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paraphrase of Andrew Farley's 'The Naked Gospel'



THE
GRACE
GOSPEL

GRACE LIFE MINISTRIES 2016

THE GRACE GOSPEL

*PURE AND
UNADULTERATED...*

Contents

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GRACE GOSPEL PRESENTATION

Do You Know For Sure *that you are going to be with God in heaven?*

What if God asked:

***WHY SHOULD I LET YOU
INTO MY HEAVEN?***

What would you say?

Did you know that the Bible tells how you can **KNOW FOR SURE** that you have eternal life and will go to be with God in heaven?

These things I have written to you that you may know that you have eternal life. I John 5:13

Here's how you can **KNOW FOR SURE...**

1.

HEAVEN (Eternal Life with God) IS A FREE GIFT.

The Bible says...
the GIFT of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 6:23

And because heaven is a gift like any other genuine gift.....

IT IS NOT EARNED or DESERVED

Therefore, no personal effort, no good works, no religious deeds can get you to heaven.

By grace you have been saved through faith, and that NOT OF YOURSELVES. It is the gift of God, NOT OF WORKS, lest any man should boast. Ephesians 2:8.9

WHY is it that no one can earn his way to heaven?

2.

MAN IS A SINNER.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23

Sin is transgressing God's law and includes such things as lying, lust, cheating, deceit, anger, evil thoughts, immoral behavior and more.

And because of this

MAN CANNOT SAVE HIMSELF.

The Bible says you would have to be perfect.

You cannot commit even one sin.

Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Matthew 5:48

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

In spite of our sin, however ...

3.

**GOD IS MERCIFUL,
and
DOESN'T WANT TO PUNISH US.**

This is because ...

God is love. . . I John 4:8
and He says,

I have loved you with an everlasting love.
Jeremiah 31:3

But the same Bible that tells us that God loves us also
tells us that . . .

**GOD IS JUST, and therefore
MUST PUNISH SIN.**

He says ...

I will by no means clear the guilty

Exodus 34:7

The soul who sins shall die.

Ezekiel 18:4

We have a problem; we have all sinned. The penalty for sin is death.
We need forgiveness so that we can have a right relationship with God.

**God solved this problem for us in
the Person of ...**

4.

JESUS CHRIST

Who exactly would you say Jesus Christ is?
The Bible tells us clearly that He is the infinite
GOD-MAN.

***In the beginning was the Word (Jesus) ... and the
Word (Jesus) was with God ... and the Word (Jesus) became
flesh and dwelt among us. . John 1:1,14***

**Jesus Christ came to earth and lived a sinless life,
but while on earth ...**

WHAT DID HE DO?

He died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins and rose from the grave to purchase a place for us in heaven.

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 sin in His body on the cross. Now Jesus Christ offers you eternal life (heaven) as a free gift.

This gift is received by ...

5.

FAITH

**Faith is the key that opens the door to heaven.
Many people mistake two things for saving faith:**

- 1.** Just believing certain historical facts.
The Bible says the devil believes in God, but that is not saving faith.
- 2.** Just trusting God for temporary crises such as financial, family, or physical needs.

**Now these are good, and you should trust Christ
for these, but they are not saving faith!**

SAVING FAITH is trusting in Jesus Christ alone for salvation.
Believe (trust) on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. . .
Acts 16:31

Faith is like a beggar getting a gift from a King. We don't deserve the gift of
eternal life.

But we can have it, if we have faith.

**The question that God is asking
you now is ...**

WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE THE GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE?

TRUST in what Jesus Christ has done for you on the cross, that
He has died for YOU.

RECEIVE THE RESURRECTED, LIVING CHRIST into your life as
SAVIOR.

He says, ***Behold, I stand at the door and knock [at the door of
your life]. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will
come in to him.*** Revelation 3:20

RECEIVE JESUS CHRIST INTO YOUR LIFE AS LORD

He comes as Master and King. He made you. He bought you and He wants
to take His rightful place in your life. **REPENT OF YOUR SINS.** Turn away
from sin. Follow Him only.

YOU CAN PRAY TO GOD

You can receive His gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ right now.
***...with the heart one believes to righteousness, and with the
mouth confession is made to salvation ... for whoever calls upon
the name of the Lord shall be saved.***

Romans 10: 10, 13

**If you want to receive the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ,
then call on Him, asking Him for this gift right now.**

HERE IS A SUGGESTED PRAYER:

Lord Jesus Christ, I know I am a sinner and do not deserve eternal life.
But, I believe You died and rose from the grave to purchase a place in heaven
for me.

Lord Jesus, come into my life; take control of my life; forgive my sins and
save me.

I repent of my sins and now place my trust in you for my salvation.
I accept the free gift of eternal life.

**If this prayer is the sincere desire of your heart,
look at what Jesus promises to those who believe in Him.**

***Most assuredly, I say to you ... he who believes in Me has
everlasting life. John 6:47***

WELCOME to God's Family!

If you have truly repented (forsaken, turned away) from your sins,
placed your trust in Jesus Christ's sacrificial death,

and received the gift of eternal life,
you are now a child of God! Forever! Welcome to the Family of God!
***But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to
become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.***

John 1:12

TODAY is your SPIRITUAL BIRTHDAY
a day that you will always want to remember!

***Who were born, not of blood, nor of the Will of the flesh,
nor of the will of man, but of God.*** John 1:13

SPIRITUAL BIRTH CERTIFICATE

For whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Romans 10:13

Knowing that I have sinned and that I need the Lord Jesus Christ as
my Savior.

I now turn from my sins and trust Jesus for my eternal life.

I ask Jesus Christ to forgive me and to deliver me from sin's power and
give me eternal life.

From this time forward, as He gives me strength,
I will seek to serve Him and obey Him in all areas of my life.

Date _____

Signature: _____

WHAT'S NEXT?

*As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the Word (of God),
that you may grow thereby. I Peter 2:2*

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

WORSHIP Jesus Christ

*God is Spirit, and those who worship Him
must worship in spirit and truth.*

John 4:24

*Those who gladly received his word ... continued steadfastly in
the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread,
and in prayers. Acts 2:41,42*

*Jesus said, Therefore whoever confesses Me before men,
him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But
whoever denies me before men, him I will also deny before My
Father Who is in heaven.*

Matthew 10:32,33

PART 2

THE GRACE GOSPEL

(the truth you may never hear in church)

paraphrased by Lorri Frandsen
from Andrew Farley's book
THE NAKED GOSPEL

Today Christians are grateful for Jesus and heaven. Some of us go to church every time the doors are open. Some listen to hundreds of sermons each year. Some remember many Bible verses. But many of us still are not excited about the gospel.



Many of our North American churches are good. There are nice church buildings, attractive features, events, interesting speakers, lots of great music, prayer groups and a friendly atmosphere. So why are the Western Christians so dissatisfied?

This is not a new problem. This problem has been around even more than just a hundred years ago. To understand the religious roots of the problem, we must go back thousands of years ago to the time of Moses in the Old Testament.



Moses was a great leader and prophet who told the Israelite people about God and His laws. God wrote 10 commandments directly on two tablets of stone when Moses was up on Mt. Sinai with Him, while the Israelites were down at the foot of the mountain anxiously waiting to hear what God would say. When Moses revealed the 10 Commandments, the people responded immediately.

*"We will do everything," the people answered.
Exodus 24: 3, 7*

So how did the Israelites do? It is recorded in the Old Testament that Israel had failure after failure. They could not keep the Law and the Law condemned them for breaking the rules.



But God gave Israel a sacrifice system as well, including a Temple with priests. The tribe of Levi served as Israel's priests. They taught God's law, made animal sacrifices, and they prayed for guidance. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest served at the temple. Lamb's blood was an offering for sin. The blood was sprinkled on the cover of the ark of the covenant.

