

THE GOSPEL IS GOD'S POWER TO SAVE

Every human being has the same difficulty! Sin is our problem! Every human being recognizes this weakness within himself or herself. We all can identify with the Bible passage that describes the condition of the human race in Noah's day.

^s ... the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and ... every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Gen 6:5 (ESV)

You may not have gotten as bad as that! But you know the problem of sin in your life, and other people's lives, don't you?

Hello I'm Larry Murdock. I preach for the Gandy church of Christ.

I suppose there may be someone somewhere who denies that they have sinned. I have never met that person. Even atheists believe that there is evil and wickedness in the world. Even the journalists who bring us the news of wicked deeds, do so in such a manner that you know it is a sad thing for them to announce. Three times an inspired apostle of Jesus Christ speaks of the "law of sin." It was the apostle Paul to whom it was revealed that there is indeed a "law of sin" alive and active in the lives of human beings. It seems like a natural law because it's the only one we know. And this law of sin has been around since Adam and Eve, shortly after God created the universe and everything therein. This "law of sin" is so prevalent that the Holy Spirit says we are "sold under sin."

I am of the flesh, sold under sin. ¹⁵ I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Romans 7:14-15 (ESV)

There is a terrible divide within every human being. There is a part of me that recognizes the good that I should do. But then there is another part of me that actually does the opposite. Part of me says to help the man who has stumbled and is hurt. But another part of me may laugh at his misfortune. The Bible says,

Pro 17:5 By insulting the poor, you insult your Creator. You will be punished if you make fun of someone in trouble.

Yes, I agree! I know intuitively that it is wrong of me to rejoice when I see someone is in pain, or trouble, or heartache! But does my knowledge of what is right keep me from doing wrong? No; not always!

We all know what sin is! No...we may not recognize every sin when we see it... but we do know that we have been guilty of doing the wrong thing on many occasions. Guilty as I am how can I be saved from the consequences of my sins?

The God who created human beings believes that it is His duty to punish sin! He is the Judge of all such matters. Even we sinners believe it is right to punish sin! That's right! And even though God has declared His great love for the human race, he still must say, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." Romans 12:19 (ESV) Furthermore, it is written, that...

the Lord Jesus is *[to be]* revealed from heaven with his mighty angels ⁸ in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, ¹⁰ when he comes on that day.... 2 Thess 1:7-10 (ESV)

The wrath of God is a terrible thought. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Heb 10:31 (ESV) "...The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth." Romans 1:18 (ESV). The Bible says that because of our hard and impenitent hearts we "...are storing up wrath for [ourselves against] the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed." Romans 2:5 (ESV).

Yes, if we have not known God and have not obeyed the gospel of our Lord Jesus, then we "will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day..." What kind of destruction is this? The Greek word that is translated destruction in this text means to "ruin". It is not that we are taken out of existence. We are ruined even while existing in an eternal state. Sinners will be exiled to a place away from the presence of God where there is only ruin.

But friends, knowing God and obeying the gospel of our Lord Jesus are the keys to avoiding the wrath of God against our sins! That's right! Knowing God is to know what God has revealed of Himself and His thinking. What is God's will? What does God think about your life in His world? God has revealed that some behaviors are right and some behaviors are wrong. Humans know that some things are right and other things are wrong. So perhaps we already know a little of what it means to "know God", but what does it mean to "obey the gospel"?

The word "gospel" means "good news." The Holy Spirit teaches that Jesus Christ's coming into the world is "good news." Not just his coming, but what he did when he came into the world is "good news." The coming of Jesus is a sign of God's great love for the human race. The inspired apostle John wrote that,

¹⁶ ...God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. [Everlasting life is the opposite of being AWAY from the presence of God!]

¹⁷ For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. ¹⁸ He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. John 3:16-18

It is "good news" that God cares about His creation. It is "good news" that God cares about the main problem that faces human beings...the problem of sin. It is "good news" that God can and has done something about saving us from sin. **How can God save us from our own sins?** God intends to FORGIVE SIN! That's right! God intends to FORGIVE SIN! **But how can He do that and be a Just Judge?** The Judge knows that we have sinned! God knows that we are guilty! How can he **justly** forgive people who are guilty? God's only begotten Son provided God with the solution to forgiveness. God's sinless Son...sent from Heaven...came to die for the sins of the world. Since, through one man's sin, sin entered into the world, judgment and death followed behind, God thought it was fair that through one sinless man's righteous act of dying for sins forgiveness could be offered to the world. On the one hand, Adam's sin resulted in judgment and death for the human race; on the other hand, Jesus' sinlessness resulted in forgiveness being offered the human race.

But friends, the coming of Jesus is only good news to those who believe what the Bible says about Jesus. This is the gospel; this is the good news that Jesus Christ died for your sins.

Some people teach that because of Jesus' sacrifice the whole world of people will be saved. This is called universalism. If this were true then God would be taking away our freedom! Humans still have the freedom to choose what they will do. Do you want to be saved from the Day of God's wrath, or do you not? Do you wish to continue in sin, and still be saved by God's grace? You can't have it both ways! We must make a choice. We will follow Satan, or we will follow Christ. Which will it be?

The apostle Paul knew of some Christians who still wanted to continue in sin.

¹ What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?

² By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. Romans 6:1-4 (ESV)

When we are baptized into Christ it does not mean that we will never sin...but it does mean that sin will no longer be dominate in our lives.

⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. Romans 6:6 (ESV)

Don't let sin rule your body. After all, your body is bound to die, so don't obey its desires or let any part of it become a slave of evil. Give yourselves to God, as people who have been raised from death to life. Make every part of your body a slave that pleases God. Don't let sin keep ruling your lives. You are ruled by God's kindness and not by the Law. What does all this mean? Does it mean we are free to sin, because we are ruled by God's wonderful kindness and not by the Law? Certainly not! Don't you know that you are slaves of anyone you obey? You can be slaves of sin and die, or you can be obedient slaves of God and be acceptable to him. You used to be slaves of sin. But I thank God that with all your heart you obeyed the form of the teaching delivered to you. Now you are set free from sin and are slaves who please God. Romans 6:12-18 (CEV)

1.10.2

Friends, do you want to be set free from sin? Then “obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Believe that Jesus is God’s son sent on a mission of mercy. Repent of your sins, that is, turn away from your sins. Confess your faith and be buried in a watery grave for the forgiveness of your sins. You are promised the gift of the Holy Spirit according to Acts 2:38. Friends, obey the gospel as soon as possible! God is waiting for you. Visit a church of Christ nearest you; they can help you complete your obedience.