

4. JESUS DIED IN YOUR PLACE

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

This lesson is designed to show that Jesus died--not for his own sins--but for the sins of others. This is both sad and good. It is sad in that Jesus had to suffer and die, but it is good that God made provisions through Jesus' death for us to be forgiven of our sins.

EXPLANATION OF TERMS

CHRIST: a Greek translation of the Hebrew word for "Messiah," which refers to the one who is anointed to be king.

CHRISTIANS: those people who believe in Jesus and who follow Him.

COLOSSIANS: a book of the New Testament that the apostle Paul wrote to the church in the city of Colosse in Asia Minor.

KING DAVID: the second king of the Jews, who wrote many of the psalms of the Old Testament.

EPHESIANS: a letter in the New Testament, which the apostle Paul wrote to the church in the city of Ephesus in Asia Minor.

FORGIVENESS: our sins and offenses are considered as

though they had never happened.

GALATIANS: a letter in the New Testament that the apostle Paul wrote to several of the churches in Asia Minor.

GOOD NEWS: the story of the death and resurrection of Jesus, which indicates that people can be forgiven of their sins and resurrected from the dead.

MESSIAH: a Hebrew word that refers to Jesus. It means the “anointed one.” It was the Jewish custom to pour a little oil over the head of a person to indicate that he would become king (or priest).

RETRIBUTION: to pay someone back for something he did.

1 THESSALONIANS: the first letter in the New Testament that the apostle Paul wrote to the church in the city of Thessalonika in Greece.

2 THESSALONIANS: the second letter in the New Testament that the apostle Paul wrote to the church in the city of Thessalonika in Greece.

JESUS DIED IN YOUR PLACE

Jesus was the best person who ever lived. He never did anything wrong; yet in spite of His good life a terrible thing happened to Him. He was put to death on a cross (1 Peter 2:22-24). He deserved far better treatment. He should have been received on earth with honor, since He was the one whom God had chosen to be the Messiah, king of the Jews (Hebrews 1:8-9), but the Jewish leaders put Him to death. It was foretold by the prophet Isaiah that the Messiah would be put to death for the sins of others. Isaiah lived about seven hundred years before Jesus was born (Isaiah 53).

Jesus was aware of the prophecies concerning His death. For that reason He forewarned His disciples that He would be put to death (Matthew 16:21). Even though He knew that He would be killed, He made no effort to avoid it. He could have escaped had He wanted to, but He did not. Why did He not try to escape? Jesus explained,

“Therefore my Father loves Me,
because I lay down My life
that I may take it again.
No man takes it from Me,
but I lay it down of Myself.
I have power to lay it down,
and I have power to take it again.

This command I have received

from My Father.”

John 10:17-18

Jesus knew that God had commanded Him to give His life for others. This seems like a harsh command. Why did God give Jesus such a command?

WHY DID GOD SEND HIS SON TO DIE?

God knew that all people on earth were lost in sin (Romans 3:23). Because of their sins, people were alienated from God (Isaiah 59:2). Therefore, their punishment was certain (Proverbs 11:21), yet God does not want to punish people. He loves mankind. He wants to save everyone from the consequences of their sins, yet He cannot simply close His eyes to sin. Sin has to be punished? So what was God to do? He formed a plan whereby He could uphold what is right and still help people to escape punishment.

God knew that no matter how many good deeds men and women do, they cannot save themselves (Ephesians 2:8). He also knew that no matter how deeply within themselves they search for the assurance of forgiveness, people would never find it. For that reason, forgiveness must come from the outside, not from within a person. A person cannot forgive himself. Ultimately, forgiveness must come from God, since it is against Him that people have sinned.

For these reasons, then, and perhaps for others as well, God decided (Ephesians 1:5) that He must take the initiative if people are to be reconciled to Himself (2

Corinthians 5:18-20). Through His great wisdom, He found a way in which justice could be served and people saved. He decided to send His own Son into the world (John 3:16) to take people's punishment upon Himself. This decision on God's part demonstrates so dramatically His love for mankind that no one can deny His love (Romans 5:8).

JESUS DIED FOR YOU AND ME

Jesus was condemned to die (Luke 23:23-24), but we are the ones that should have been condemned. Jesus was beaten (Matthew 27:26), but we are the ones that deserve to be beaten, not He. The ridicule and the spit which He received (Matthew 27:29-31) should have been aimed at us. Into His hand and feet harsh nails were driven (Luke 24:39-40), which should have been driven into our hands and feet. He hung on the cross where we should have hung. He suffered and died for us (1 Peter 2:21), but we should have been the ones to suffer and die (Ezekiel 18:4,20). Yes, Jesus did it all for you and me (Revelation 1:5)!

When we think of Jesus' hanging on the cross, suffering and bleeding, it opens our eyes to the seriousness of our sins. It makes us sad and ashamed that we have caused His death, yet it also makes us grateful that Jesus loved us enough to die for us (John 15:13).