The animal blood covered over the sins of the people so that God did not immediately judge them. God promised that one day He would send a Sacrifice that would actually save them from sin. But until that time the High Priest served in the Temple until he died and then his eldest son took his place. This went on for thousands of years.

In Psalm 78 it is written that God will always be faithful to Israel. He delivered them from slavery in Egypt, guiding them as a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. God split a rock to provide water. He made food to fall from the sky. Israel was supposed to be loyal to Him in return.

But Psalm 78 shows that Israel always failed.

"They rebelled against the high God, they did not follow orders, they were like their ancestors - treacherous and disloyal and they angered God with their idols ..God was angry; He completely rejected Israel. "

The Levitical line of priests also transgressed God.

"And now, you priests, this warning is for you. You do not hear, you do not resolve to honor my name, and God Almighty says, "I will send a curse upon you. Yes, I have cursed them already. "

Malachi 2: 1-2



It was no different in the New Testament. Paul, a Pharisee and great contender for the Jewish religion, could not be obedient to God either. As a Jew he tried very hard to obey God's Law, but he always failed.

In the Bible he wrote: *".. I do not understand what I'm doing, I can not do what I want to do, but instead I do what I hate" (Romans 7:15)*

There's certainly nothing wrong with the law, but no one could keep all the rules. The law clearly showed that something was wrong with everyone.



Many years later, there was a man named Martin Luther who was a monk in the Catholic Church. He wanted to obey God, but he could not do it. He always felt guilty. He hit himself with a whip until he bled. Sometimes he lay on the ground in the snow on a winter night. He almost froze to death.



Even Mother Teresa confessed: "People often say that God loves me, but I feel cold and empty inside. Where is the love, faith, trust, and prayer? Maybe I should not be with the Sacred Heart."

Mother Teresa helped people for forty years, but Mother Teresa had a hard time finding meaning in life and she wanted a stronger relationship with God.

Paul, Martin Luther, and Mother Teresa all struggled in their faith. As they tried to get closer to God, they felt a sense of failure. They asked themselves, "How much is enough? When does it end? Why is God still not satisfied? There has to be another way." They were not happy in their Christianity, just as many Christians today are depressed and unhappy.

ANOTHER WAY



The old way always disappoints us, no matter how much we try to be holy. But there is a new way and it is free and changes everything.

The old way was called the Old Covenant. It was in effect for thousands of years. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses (Hebrews 11) were the heroes of the faith. They were committed to God. These heroes were put in jail, and they were even stoned to death because of their faith.

Referring to believers of the Old Testament, the author of Hebrews writes,

"These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what they were promised. They would not be made right with God before us."

Hebrews 11: 39-40

Such dedication and commitment, yet they did not receive what they were promised. For Christians today, it is better. Has God changed? No. God is the same as always. So what is so different from 2,000 years ago?

One of the things that has changed is the priest system. God's law said a man from the tribe of Levi was to be the high priest for Israel. Today, Christians regard Jesus Christ as their high priest, but according to the law, this makes no sense at all. Jesus was from the tribe of Judah. No one ever served as a priest from the tribe of Judah. The law did not allow it.

"He belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe ever served at the altar. (Hebrews 7:13 - 14).



If Jesus is our High Priest today, then the law system had to have changed at some point. And that's what happened, the whole system has changed!

Some Christians claim that the law is still for us today but they also claim Jesus as their Savior. This cannot be right because the Law belongs to the old system and Jesus is from the new system.

"For this reason, the writer of Hebrews writes, "When the priesthood is changed, the law must be changed also" (Hebrews 7:12)

GOD'S NEW WAY



Christians have a new covenant with Jesus. The old one was different.

*"Jesus Christ has promised that those who are called may receive the eternal inheritance. He is the mediator of a **new** covenant."*

Hebrews 9:15

*"The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind. 'You are a priest forever' Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantor of a **better** covenant."*

Hebrews 7: 21-22

A new covenant? What does this mean? Some people have gone to church for many years and have never even heard of the new covenant. But if we want to understand how to relate to God, we should look to the new. New and old, are definitely not the same.

God said that He would make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.

God declares "It is not like the covenant I made with their ancestors when they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them."

Hebrews 8: 8-9

Something new was coming all along. God always intended to bring in something completely different. Now, even when their strength fails, people can remain faithful.

"For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. But God found fault with the people" (Hebrews 8:7-8).

There really was nothing wrong in itself with the Law from the old covenant. It is still sacred and should be respected as well. But the problem is that no one could keep it. So God made a different way. Now He has put His own desires in us.

"This is the covenant I will establish with the house of Israel after that time, the Lord says. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Hebrews 8:10



God writes His laws on our minds and hearts. But contrary to popular teaching, it's not the Law of Moses that is written on our hearts. It's God's desires.

The "Royal Law" gives freedom. (James 1:25, 2:8, 12) God's commandments are to love Him and to love one another (Mark 12 : 30 - 31). These are easy. Jesus says that those who love Him keep His commandments (John 14:15).

The law of Moses had hundreds of rules. The new law is not like that.

Here is what God says about the New being better.

"The new covenant is established on better promises which we have received through the ministry of Jesus, the mediator of the covenant, which is better than the old one." (Hebrews 8: 6)

If the law were able to save, there'd be no reason for the New. Even Old Testament believers were justified by faith alone, apart from the law. Abraham lived before the law, but he was declared righteous. It was not by law.

*"The law is not of faith."
(Galatians 3:12)*

CAR TROUBLE



Suppose you put aside money to buy a new car. The car dealer offers a price you can afford. The price comes out to Rs 500,000. You sign the paperwork and take the car home. In the end it's yours! A year later, the car dealership says they charged too little. He says you owe Rs 1,00,000 more on the car. You can not believe it! How can they do this? The lawyer points out that the dealership is wrong. A contract does not allow such actions.

Paul said the same thing.

*"Although it is only a man's covenant, yet when it has been agreed and settled, no one can set it aside. What I am saying is this: The law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, can not erase the first covenant made by God."
Galatians 3:15, 17*

The car dealership legally signed a contract that could not add to the price. The Covenant with Abraham also was not changed just because the law came later.

But some people want to keep the law of Moses. Paul wrote to Timothy:

*"We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. But the law is not made for righteous people. The law is designed for lawbreakers.
1 Timothy 1: 8-11*

What purpose does the law serve? Paul says that it is only for unbelievers. In the Old Testament, the law was only for Jews. Today, the law is for only one group, namely, the unbelievers.

We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers...

1 Timothy 1:9

The Bible says that the world is silenced by the law:

"Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. So nobody will be declared righteous in His sight by observing the law; Rather, through the law we become conscious of sin".

Romans 3: 19-20

God says that He demands perfection. When we see the standard, our mouths are silent. Like Adam and Eve, we see our sin before God. The law exposes our sin and our need for Christ.

"Why the law then? ... So that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. "

Galatians 3:19, 22



Some people are prison inmates in jail. Some are under a life sentence. They will be locked up until they die. In these prisons, there are heavy metal doors and iron bars to restrict the freedom of the prisoners. This is how Paul describes life under the law. It's like being locked up as a prisoner:

"Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith."

Galatians 3:23 - 24

Being under the law is like being in prison. You're always being reminded that you are guilty. The law does not help us. It tears down our pride. It shows us

that we will never succeed. The law shows us that we are spiritually dead and we need new life.

The Law of Moses only points out where we've fallen short. Are you looking for love and encouragement? You'll never find it in the law. Living under law is like being a slave to a taskmaster. There's always more to do. And you'll never do enough to please him. The strictest legalist can look very holy but the Law will condemn him as soon as he commits a single sin.

James teaches, "Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it." (James 2:10)

Paul tried to follow all the rules of law.

