

GOD'S ANSWER TO MAN'S PROBLEM OF SIN

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INTRODUCTION:

A. I really enjoy working puzzles – Especially puzzles where you have to bend and twist an object to free another object that is trapped in the middle.

1. I call these “cracker barrel puzzles” since I remember playing with them there when I was younger & we’d take family vacations. That was the first “toy” I would go play with when we arrived!
2. The better the puzzle the more impossible the solution seems. Sometimes it can become quite an aggravation and you may begin to wonder if it’s a joke and there is no way to undo it!
3. If you have the directions, or know how to work them, the answer to the problem is quite simple!

B. This morning I want us to look at another puzzle – however, the consequences of how we work this one are eternal. What’s at stake is not a few minutes of pleasure but our eternal salvation!

1. The puzzle takes place in our hearts and with our souls. The object we have to get loose and take away are our sins. The solution may seem impossible, but the directions are in God’s word!
2. Many people try to work the puzzle themselves – coming up with their own way to remove sin and be saved; however, it is not man’s place to do that! God’s plan must be followed!

I. SIN IS A UNIVERSAL PROBLEM OF MANKIND:

A. Fellowship with God should stand as the desire and goal of every man:

1. We were created by God in order that we could have fellowship with Him (**Hosea 11:1-4, 7-8**)
 - a. We’ve all probably wondered why God created man in the first place - There are two major reasons: To glorify Him and then to have a relationship of fellowship with Him
 - b. His desire for our fellowship is so strong that even though He knew we would sin and break that fellowship, the pain it would cause Him, and the great lengths He would have to go to restore that fellowship... God created us anyway!
 - c. God, a holy God, created a holy man in his image so we could have fellowship with Him!
 - d. Since God has such a desire for fellowship & He created us in His image, He would have created us with the same desire for fellowship! Without His fellowship we’re empty!
2. In the garden of Eden we see man and God enjoying the closest of fellowship; however, due to man’s sin we also read of that fellowship being lost: (**Gen 2:16-17; 3:8-9, 23-24**)
 - a. While this is spoken of after their sin, the language seems to suggest this was a regular event and not the first time! God walked among them and talked to them in person
 - b. But due to their sin, they not only got kicked out of the garden but began dying physically and most importantly they lost this personal fellowship and relationship with God
 - d. Here we read about sin separating man from God ... from then on the Bible is all about how sin is forgiven & fellowship is restored, bringing man & God together again!
3. The same thing happens today as we sin – Sin separates us from God! (**Rom 5:12; Isaiah 59:1-2**)
 - a. Calvinism says we are born inheriting the guilt of Adam’s sin, so all men are born dead in sin... Paul clearly says spiritually we die because we all have sinned! It’s our fault!
 - b. The only person to be blamed is ourselves – We have chosen to do that which goes against the righteous & holy nature of God. We’ve become his enemy by our own choices!

B. Thus we have our great problem! We want fellowship with God but sin stands in the way!

1. In showing the Romans their need for Jesus and why they must approach salvation through faith,

- Paul makes the argument that there is none righteous! **(Romans 3:10-12, 23)**
- a. We must understand that sin is a universal problem – Every single one of us have sinned!
 - b. Paul utilizes words of totality, leaving no room for doubt! Some may feel they are good moral people and that they don't do a lot of bad stuff – You still are not righteous!
 - c. How many sins does it take to make one a sinner? How many sins does it take to separate us from a God who is completely holy and righteous? ONE sin leaves us condemned!
2. Remember, God desires fellowship with us and to save us as well; however, His nature prevents Him from simply overlooking our sins: **(Psalm 5:4; Habakkuk 1:13; Romans 3:26)**
- a. God's holy nature means He hates sin and His justice demands that the price for sin be paid – God cannot ignore our sins & give a free pass into His fellowship & presence!
 - b. God is equally full of love, mercy, & compassion – His nature means He has to be just (sin must be punished) & His love means He desires to justify us – How can both occur?
3. While we want fellowship and salvation, our sins have separated the fellowship between ourselves and God and we cannot restore that on our own! **(Romans 3:19-20)**
- a. A court scene – The arguments are made & the evidence laid open. All your sins are laid open before everyone! God then asks, "What do you say for yourself?" **NOTHING!**
 - b. Who can claim we're righteous? The gulf created between us & God by sin is impossible for us to cross – To truly appreciate salvation we must first see how lost we were!
4. Losing this fellowship is a problem affecting us in this life & in eternity! **(Rom 6:23; 2 Thess 1:8-9)**
- a. Sin has caused us to lose the benefits of fellowship now – Friendship with God, answered prayers, hope of eternal life, the absence of guilt, fellowship with each other, etc...
 - b. Ultimately our sins will result in eternal separation from God! Our sins mean we have to spend eternity in Hell instead of Heaven! It's the most serious problem ever faced!
 - c. If you're currently outside Christ you should fear death! You shouldn't sleep well at night! You should know you can't abide with God or the saved in Heaven due to your sins!