JESUS MADE REDEMPTION POSSIBLE

Everyone is a slave to sin, but Jesus made it possible for everyone to be rescued from this slavery. He paid the ransom price to buy everyone out of slavery, who wants to

get out. The ransom price that He paid was His own life (1 Timothy 2:6).

After He buys people out of slavery He makes them His willing servants (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) so they can be truly free.

THE FREEDOM THAT PEOPLE HAVE IN JESUS

There are various aspects to the freedom that people have in Christ Jesus. Here are some of the aspects of freedom:

1. Jesus makes Jewish people free from the Law of Moses (Galatians 4:4-5). The Jews that follow Jesus are not under the Law of Moses, due to the fact that they are led by the Spirit of God (Galatians 5:18). Gentiles, of course, have never been under the law of Moses.
2. Jesus makes people free from being forced to do evil (Romans 6:17-18). He delivers people out of this evil age (Galatians 1:4) and translates them into His kingdom (Colossians 1:13).
3. Jesus makes people free from the guilt of their sins. Put in another way, Jesus makes it possible for people to receive God's forgiveness (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14) so that their sins will not be held against them.
4. Jesus makes people free from the wrath that one

day will come upon the earth (1 Thessalonians 1:10).

5. Jesus makes people free from the fear of dying (Hebrews 2:14-15).

6. Jesus makes people free from the fear of the Judgment (John 5:24).

CAN SINS BE FORGIVEN?

Yes, sins can be forgiven, in spite of the fact that many people do not think they can. Some people incorrectly assume that the law of retribution works always and without exception. To be sure, the law of retribution does work, unless God intervenes, but the question is, does God actually intervene so that people will not have to be punished for their sins? Yes, under certain conditions, He does. A murderer, for example, may have to pay with his life for having killed someone, yet he can be forgiven and not have to suffer for his sins in the life that is to come.

God has a right to intervene in the law of retribution if He chooses to do so, because it is against Him that people sin. If He feels that He has ample justification for overlooking people's sins, He has every right to overlook them. Even in the Old Testament one reads of God's willingness to forgive sins. King David wrote in the Psalms,

“The Lord is merciful and gracious,
Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.
He will not always strive with us,

Neither will He keep His anger forever.
He has not dealt with us
according to our sins,
nor punished us according to our iniquities.
For as the heaven is high above the earth,
So great is His mercy toward those
who fear Him.”

Psalm 103:8-11

God’s willingness to forgive sins can be seen even more clearly in the New Testament than it can in the Old Testament.

THE GOOD NEWS

In the New Testament we read that Jesus and the Father want all people everywhere to learn that sins can be forgiven (Luke 24:47). This is good news and everyone needs to hear about it (Matthew 28:18-20).

If you have already come to believe in Jesus, please go one step farther. Accept Him as your Lord and Master. Turn from your sinful ways and ask someone to baptize (immerse) you in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38). By doing this you will, in a sense, go through the death of Jesus. In baptism you will die to the world (Galatians 6:14) and your sins will be forgiven. As a result, you will arise from the watery grave to live a new life. You will no longer be a servant of the devil. You will serve Jesus, who bought you by dying for you (1 Corinthians 6:20).

After you have become a servant of Jesus, you will no longer live like other people do. You will live to satisfy Him who died for you (2 Corinthians 5:14-15). You will live as Jesus lived, because He will be living in you (Galatians 2:20).

WORKSHEETS

After you have read this lesson and have looked up all the references in the Bible, please read the following sentences. As you read, please pay attention to whether or not the statements are true. If you decide a statement is true, please write a “T” before it. If you decide a statement is false, please write an “F” before it.

- _____1. Jesus was afraid of what the Jews might do to Him.
- _____2. God the Father loves Jesus because Jesus was willing to lay His life down for us.
- _____3. God does not punish sins at all.
- _____4. A person can find the assurance of forgiveness by searching within himself.
- _____5. Jesus’ death demonstrates God’s love for man.
- _____6. Jesus had to die because He had done something wrong.
- _____7. Christians are under (subject to) the Law of Moses.
- _____8. Jesus made it possible for us to be free from the guilt of our sins.
- _____9. God is willing to forgive us, provided we turn from

our sins, believe in Jesus, and allow ourselves to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of our sins.

____10. Baptism is somewhat similar to a death.

Please, read the following passages in the New King James Bible and fill in the blanks.

Matthew 16:21

“From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and _____
from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and _____,
and be _____ the third day.”

2 Corinthians 5:18-19

“Now all things are of God, who has _____ us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry _____, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, _____ to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”

1 Peter 2:24

“who Himself _____ on the tree, that we, having _____, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed.”

Please, answer the following questions by writing a short paragraph about each:

1. Why do you think Jesus was willing to die for you?
2. What should your response be to Jesus' sacrifice?