"I was 100% committed to comply with the law." (Philippians 3: 6)

Maybe people thought that Paul was holy and innocent, but Paul knew that he had failed to comply with the law. Speaking of his failure, Paul writes:

"I did not know what sin was except for the law. I would not know what coveting really was if the law did not say, "You shall not covet." But sin, taking opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of coveting. "
Romans 7: 7 -8

The law is all or nothing. Either you obey the law, or you are cursed. There is no other option. You cannot mix the law with Christ, although many people try to do just that.

'Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you are circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you. Every man who lets himself be circumcised must obey the whole law.'
Galatians 5: 2-3;

Some Christians in the United States want the Ten Commandments posted in public buildings. They do not want to lose what they see as America's Christian heritage. But Christianity was never based on the law.

LAW BREEDS SIN



Commands do not stop people from sinning.
The Law arouses sin:

Sinful passions are aroused by the law and cause spiritual death. "
Romans 7: 5

"But the law of sin produced in me coveting of every kind. Before I knew the laws, I did not know what was wrong.
Romans 7: 8

Romans 7 says that man can not keep the law. The law creates persistent sin. The law arouses sinful passions.

Paul said that the law kills. It is a ministry of condemnation.

Jewish Temple law restricted what a Jew could eat and how to dress. Many Christians can agree that those rules are not for Christians today. But what about the Ten Commandments?

Paul shows that one of the Ten Commandments in his life excited sin. "You shall not covet" caused Paul to try to stop coveting. When he tried to overcome sin in the flesh, sin won every time. The conflict ended with Paul coveting in spite of his best efforts.

In 2 Corinthians, we see that the Ten Commandments bring nothing but condemnation and death:

"Now if the ministry that brought death was magnificent, how much more glorious will the ministry of the Spirit be? If the ministry that brought condemnation was glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry of faith! "
2 Corinthians 3: 7-9

Paul is referring to the Ten Commandments. He particularly mentioned that the ministry "was engraved in letters on stone." This was true of the commandments. It was designed to condemn sin.

"We live under the law, sin will rule over us. We are free from the law, sin shall not rule over us: "Sin will no longer be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace" (Romans 6:14).

But how can we live holy lives if the Ten Commandments do not guide us? It is an obvious question. The answer is: the Holy Spirit comes to live within us when we believe, and that's enough! The fruit that comes from the Holy Spirit is enough.

"There is no law against such things." (Galatians 5:23)



Those who are led by the Spirit are not under the law. The law is a poor substitute for the advice of the Holy Spirit. We think that it is a good way to live to follow the Ten Commandments, but the law has the opposite effect. Principles, rules, and standards, no matter how "Christian" we believe they are, cannot make us holy. Being led by God Himself is better.

In Colossians we read that the law has little value:

*"Since you died with Christ we are not subject to the rules of the world: the rule that says" Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch! "These rules will be destroyed. They are based on human commands and teachings. Such knowledge seems like a good rule, but they lack any value in preventing sin."
Colossians 2:20 - 23,*

Some might say, "I know that living by the rules, does not save me. But now that I am saved, I need rules to guide me," This is why Paul wrote:

*Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard?
Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by human effort?
Galatians 3: 2-3*

Paul says that Christians started out with the Spirit, but then returned to the law. They were trying to finish with human effort! Many today are trying the exact same thing. They are like the Galatian Christians who looked back to the Law and mixed it with the grace of Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul called this an accursed gospel. In fact it wasn't even a gospel (which means good news). It was really a sinful hybrid that attempted to mix grace with legalism.

But the law itself is not sinful. The Apostle Paul writes that the law is not sin. He says that it is good:



"So then, the law is holy, and the commandment holy, just and good" (Romans 7:12).

The law is still used to convict the unbelieving world. That obvious statement concerning the usefulness of the law was written to Timothy:

"If we use it properly, then the law is good. We also know that law is made not for the righteous" (1 Timothy 1: 8-9).

Here we see a balanced view of the law. The law still exists today and has a purpose. Its sole purpose is to show the unbelieving sinners that they are lost. Christians should not be slaves to the law. Jesus Christ has already met the requirements of the law. And He has credited the requirements of the law to those who are born of the Spirit:

'God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful humanity to be a sin offering. God condemned sin in the human body. The law of commands is fully met in Jesus Christ.'

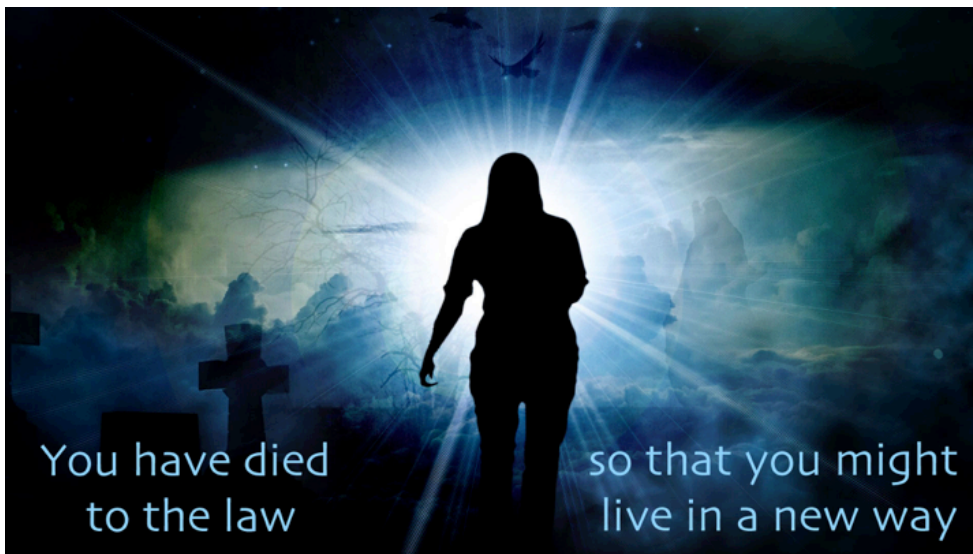
Romans 8: 3-4

Jesus Christ fully met the requirements of the law. He was a sacrifice for sin. Sin was punished. Is God still trying to fulfill the law? No, He has already accomplished it. This is a past event. When we come to Christ, all that He did to fulfill the law is credited to us.

"So, my brothers and sisters, you have died to the law so that you may belong to another, to Him who was raised from the dead. We have been released from the law to a new way of the Spirit so that we do not serve in the old way of the written code.

Romans 7: 4, 6

Through the law, we have come to know sin. Through the law, we die. The law kills. When we realize this, we are ready for a new way.



In Christ, we die and are reborn, free from the law.

TODAY'S SABBATH

But what about things like Sunday worship and tithing? Weekly Sabbath observance and tithing are rooted in the law. If we impose these on believers today, we should follow the rest of the law. The law is an all-or-nothing system.



For Jews, the Sabbath, the seventh day of creation, was a reminder of God resting after His work. He commanded Israel to remember the Sabbath day and to use it for rest. It was to be a special day of remembering how God rested after 6 days of working on His glorious creation.

We look at all that God has made and we are amazed. Creation truly is a glorious work! But the redemptive work of Jesus Christ on the cross is even more glorious. And Jesus is God's true Sabbath rest.

The author of Hebrews invites us to rest with God. Our efforts to become holy through our own meritorious works must cease. Today we are invited to enter into God's rest. Today we celebrate the spiritual Sabbath rest that Christ has fulfilled in Himself.

"There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; Those who enter into God's rest also rest from their own works, as God did from his. We, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest. "

Hebrews 4: 9-11

The Sabbath was only a shadow. The reality is Christ, in whom the true Sabbath-rest is found.

ROBBING GOD?



Many people think that Christians should give 10 percent of their income to the church. If they do not, then they say that you are "robbing God." But is it true?

