about Jesus Christ:

- A. He died in our place. God became a man, lived a sinless life, and gave Himself the punishment I deserve. An illustration: A law court: A judge, after imposing a fine of \$100,000 to a criminal he loves, comes off the bench, and writes a check out for him for \$100,000. In astounding contrast to other religions, God Himself becomes the sacrifice for sin. This is the meaning of the death of Jesus Christ. (Isaiah 53:5; John 3:16; Colossians 1:21-22; Romans 3:21-26, 5:8; Ephesians 2:13-16; 2 Corinthians 5:21)

Additional Biblical Illustrations.

Redeeming a slave by paying a ransom:

Redemption came by Jesus (Romans 3:24). He, by his death on the cross, paid the ransom price (Mark 10:45). In this way, we are set free from the power of sin. This is true freedom. Jesus said, "If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." (John 8:36).

The temple:

The Lamb of God. (John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:19)

The Earthly Tabernacle/Temple. (Hebrews 9)

What happened when Jesus died? (Matthew 27:51; Hebrews 10:9-22)

The home:

Restoration of relationship with God the Father. The prodigal son story.

- B. He was resurrected. By this He proves that He is still in authority over life and death and evil. It also means He is still seeking a relationship with me. (1 Corinthians 15:3-6; 1 Peter 1:3-4)
- C. He is the only way to God. Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me." (John 14:6)

V. Implications:

- A. He loves me, seeks me, and desires me to come to Him. (Revelation 3:20)
- B. If I do not accept His offer of forgiveness, I remain facing the judgment of God; He will not deny my personhood or His by overlooking my decision. John 3:16 is a declaration of His love, but also a warning about the possibility of perishing.

VI. My Response:

I must individually receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; then, I can know God personally and experience His love, His kingdom, and His plans for my life. (John 1:12) I receive Christ through faith, not by good works. (Ephesians 2:8-9) Receiving Christ involves asking God (by prayer) to forgive me for my sins and inviting God to be the King and the Lord of my life.

VII. Result of My Response:

I am a new creation, a new baby in Christ. (John 3:1-8; 2 Corinthians 5:17) I have peace with God, and a relationship with God. (Romans 5:1-2) The Bible promises eternal life to all who receive Christ. (1 John 5:11-13) The Holy Spirit begins to dwell in me. (Ephesians 1:13-14) I begin to bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." (Galatians 5:22)