II. GOD HAS PROVIDED THE ANSWER!

A. While the problem created by sin seems hopeless, God provided the answer through Jesus the Christ!

1. In Jesus, God was able to provide the answer & demonstrate His righteousness **(Rom 3:21-26)**
 - a. There are three things that Paul mentions here which Jesus' death accomplishes for us:
 - 1) He justifies us – A legal term to make right – Because the penalty has been paid, God can look down upon us who are sinners and call us "righteous" again
 - 2) Redeems us – His death is the ransom price to buy us back from the grasp of Satan
 - 3) He is our propitiation – Closely tied to the concept of mercy (cover of mercy seat), it means to appease the wrath & justice of God – He saved us from this end!
 - b. Through the sacrifice of Jesus, God was able to reconcile both aspects of His nature – That He is holy & loving... He is just & the justifier! Sin was punished & grace was shown!
2. This is what Isaiah was saying as he prophesied of the Messiah as God's suffering servant **(Isa 53)**
 - a. You cannot miss the point of this – Jesus, the Messiah, was going to have to suffer greatly & die for our sins, transgressions, iniquities – So we could have peace & be healed
 - b. The Messiah would be God's sacrifice **(vs. 10)** – For years the Jews sacrificed animals which could never take away sins. Jesus was God's sacrifice to provide real forgiveness!
 - c. Any Jew would have been familiar with this – So when Jesus came and John introduced Him should've known what this meant... Jesus was going to die! **(John 1:34-37)**
3. When Jesus died on the cross, He paid the penalty that we owed due to our sin **(2 Cor 5:20-21)**

- a. God poured out on Jesus the penalty that all of us owed – He treated Jesus, who had never sinned, as if He were us! Jesus died the death on the cross all of us should have died!
- b. This is why Jesus cried out, “Why have You forsaken Me!” – He was bearing the penalty for our sins He was suffering for the first time a spiritual separation from His Father!
- c. The death Jesus died on the cross, He died for all men... He paid the penalty so we would not have to! If that doesn’t move someone to live for Him, what will? **(2 Cor 5:14-15)**

B. Now that Jesus has paid it all, the answer to our problem of sin is to be found in Him!

1. Jesus died and shed His blood for us on the cross, now we must respond in obedient faith:
 - a. While Christ died for all, the benefits of His death are only available to those who obey His gospel – How can one ignore the fact that action is required: **(2 Thess 1:7-9)**
 - b. It is when we respond in faith to the gospel of Christ that we are saved **(Gal 3:22-26)**
 - c. The kind of faith that saves both believes & responds with action **(Heb 11:6; Jas 2:14-17)**
 - d. So has God told us what to do in order to receive the cleansing found in Jesus Christ?
2. In order to be found in Christ, we have to die with Him: **(2 Tim 2:10-11)**
 - a. Look at where this says salvation is – **IN Christ** – Unless we’re **IN Christ** we have no hope!
 - b. The gospel message that we are told we must obey tells us that we have to die with Christ
 - c. Dying with Christ puts us in Him & connects us with the saving power of His blood! Many people have many ideas about how this happens but what does God’s word say?
3. It is through our baptism that we become united with the death of Jesus Christ: **(Rom 6:1-5)**
 - a. Notice the connection Paul makes from the end of chapter 5 to the beginning of chapter 6
 → The grace granting them forgiveness was received when? At their baptism!
 - b. Why is grace found there? There our faith is completed through the action by which we are crucified with Christ, dying to sin, are buried with Christ, and are raised with Him
 - c. Verse 5 is plain – Being united with Christ takes place when we go through this process!
4. It’s interesting to note that other passages that talk about being found in Christ talk about being baptized – Until one is baptized into Christ there is no forgiveness! **(Col 2:11-13; Gal 3:26-27)**

CONCLUSION: There is no reason for you to wrestle with the problem of sin and your salvation any longer! Jesus Christ died for you and if you will die with Him today the sin will be removed through His blood and by His grace!