Israelites conquered Canaan and the tribes divided the land. The tribe of Levi did not get land. They were priests in the camp. The priests could not have homes or land. They received support from other tribes. The law commanded that they get 10%. In this way, God's priest tribe could be supported. This was the reason for the tithe. Today if a pastor of the Church teaches that Christians should give up to 10 percent, it is teaching law.

God says Christians should give offerings from a happy heart (2 Corinthians 9: 7).

Believers are free to give 1 percent, 10 percent, or 100 percent.

The old covenant should not be applied to Christians.



The old covenant of the Bible shows how people ruined their relationship with God. We see how our God throughout history has been full of grace! God told Abraham that through his seed (Jesus) Abraham would become the father of many nations. A promise of salvation coming to many nations was given long before the law was given in the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament, God punished the Israelites for their sins. In the New Testament, God punished Jesus for our sins. In the Old Testament, God left the people. In the New Testament, we see that He will never leave us or forsake us.

God loved David, but David pleaded with God not to take away the Holy Spirit. (Psalm 51:11). Under the new rule, we do not fear such a thing. Life under grace is completely different.

We read about the diet rules and other rules, but we do not have to live by them. Tithing is not applicable to us and neither is keeping the Sabbath. These rules and commandments show us what Jesus has done for us.

Many people think that rules are right. Rules help people know what is right and what is wrong. Adam and Eve wanted to know what was right and what was wrong. They wanted to be wise.

Adam and Eve did not eat from "the tree of evil." They ate from the tree of KNOWLEDGE of good and evil. They tried to be like God. The serpent deceived them by luring them with desire. They wanted to be like little gods deciding for themselves what was good and what was evil.

The temptation of the serpent was: *"When you eat ... your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God" (Genesis 3: 5).* Today, we may be deceived in the same way.

Today people want to be wise. They want rules. Rules that will help them to be righteous. All religions are based on this desire to formulate moral values and philosophies that will help people to feel better about themselves. Different religions have different rules but they are all the same in making people feel like little gods in control of their own world.

Through Eden's story we see our need for real life, not just a bunch of rules on how to live. Some see a behavior improvement program as Christianity. This caused death to Adam and Eve and shows that our problem is not a lack of moral laws. All world religions have lots of rules for behavior change. The Bible does not teach this way.

Paul describes our problem:

"Through one man sin and death entered the world, and in this way death came to all men, just as all have sinned."
Romans 5:12

"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins."
Ephesians 2: 1

Life is the only solution:

"When you were dead in your sins, God made you alive with Christ."
Colossians 2:13

God is rich in mercy and love. He made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in sin. We are saved by grace. "
Ephesians 2: 4-5

God knows our real need. Christ met that need. He has given us life. Legislation or any other system of rules cannot provide us with life. Some might think that the law is the solution to the problem; it only brings greater awareness of death. The law makes us conscious of sin. The law always condemns.

The apostle Paul used the law to try to get spiritual, but he was very disappointed.

"I found that the commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death" (Romans 7:10).

God's Way Is Not Like Man's



The Pharisees of Israel thought of themselves as little 'gods' who were experts of the Law. In fact, they went beyond the Law and formulated many extra rules of their own. Then they forced those rules on the rest of society as well. Jesus angered the Pharisees and other religious leaders because He did not follow their man-made rules. He healed on the Sabbath, and they hated Him for it. He turned over the money tables. He even called them snakes. He showed that keeping the laws was different from real life. He confronted them about their arrogant pride. They condemned prostitutes and alcoholics, but Jesus befriended these same people. Jesus was gentle and kind to sinners. The Pharisees were cruel and

rude to them. They were sure that God rejected these lowlives, whereas they themselves were approved. But they were hypocrites and Jesus hates hypocrisy. Religious leaders pretended to have life, but they were dead inside. They tried to become holy and righteous by their own efforts.

Jesus came to show mankind that it was not possible for anyone to become spiritually alive on their own. They could never attain life that way. Only

through the sacrifice of Jesus would the dead become alive. The sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross is the most important event in time and eternity. It brought the grace of God to mankind. It came through the New Covenant.



A will is in force only when somebody has died, because to be in effect, it is necessary to prove a death; It never takes effect while the one who made it is living.'

Hebrews 9: 16-17

The New Covenant is like a will. It came about after the death of Jesus. This point is important for many reasons. First, the New Covenant doesn't actually begin in Matthew 1. It begins at the point in history when Jesus' blood was shed. Before that happened, Jesus gave many teachings that made reference to the Old Covenant. He was bringing in a new way that would change everything, but first He had to explain why the old way was not working.

Jesus was "born under law to redeem those who were under the law." (Galatians 4: 4-5).

Jesus lived on earth for thirty-three years. The people living at that time were still under the Old Covenant.

THE TRUE BEGINNING

When we try to mix the old with the new, we mix up covenants. This does not work. Jesus likened it to trying to fill new wine skins with old wine which just results in the skins bursting.

We are under a new covenant. This is what the scriptures say:

"He sets aside the first one. Now, Jesus Christ makes us holy through His sacrifice."
Hebrews 10: 9-10



We are God's children. We are holy. The first (old) covenant was set aside. The old ways cannot sanctify us. No one can obey the Law. For that reason, the old is now done away with. We are unable to obey it, so it has been set aside:

"By calling this covenant" new, "[God] has made the first one obsolete; And what is obsolete and outdated will disappear. "

Hebrews 8:13

"It (the law made nothing perfect) and was set aside because it was weak and useless, Now we have a better hope by which we draw near to God."

Hebrews 07:18 – 19

The writer of Hebrews says that the old way is weak and useless.

"Today, we have a better way. This new system actually works. It makes us holy, yet we do not always perform perfectly. Through the new way we can actually draw near to God.

Scriptures are clear: getting closer to God through the new covenant is the only way. It does not work any other way.

The Dividing Line

Jesus talked about the law as being absolutely strict and unforgiving.

"The law says that 'whoever murders will be judged. But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be judged. " Matthew 5: 21-22

"The law says you shall not commit adultery. But I tell you, anyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery in his heart. "
Matthew 5: 27-28

Jesus was using the law to show the dividing line between old and new.
Remember that Christ was born and lived during Old Testament.

"But when the time came, God's Son, born under law, came to redeem those under law, that we might receive sonship."
Galatians 4: 4-5



Jesus said, "gouge your eye out...." (Matthew 5: 29-30).

'If your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out. Better to enter eternal life with only one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell.'
Matthew 18: 9

Jesus told His followers that this is what you would have to do if you wanted to be safe from the law's penalty. The Law condemned adultery, but Jesus said that just looking at a woman with lust was the same as adultery and such lust condemned a person to hell. That's why Jesus said it was better to gouge out your eyes so you couldn't lust after a woman, rather than end up in hell. Jesus wasn't telling people to actually gouge out their eyes. He was showing how serious it was to break the law. He was showing that sin condemns people to hell.

Jesus was hoping that the people would give up. He wanted the people to see that they could never keep the Law, just as the Israelites in the Old Testament could never keep it. He wanted them to see their danger and to become desperate for a different way to be saved. He said He was bringing a new way. He wanted them to think of the new way and give up on the old way.

Jesus told a story of a rich young man. The man had tried his best to keep the law. Jesus looked at him and loved him. That young man was sad. Why?

The young man said: "When I was a boy, I have kept all these rules."

