

## THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

### A Perfect World and perfect people:

God created a perfect world and perfect people. Genesis 1:27 says, “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” **Genesis 1:31 says, “God saw all that He had made, and it was very good.”**

### A Broken World:

Yet the world we live in is broken.

When you take a realistic look at the world and society and even your friends and family, what do you see?

Sexual trafficking

Self-centeredness

Murder

Hate

Wars

Divorce

Abuse

Jealousy

This world seems upside-down and there is an ache in your spirit to see it made right. There is also a longing for “something more,” which only God can satisfy.

### Broken People

We are broken too. Through man’s rebellion, pride and selfishness, this perfect world was shattered, and mankind’s relationship with God, with each other, and with the material world itself was ruptured and turned upside down. God continuously warned mankind and through many prophets showed us how to restore our relationship with Him. He also gave us commandments showing us how to love God and how to love others. These commandments were for our good and were based on God’s love for us.

There is a major problem! The Bible says in Jeremiah 17:9, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” Since our hearts are corrupt, the things that we do are corrupt and can never please God. If you are honest, you even see that you, yourself, are part of this corruption and brokenness. You know that you have lied, stolen things (like music from the Internet, software or office supplies, answers on tests or homework), taken God’s name in vain and been jealous of other people. And lusting after other people or being hooked on pornography seems to be normal these days. These are just five of the Ten Commandments that you have broken – and you will be held accountable for each and every one of them apart from Christ. The Bible says that, “All have sinned . . . .” and, “There is no one righteous, not even one.”

### Exiled from God

We became exiles from God by rejecting His ownership of our lives. The consequences of not following God’s commands was death, or separation from God. **Isaiah 59:2 says, “But your iniquities have separated you from your God.”**

Even though our Creator God is a God of intense love, He is also a holy, perfect God of justice Who must judge all wickedness. Hebrews 9:27 says, “For it is appointed unto man once to die, and then the judgment.”

The Bible says that all will stand before God’s judgment seat and each one of us will have to give an account of himself to God. We are left without hope if we depend upon ourselves to try to find out way back to God. For God to be Just, justice must be served. We have broken His Law, and the fine must be paid, or we are separated from God for all eternity.

### How do we try to “fill this gap” between God and us?

Some try to close this gap with good works or religious works, thinking that they will make a person acceptable to God or to themselves as their own “saviors.” Others try to fill this emptiness by swamping out these feelings of separation from God by plunging into a myriad pleasures, which often, in time, become addictive, thereby produce diminishing rewards as these idols grow in strength.

## **God's Rescue**

But God did not give up on us. Because He loved us, God chose to rescue us from spiritual death that would result in our eternal separation from Him in hell. God sent His only son, Jesus Christ, into the world to save it from His wrath and ultimately return it to the Paradise He had originally created. Jesus humbled Himself and entered the world in human flesh with all its frailty to experience every temptation that any man has ever known. He also revealed the Father to us through Word and deed.

Being born of a Virgin and of the Holy Spirit, Jesus was fully God and fully man so that He could bridge the gap between God and man. **John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."**

## **Jesus lived a perfect life**

Jesus lived a perfect life by obeying all of God's commands, including the Ten Commandments. Jesus lived a sinless life for us that we should have lived. Because Jesus was without sin, He should not have died, but because of love, he paid our fine for sin and died a death that we should have died. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, "God made Him (Jesus) who knew no sin to be sin for us so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God."

## **Paid in Full**

In doing so, all our sins, past present and future, were placed upon Jesus when He paid for them by His sacrificial death on the cross. God in His justice, chose to kill His only begotten Son in our place because someone had to pay the price for our rebellion, and it couldn't be us, as we are the guilty ones. Jesus cried out "Totelesti" just before He died on the cross, meaning, "Paid in Full," thus allowing God to be completely "just" and able to forgive us our sins and declare us righteous.

Jesus was buried and three days later rose from the dead. His resurrection, which proved He was God, broke the power of sin and death and Satan in our lives. Because Jesus lives, we can live victoriously forever with God.

## **Our Choice**

We have two choices: either to receive this gift of forgiveness and life OR try to earn our salvation through never-ending good works that will all fall short of the perfection which God commands. And for those who are trying to "do good works" or "be religious" the Bible has a warning, "...All our righteous acts are as filthy rags" to God. Further, Matthew 5:28 says, "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect," showing us that we cannot be our own saviors.

All other religions in this world have mankind trying hard to obey that particular religion's rules to rack up more good works than bad works so that the scales of justice weigh heavy on the good work side. But how does a person "score" good works as opposed to bad works? Is a particular sin minus 5 points or minus 1000 points? It is impossible to know where a person stands with his or her god(s). There is no peace or assurance of being accepted. This is a "religion of DO, DO, and DO some more."

On the contrary, Christianity is a faith where the work has been DONE" for us by Jesus, God in the flesh. Two thousand years ago Christ died for us, earning our acceptance into the family of God by making us holy and perfect and righteous - everything we needed to be reconciled to God. He saved us from sin and death!

When we submit to Christ and become "born from above" (John 3:3, 7), God spiritually removes our "hearts of stone" and gives us "hearts of flesh." (Ezekiel 36:24-30) He sends His Holy Spirit to live in us and help us. We now have power to resist temptation thrown at us by our own flesh, the world or Satan. We become "more than conquerors" in life now and for all eternity.

**We are seen as Perfect People in God's sight when we receive this gift of salvation. What must we do?**

**Confess:**

- We admit that we are sinful and are self-centered and want to be gods ourselves, wanting to be self-reliant and autonomous. We must acknowledge our sins and wrongdoings and ask for forgiveness.

**Mark 1:15b says, "The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news."**

**Repent:**

- We admit that we can't earn perfection or God's favor through good works or trying hard to be good. We turn from trying to be our "own saviors" to our Creator God Who alone can save us.
- We turn from known sins that bother our consciences.
- Repentance (a change of mind and heart) looks like a person making a 180 degree turn in their lives – turning away from everything that God hates and is evil and then turning to God, Who loves us and saves us. We have been deliberately walking away from God but now turn towards Him in thanksgiving for His amazing grace and mercy.

**Put Faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord:**

- Then we place our faith and trust in Christ alone, God's Son Who lived a perfect life for us and died in our place. He alone as our Savior can bridge the gap between a sinful man and a Holy God. He alone can save us from the wrath of God and from our sin.
- We surrender control of our lives over to God's loving control, trusting Him as our Lord.

**Jesus warned His disciples about "Counting the Cost:"**

Jesus warned that there is a cost to following him – that the world will hate us or misunderstand us. Becoming a Christian will put us at odds with many of the world's values. He told His disciples to be willing to "deny themselves and take up their crosses daily." There may be conflict with those still heading away from God as, we now have turned to follow Jesus, and our values are now totally opposite of those who are still lost.

**We enter God's Kingdom and start redeeming the world to make it Less Broken**

We were created to be accountable to God, so we now start living in light of being God's adopted children in His Kingdom on earth where God reigns as our King.

Everything is turned right-side up in this Kingdom where God rules our hearts. We now have a purpose in our lives to represent God as His ambassadors and His reconcilers to the rest of those living in brokenness. Ephesians 2:10 says that God has specific good works planned for each of us to do in redeeming and restoring the world.

**We become Perfect People living in a Perfect World with a Perfect God**

After God brings His throne in heaven and the inhabitants of heaven down to the New Perfect Earth. Revelation 21:4 says, "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

**Jesus is coming soon!**

Revelation 22:7a, "Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book."