

Man's Problem and God's Solution

Ephesians 2:1-5

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The Gospel is only good news when we truly understand just how bad our spiritual condition really was/is.

I. Everyone has (or had) a serious sin problem.

a. Captive in a corpse (v. 1, 3a)

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh... (Colossians 2:13a)

And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die." (Genesis 2:16-17)

For the wages of sin is death... (Romans 6:23a)

For when we were in the realm of the flesh, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in us, so that we bore fruit for death. (Romans 7:5)

Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. (Romans 8:5-8)

...all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness. (2 Thessalonians 2:12)

But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death." (Revelation 21:8)

b. Wooed by the world (v. 2a, 3a)

This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. (John 3:19)

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. (1 John 2:15-16)

Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God re-mold your minds from within... (Romans 12:2a Phillips)

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God... (1 Timothy 6:17)

...those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away. (1 Corinthians 7:31)

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)

Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me... (2 Timothy 4:10)

What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? (Mark 8:36)

Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ. (Colossians 2:8 NLT)

You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. (James 4:4)

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 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. (1 Peter 1:3-4)

The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever. (1 John 2:17)

Jesus told them, "This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent." (John 6:29 NLT)

...for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. (1 John 5:4-5)

May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. (Galatians 6:14)

We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. (1 John 5:19)

c. **Deceived by the devil** (v. 2b)

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 6:12)

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8)

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (2 Corinthians 4:4)

“Did God really say...,” “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” (Genesis 3:1, 4-5)

“If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written:

““He will command his angels concerning you,
and they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”” (Matthew 4:6)

When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. (Matthew 13:19)

The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. (John 13:2)

Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit... (Acts 5:3)

And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness. (2 Corinthians 11:14-15)

II. **That sin problem causes an even more serious problem with God.** (v. 3b)

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. (Romans 1:18-20)

But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God’s wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God “will repay each person according to what they have done...” But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. (Romans 2:5-6, 8)

“As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 13:41-42)

“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. (Matthew 25:41)

If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, where

“‘the worms that eat them do not die,
and the fire is not quenched.’ (Mark 9:43, 47-48)

“The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’ (Luke 16:22-24)

“Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.” (Matthew 25:46)

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on them. (John 3:36)

III. **God lovingly and mercifully offers the only possible cure for our condition.** (v.4-5)

The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying:

“I have loved you with an everlasting love;
I have drawn you with unfailing kindness. (Jeremiah 31:3)

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! For 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 5:8-10)

For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. (Hebrews 2:17)

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness,

which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. (Colossians 2:13-15)

In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ... (Colossians 2:11)

Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. (Romans 8:12-14)

Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. (Galatians 6:8)

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (Galatians 5:24)

Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh. (Romans 13:14)