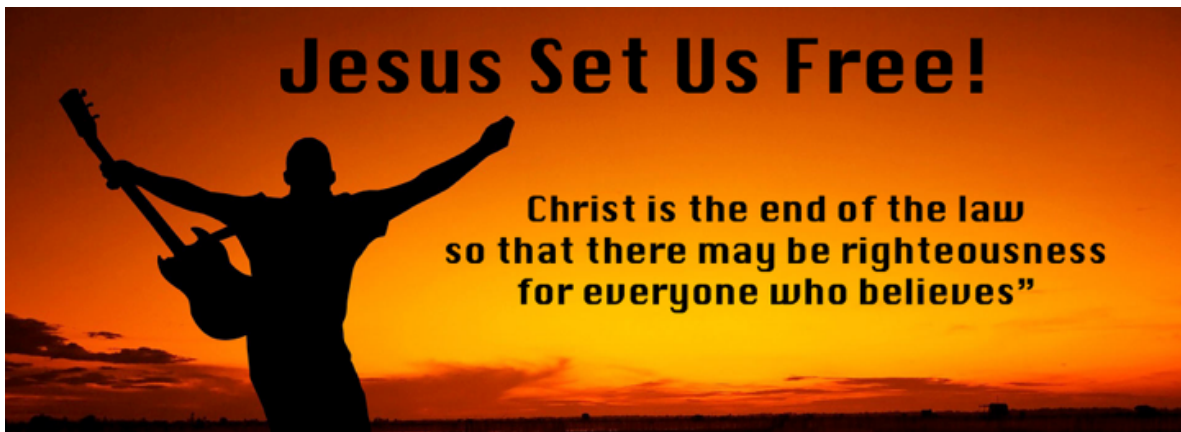
Jesus looked at him and loved him.

"One thing you lack," he said. "Sell everything. Give it to the poor. You will have treasure in heaven."

The man's face fell. He was rich, he went away sorrowful. '

Mark 10:20 – 22

Many of the teachings of Jesus addressed the Old Covenant. He was leading the people out of the Old Way and into the New. That is why some of Jesus' teachings seem so strange to our ears today. We must understand that His mission was to turn people away from trusting in the Law for salvation. He was leading the people to trust in Him instead. He was the NEW WAY. He even said that He was the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one could be right with God without Him, and Him alone.



It is important to see the dividing line in history. Peter, James, John, and Paul all wrote about life under the new rules.

The New Covenant always makes us free.

"Christ is the end of the law so that everyone who believes can be free."

(Romans 10: 4).

Paul was angry with the believers who had forgotten the message "Jesus plus nothing."

You foolish Galatians! Who has betrayed you? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by human effort? '

Galatians 3: 1-3

Paul said:

"The law is to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith."

(Galatians 3: 24-25)

The law leads us to Christ. It shows us that we always fail to keep the law completely. It makes us see that we are all sinners and cannot make ourselves righteous. God's solution was the work of Christ.

Paul told the Christians that they became right with God through faith and they were to continue to live by faith. They were not to return to the Law. They were to follow the Holy Spirit who had been given to them after they trusted in Christ. The Holy Spirit had nothing to do with the law. We do not get to Christ through human effort. Rather the Holy Spirit lives inside of us and we rely on the Spirit to produce fruit.

"You are led by the Spirit, you are not under law."

(Galatians 5:18)

We are saved by grace through faith. Faith in Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit bring about purity and that is more than enough. The scriptures say that the law has no place in the life of faith. Grace operates in a different way than the law operates. The New Covenant says that the grace of God has appeared and offers salvation to all people. Grace causes us to say "no" to sin. It teaches us to live holy lives.

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age. (Titus 2: 11-12)

The grace of the Holy Spirit teaches us every day. We do not need laws to keep us under control. Grace alone is the cure for sin!

We think that is why we have laws to control our life - so we can control ourselves and others. But in fact we have never had to be in control. Self-control has always been the mark of the Holy Spirit. He produces self-control. Paul said that Jesus once told him.

"My grace is sufficient for you, my strength is made perfect in weakness."

2 Corinthians 12: 9

Grace is the heart of the New Covenant. What is needed at this moment is Jesus' grace. It is sufficient. Paul learned this. The same is true for us today.

PRISON BREAK



People who have been jailed for a long time get used to many rules. They are told when to have a shower, when they can eat, when to exercise and when they can sleep. Wardens guard them. When they are released, some of them are uncomfortable. Now they must decide for themselves where to go, when to do things, and what to do with the rest of their lives. In a similar way, freedom can trouble us. After depending on the law to tell us what to do, we think we must have those rules to live by. But we are in Christ and He is in us. His Spirit lives inside our hearts. We do not require external regulations; We look for a beautiful freedom to move away from religious bondage:

*"Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."
Galatians 5: 1*

HOW MANY SINS DOES IT TAKE TO BECOME A SINNER?



How many sins does it take to be a sinner? Some Christians say just one sin. The reality is it takes zero. We are born sinners. Everyone is born spiritually dead.

Adam was created in God's image. Adam's children were born in the image of the original Adam himself.



“God created human beings; He made them in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them. Then Adam had a son in his own likeness.”

Genesis 5: 1-3

Adam was created in the likeness of God. Adam's son was born in the image of Adam. So according to Scripture, we are born in the image of God? No, we are born in the image of Adam. When we are created in Christ Jesus, God is the image. But before rebirth, we are descendants of the first man, Adam. At birth, we bear the image of Adam.

Romans 5 shows the effect that sin brought on mankind:

- Sin entered the world (verse 12)
- Many died (verse 15)
- Condemnation came on all people (verse 18)
- Many became sinners (verse 19)

All of Adam's descendants were born spiritually dead. Adam's sin condemns us all. We were all made sinners from the sin of Adam.

Jesus told Nicodemus that what everyone really needs is to be born a second time. Jesus told the leaders they did not need more regulations. He mentioned

being born again. Some see it as a behavior improvement program, whereas Jesus showed that God's plan was actually an exchange of nature. Our old nature is the sin nature in the image of Adam. We require a new nature in the image of God. That is what Jesus was saying to Nicodemus about being born again. We need to become a new person altogether.

We are born in Adam, so we need a real change to happen.

"In Christ all will be made alive, as in Adam all die" (1 Corinthians 15:22).



When we become a Christian, we place faith in Christ's work and we go through a deep transformation. We move out of the line of Adam's life and we are transferred into the life of Christ. We become part of a new family. At the deepest level, we are a changed person.

The Bible tells us that we *"are hidden with Christ in God" (Colossians 3: 3).*

In Corinthians and Colossians, Paul says: *"Christ Jesus became for us wisdom from God - our righteousness, holiness and redemption."*

(1 Corinthians 1:30)

"He delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his dear Son."

(Colossians 1:13)

It is God who has changed our spiritual condition. He took us from Adam and moved us to a place in Christ. Before we were like Adam. Through our new position in Christ, we become like Christ. We are spiritually alive and righteous.

FUNERAL



We know that Jesus Christ was crucified and buried. But we ourselves were also spiritually crucified and buried with Him.

As we enter into Christ's salvation, our old self is done away with. God miraculously kills our old self. We are crucified with Christ:

"We were baptized into Christ ... our old self was crucified with him, we are buried with him through baptism". Romans 6: 3-4, 6

(The old self is also called the "old man" in Adam. The old self has a nature that is like Adam's. Adam represents all of sinful mankind.)

Jesus came as a human being but He was sinless. He did not have the dead sin nature of Adam. The curse of death did not apply to Him. But Jesus willingly volunteered to represent sinful mankind on the cross and He took the curse of sin on Himself. He died and was punished in hell. However He Himself was sinless and so, after paying the penalty for sin, He arose as the New Representative of mankind, a NEW MAN....a NEW CREATION.

"God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2: 7).

For a short time, Jesus Christ was on earth like one of us. He was in the likeness of sinful flesh, although He never sinned. But today he is sitting in heaven with God. And we are joined to Him! We are joined to the risen Christ. We are declared totally righteous in Him!

Jesus said it best. He stated that our righteousness must exceed the Pharisees.

'For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.'
Matthew 5:20).

In other words, God requires perfect righteousness. So if we do not claim to possess perfect righteousness, and yet hope that God will accept us as we are, we are lowering the standard of God. Only perfection will do. And thanks to Jesus Christ, we are! He has made us perfectly righteous. We are completely pure. We are fully justified in our inner being.

The gospel message is about dying and being resurrected and changed into a new person. Paul writes the following:

'For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.'
Colossians 3:3 - 4

Death and new life are at the core of the gospel. Every person is born spiritually dead but those who place their faith in Christ undergo a miraculous exchange. Now they are not in Adam. They are a new person in Christ. They have become a child of God.

The key is the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. The miraculous exchange is real. It is literal and spiritual. Every Christian was crucified, buried, and raised with Christ.

So what happens to the old self that was in Adam? The old self is dead and gone? So why do I still sin?

We must understand the difference between "flesh" and "sinful nature". Many Christians today believe that they must struggle with their sinful nature.

They believe they *have a sinful nature* so it is *natural thing for them to sin*. The Scriptures teach just the opposite. We are now partakers of God's divine nature .

'Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.' (2 Peter 1:4)

Christians struggle against the *flesh (body of sin)*, not against our own nature. Jesus Christ has made each of us who believe into a **new person**. The old has gone, and the new has come.

FLESHLY IDENTITY

The flesh (body) is from the earth. It is where we get a sense of who we are - how smart we are, the way we look, or our status. The flesh gets this sense from the *soul*.

Paul was someone who believed that he was a very good person. He said he was a top Pharisee. He was super religious. He thought he was perfect in everything he did. If anyone was proud of his flesh, it would have been Paul. *'If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; 'as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.'* (Philippians 3: 4)

But Paul realized that he was actually worthless and not blameless under the Law. He discovered that his birth, background, and his religious works were nothing compared to knowing *Jesus Christ*. All the religious works of the past had not perfected him.

'But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith...' (Philippians 3: 7-9)

The Christians in Galatia were trying to do what Paul had once done. He was horrified at this and told them they were being foolish.

"Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" (Galatians 3:3).

He taught that the flesh (body) is useless. God's way is simple: Jesus plus nothing! God is the only One who can perfect us.

He wrote:

"I am confident of this very thing, that God who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6).

This is what the flesh (body) is:

- It is a way to *think*.
- It is a way to *walk*.
- It *works against* the Spirit.
- It encourages *self-effort*.
- It seeks *identity* and *purpose*.
- We choose to *put confidence in it*.

But the flesh (body) is not the same thing as the old self. It's something that is with us, but it's not who we are. We must remember that we no longer are in Adam, so we do not have a dead sin nature any longer. The old man (old self) is gone. Yes, we still have our bodies (flesh) where sin used to operate, and it's true that sin still tries to operate in our bodies, but our new nature is joined with the Holy Spirit and we can refuse to sin. Christians are new creations at heart. Christians are *in* the Spirit. We can choose to walk after the Spirit, not after the flesh.



If we rely on how smart we are, our strength, or how we look to give us importance and identity, we're walking after the flesh. Depending on the flesh goes *against* our new nature. Does that mean we have a split personality? No, not at all.

We are born to be dependent upon Christ. Walking after the Spirit is our destiny. Our identity is in Christ. Our new nature (new self) always wants to obey God.

But we are also still living in our human bodies (flesh) and so now, as children of God, there's a battle within us. Our new human spirit wants to follow the Holy Spirit. But the flesh (body) does not. The flesh (body) is helped by sin to go against God.

When we depend on the Holy Spirit we are really being ourselves. We are now God's workmanship (Ephesians 2:10). We're designed for walking in the ways that God has already prepared for us.

SLAVES TO SIN



We're in a fight. Paul, as a Pharisee, was in the fight when he tried to live under the law. He said he was "*a slave to sin.*" At first Paul did not know that he was a slave to sin. The Law showed him that he was. Later, God delivered him from spiritual slavery.

Paul did not want to sin but slaves have no choice but to obey their master.

"I do not understand what I do. What I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do not want to do what I do, I agree that the law is good. Anyway, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.

Romans 7:15-17

Is sin still acting in the bodies of Christians today? Yes. It is still alive and at work in our flesh. But Christians must not think they are sinful like everyone else. We have a new nature and we are called 'new creations'.

As was mentioned earlier, Paul wanted to keep the law and do right. He wanted to do what God commanded. But he didn't end up doing what he wanted. Before he came to Christ, he was helpless against the law of sin at work in his body.

"I know that nothing good is in my life, that is, in my flesh; I do the bad things I do not want to practice." Romans 7:18 - 19

So why was Paul not able to do good things? He said it was because of sin.

"Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it" (Romans 7:20).

Once we are saved, sin is *still* present in our bodies. Sin itself isn't dead. But because of our new nature and the Holy Spirit living inside us, we have power over sin in the flesh. Paul came to experience this victory over sin when he found Christ.

"Who will save me from this sin that brings death to my body? I GIVE THANKS TO GOD WHO SAVES ME. HE SAVES ME THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD!"

However, even though Christians have power over sin, it still requires us to actively reject it. Romans 6 says we should not let sin control our lives. Paul was opposed to sin and he said we must not allow it to take control. It's a choice. We must say no to sin.

"Sin will not reign in your mortal body. You will not obey its evil desires." (Romans 6:12).

The evil desires belong to sin. They are coming from an evil source that is trying to move us away from God. As heavenly people, we hate the flesh and the power of sin. The core of our being wants to follow God.

A PARASITE



Pretend that you are going to a place that is wild. Once there, a parasite attaches to your foot. Over time, the parasite digs deep inside your leg, but you do not know it. In the next few months, the parasite feeds off your life as it develops. As time goes on, it becomes increasingly difficult to bear the pain. You start thinking, "Something's wrong with my leg."

Months and years follow, and you have to go to several doctors, but no one finds the presence of the parasite. Finally, you find that there is only one solution. You cut off your leg! What a tragedy that you did not detect that parasite!

Sin is like a parasite that has found its way inside your body. This parasite lies within us, but it's not us. We must remember that our old self is dead and gone and that we truly *don't want* to sin. We must know that sin is the parasite.

Scriptures say that if you're in Christ, the old self is dead, buried, and gone. We sin because of the continued presence of something called the power of sin. But it is not us. We are not the sin.

You were taught to stop your old way of life. Your old way was full of deceitful desires. Now you are to be made new in the attitude of your minds. '

Ephesians 4: 20-23

Colossians clearly states that Christians have taken off our old self at salvation:

'Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.'

Colossians 3:9 – 10

The old self is dead and gone. Our new selves are not the problem. Sin is the problem. As new creations in Christ we say no to sin and say yes to who we truly are.

"So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. In my inner being I delight in God's law; But I see another law at work in the members of the body, waging war against the law of my mind. The he law of sin within my members is making me a a prisoner...Who will save me from this sin that brings death to my body?

I GIVE THANKS TO GOD WHO SAVES ME. HE SAVES ME THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD!

Romans 7:21-23

PAUL'S BATTLE



Paul hated being controlled by sin. He cried out for freedom. He eventually found that freedom through Christ, but before he did, Paul was disappointed with his spiritual experience. He understood what the law demands, but he had no power to carry it out. The power of sin got the best of him every time. But his spiritual co-crucifixion with Christ gave the victory.

As Christians, we are God's team now, and we want to do what He wants. Our fight is not against ourselves. The fight is against the force of sin. We are stamped on our heart and mind with God's desires and these are perfect.



It is not enough to know the source of temptation. We have to know that we have the power to resist the source of sin. Nonbelievers are slaves of the spiritual power of sin. When a person comes to Christ, although he was controlled by sin, now his old self has died through the work of the Cross. A new self is raised through the resurrection of Christ. We are in Christ and we no longer have to submit to sin. Instead of sin and death, we are free to choose life:

*"Our old self was crucified with Christ so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with [be made powerless]. We are dead to sin. We have been set free.
Romans 6: 6-7*

Paul says that we are dead to sin because God has already said it is so. We are to think of ourselves as dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

*In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.
(Romans 6:11).*

God has made us alive. He removed our unrighteousness. He made us righteous. God is saying that we are now 100 percent OK with him.

We believe that God spoke the universe into existence. We believe that a flood covered the earth and that Jonah spent three days in a big fish. We believe that Jesus rose from the dead and then rose up to heaven. We must also believe that we are new creations, perfect in Christ, and without condemnation.

*"I give you a new heart and a new spirit. I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. You will follow my decrees and my laws."
Ezekiel 36: 26-27*

God gives us a new heart. This means that our inner desires are changed. We receive a new spirit. We also receive God's Spirit within us. It is important to understand that we have the presence of Christ in us. And *we are* in him.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Always remember that you have power over sin and the flesh (body of sin).

NOTHING BUT THE BLOOD



The Israelites had to offer animal sacrifices over and over. No sacrifice was able to perfectly cleanse them.

"[The law] can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins.

Hebrews 10:1-2

John the Baptist declared,

"Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

Today, we have a perfect Lamb in the person of Jesus Christ. His sacrifice made the temple ceremonies empty. We do not need the tabernacle, the temple, or the daily sacrifices. Jesus Christ's sacrifice cleansed *once for all*. There is nothing else needed for us to remain forgiven.

"Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God" (1 Peter 3:18).

This is God's way. Jesus' blood—nothing else:

"Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Hebrews 9:22).

We now know that nothing will bring us more forgiveness than the blood of Jesus. God is satisfied regarding our sins, both now and in eternity.

The Jews had a high priest who killed an animal to cover over their sins. They sacrificed animals over and over again. But Jesus' sacrifice was once for all.



We must never try to add anything to Christ's sacrifice. That would be an insult to God! God says His Son's works are awesome. We must agree with the Father. God wants us to adore His Son. We are to honor Christ's finished work on the cross.

Hebrews 7:27 says:

- Only blood brings forgiveness.
- Jesus' blood will never be shed again.
- Therefore God is satisfied.
- And I enjoy lifelong and eternal cleansing.

Temple sacrifice no longer makes sense. The author of Hebrews pleaded with his fellow Jews to leave the dead works of the temple. How insulting to return to temple sacrifice! After they were introduced to the cross they were seeking another means of forgiveness. Their attitude would be something like: "I believe that Jesus died for our sins, but just in case I will continue to participate in animal sacrifice." Some actually encouraged this way of thinking in the early Church! But the Bible is clear.

“He turns aside God’s wrath, taking away our sins, and not only ours, but also the sins of the whole world.”

1 John 2:2

Hebrew priests had to stand in the Temple when offering animal sacrifices.

‘Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest [Jesus] had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.’

Hebrews 10:11–12

‘After [Jesus] had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.’

Hebrews 1:3

Our High Priest is seated at the right hand of the Father, with nothing left to do about our sins. The work is completed, and now we are forgiven forever. Our past, present and future sins were dealt with through the cross. Jesus finished wiping out all record of our sins. He took a seat and is resting at the right hand of God.

Confession

“When you were dead in your sins ..., God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.”

Colossians 2:13 – 14

“Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.”

‘And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary.’

Hebrews 10:17 – 18

But what about 1 John 1:9?



“If we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness”?

Do we need to confess our sins all the time?

This verse is actually speaking to some people who said they were Christians but they also said they had never sinned. They were from the Gnostic sect.

John was not telling Christians to confess their sins all the time. They were already forgiven. But the Gnostics could not have salvation unless they agreed that they needed to be forgiven for sin.

Gnostics also said Jesus was only spirit. The apostle John said that anyone who doesn't believe that Jesus came in human flesh is *not from God*. *Neither is anyone who says they have never sinned.*

“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8).

What do you have to do to become a believer in Christ? Admit you're a sinner! Someone who claims they have never sinned is *not* a Christian. So here John is concerned for *unbelievers*. He knew that there were some in the church who claimed to be Christians but were not.

John states the following:

- If we claim to be without sin)... the truth is not in us (1 John 1:8)
- If we claim we have not sinned ... [God's] word is not in us (1 John 1:10)

John is saying that if we *humans* claim we have no sin, we're liars and don't have Christ (the Word and the Truth) in us. Such people are not real Christians. They are wolves trying to look like Jesus' sheep.



1John 1:9 is an invitation to become a Christian. And it applies to today. If anyone claims to be without sin, they're wrong. But there's a solution to their wrong thinking. If they're willing to change their mind and confess that they *do* have sins, then there's hope.

What about James 5:16?

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

James says we are to confess our sins to each other. We confess so others can pray for us. James's exhortation to confess our sins to each other has nothing to do with God's forgiving or cleansing us. Confessing sin does not bring cleansing into a Christian's life. We've already been cleansed "once for all" through the onetime blood sacrifice. Our fellowship with God cannot be broken. When we sin, he's there to help us learn from our mistake.

However, being sorry for sin is normal for Christians. Being sorry for sin leads a believer to desire change (2 Corinthians 7:10). Believers are designed for good works, not sins. We're meant to display the life of Jesus Christ.

THE LORD'S PRAYER



In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus taught his disciples to say, "Forgive us our sins" (Luke 11:4). This is asking for forgiveness. So how does the Lord's Prayer fit in with once-for-all forgiveness?

"If you forgive others when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive you." (Matthew 6:14-15)

Jesus prayed, "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" (Matthew 6:12).

He was showing that no one could forgive perfectly like that. Under the old covenant no one could get God's forgiveness because no one could forgive others perfectly.

When Jesus taught Jews how to pray, His blood had not been shed yet. The New Covenant had not begun. The Lord's Prayer is an Old Covenant prayer.

Why would Jesus say this about earning forgiveness through forgiving others? It was for the same reason that He told the Jews to gouge out their eyes and cut off their hands in their fight against sin (Matthew 5:29-30).

He said these things to bring despair regarding works of the Law so that they would see that they needed a Savior. The Law's standard was impossibly high and could not bring God's forgiveness or salvation.

But God provided a way to forgiveness that does not involve trying to keep impossible standards. Through the sacrifice of His Son, God has made us perfect in His sight and He has declared us 'not guilty'. The book of Hebrews tells us that God doesn't remember our sins anymore (Hebrews 8:12). Then the author repeats the same point, declaring that the Holy Spirit doesn't remember our sins either (Hebrews 10:17).

The Bible says the Holy Spirit is our Counselor, our Helper, our Comforter, our Advocate—the One who guides us into all the truth (John 16:13). He prays for us. (Romans 8:26). He tells us we are God's children. (Romans 8:16). The Holy Spirit trains and teaches us. When we sin, He reminds us of Jesus' work on the cross. He reminds us that we're pure and made for good deeds.

Satan tries to tempt us. He tries to make us feel guilty. But God has forgotten our sins. We've got a clean slate. The Holy Spirit will never leave us and He will enable us to walk in righteousness and forgiveness.

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE



Revelation 20:11–15 says that God judges the dead. They are judged according to their deeds and then thrown into the lake of fire. Their names were not written in the book of life. However Christians will not be judged because we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and our names are written in the book of life.

“He who believes in Jesus is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the Son of God” (John 3:18).

Christians are not judged but our works are tested to see if they can endure.

‘Jesus Christ is the foundation. If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is. Fire will test the quality of each person’s work.’ 1 Corinthians 3:11–13

The life of Jesus in us is what matters most. We shouldn't assume that someone who studies the Bible for a living is a new creation. And we shouldn't think knowing a lot about the Bible is the same as spiritual maturity. They're certainly *not* the same.

Some church activities, volunteering, and even teachings on the importance of faith and the Christian life does not mean a person is a new creation. Without God changing the heart, it is just pretending.

Jesus' life changes the heart. Jesus declared Himself to be "*the resurrection and the life*" and "*the way and the truth and the life*" (John 11:25; 14:6). He also stated, "*Because I live, you also will live*" (John 14:19).

Our new spiritual life is actually His life.

Jesus Christ is in us right now. In fact, it's His life that saves us. But Jesus' death *alone* isn't enough to save us! It is actually Jesus' resurrection that saves us.

'If, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!' (Romans 5:10)

Paul stated that if there is no resurrection, then his whole message is meaningless.

And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.
(1 Corinthians 15:14)

The life we have within us is the risen Christ, who now sits right beside God. It's important to understand that we're joined to the risen Christ. The Scriptures indicate that we're married to an eternal, risen Christ. Although we were once married to the law, we obtained a "divorce" through our death. Now we're reborn and remarried to a heavenly husband. And our union with him will last forever:

'So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.' (Romans 7:4)

Everything we need is found in our spiritual husband, Jesus Christ. Once we are married to him, we have everything we need right here and now.

“In Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority” (Colossians 2:9–10).

Paul urges believers to walk in a manner worthy of their calling.

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. (Ephesians 4: 1).

We are urged to grasp vital spiritual truth: When we come to Christ, we receive life. Through our expression of Jesus, we find fulfillment.

Jesus spoke with Nicodemus: *“truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born again.”*

“How can anyone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!”

Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.”

John 3:3 – 6

Jesus is talking about two births. The first is a natural birth, meaning a person is born from a human mother (“born of water” and “flesh gives birth to flesh”). The second is a spiritual birth. The spiritual birth is “born of the Spirit” and “the Spirit gives birth to spirit.”

Jesus said that a child within his mother's womb is surrounded in water. After placing his faith in Jesus Christ, he is born a second time, which is really spiritual. God gives him a new human spirit, and God's own Spirit comes to live in him.

It's a spiritual union—a mystery that was hidden and has now been revealed. We're united together with Christ. He's our source of strength, and we're new, righteous, and joined with him.

The Bible says that we ourselves are dead to sin. We must realize that God has raised us up and seated us with him.

In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus...And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.

(Romans 6:11; Ephesians 2: 6).

We do not let sin reign. We set our minds on things above.

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires...Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

(Romans 6:12; Colossians 3: 2).

We have within us a wonderful life. Because we already are different on the inside, we can live differently in the outside world.

From Start to Finish



After we are saved, some Christians try some other means of development. But the Bible says "*Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your life in that way, Colossians 2: 6*), meaning by faith.

Development is not by trying harder. We have everything we need for a godly life. We have an everlasting covenant and every spiritual blessing. We are complete and nothing is lacking. The only proper response is to remind each other of these extraordinary truths and spend our lives giving thanks to God.

"I have been crucified with Christ and I live no longer, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in my body is by faith in the Son of God, who loved me. He loved me and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:20

We do not try to imitate Christian behavior. We live from the life inside us, which is the life of Jesus Christ. We are partakers of the divine nature.

Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

(2 Peter 1:4).

The Holy Spirit works in our divine nature to live lives pleasing to God. The Holy Spirit does not overpower you. He does not go against your will. Instead, He wants to lead you by His wisdom. Allow Christ to guide you through your personality. In that way, you are fulfilling your destiny.

Since Christ is your life, you can only be happy when you are revealing Him. As you reveal Christ, you also express what God has created you to be.

God will not make us do the things we do not want. Instead, the Bible tells us that God causes the Christian to **want** God's will.

...for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. (Philippians 2:13).

This means that we will actually want what God wants.

CLEAN FOR LIFE

Make every effort to add to your faith goodness, and to goodness, knowledge, and to knowledge, self-control, and to self-control, perseverance, and to perseverance, godliness, and to godliness, mutual affection, and to mutual affection, love. But if any of you do not have them, you are nearsighted and blind, and you have forgotten that you have been cleansed from his past sins. 2 Peter 1:5-9

God has declared that He keeps no record of our wrongs. We can't begin to pay him back. He has released us from what we owe him. Our forgiveness rests solely on what was accomplished at Calvary. This is the amazing forgiveness that God *chose* for us through the finished work of his Son.

Now we can forgive others because we're already forgiven. We see others as God sees them. We focus on our newness and Christ's presence within us. Then our behavior changes.

"As God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

Colossians 3: 12-14



Things to praise God for:

Your relationship to the law is now *all gone*.

- Your old self is now *all gone*.
- Your sins are now *all gone*.

This is the grace gospel that was preached by Paul and the apostles to the early church. Wherever Christians did not understand this message, there were problems, just as today there are problems in so many churches because this gospel is not known. Too often the Galatian gospel (which Paul said was cursed and not really the gospel at all) is being taught instead. This is why so many Christians in the west and elsewhere, even though they have beautiful buildings to worship in, music programs, well-known speakers, and Christian books, are still unhappy and depressed. They are not hearing the true gospel. Without the grace gospel, there can be no lasting joy.



But those who understand the gospel of God's grace can rejoice! This is freedom! We can celebrate that we are now close to God!

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Our main areas of operation are Andhra Pradesh where we provide child sponsorship of high-risk children from the tenements, and Odisha where we work with tribal communities to bring development that will prosper communities. We also work with women, providing them with micro-credit loans and cottage industry skills. Our projects involve the raising of funds through sponsorship and donations for such things as bore wells, daycare centers, medical aid, etc.

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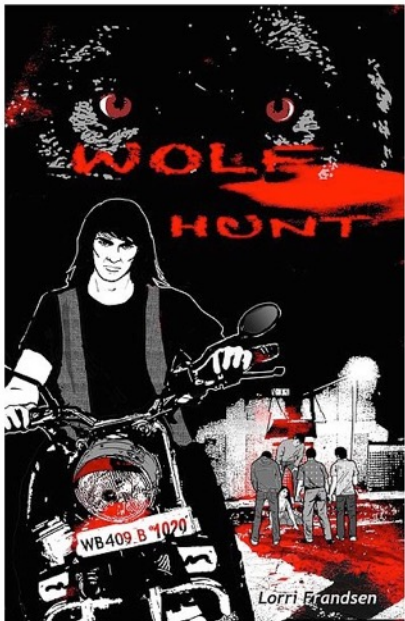
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Pushpa, a feisty little girl from a tribal village in Odisha, India, is taken to the city of Kolkata where she is forced to learn the art of street survival. Through a series of misadventures, she eventually finds herself at the mercy of pimps and panderers who plan to exploit her in the sex trade of Sonagachi, a notorious brothel area in the city. However Pushpa is no ordinary girl and the forces of darkness are no match for her indomitable will and courage. This story is interlaced with factual information on the culture of India and the plight of children caught in the trafficking trade. The message is one of hope and victory.



Adam Jayaram never in his wildest dreams thought he'd end up as a pimp and drug dealer while working for a mafia don in Kolkata, India. An idea like that would at one time have seemed completely demented, especially considering his Christian upbringing and his morally upright family. Yet his destiny has led him straight to the brothels of Sonagachi, trapping him in a lifestyle that he finds both repugnant and yet seductive at the same time. Working as a goonda certainly isn't the ideal job opportunity, and it entails becoming the predator that his street name 'Wolf' suggests, but then again the money's good and he gets respect. Besides, he's got enemies who want him dead and his 'career' as a thug provides some safety. Survival is uppermost on Adam's mind and he's learned some pretty impressive street skills along the way....if only he could evade the biggest threat of all...

