

## Notes And Helps to Instructors

Thank you for volunteering to lead a group through the treasures of God's word! You may feel overwhelmed or inadequate, but you can do this! The leader notes are designed to help you grow in knowledge and love for Christ and for you to help pass what you have received to your group. Here are some suggestions to help equip you to grow in your teaching and leading ability.

- These lessons could simply be read, and a group would receive something but that is not how they are designed. The notes are designed to grow you as a leader so you might tailor the lesson for the needs of your group. Some groups may not have much of a knowledge base in the bible, so the concepts must be brought down to their level. Other groups may have a large knowledge base and you may challenge them with more information. The key is to know your group. If you begin leading a group in one way and find that it is not connecting, it is alright to modify and bring down or raise up the level of information.
- The more preparation you do the stronger you will be as a leader. Let the study material be a joy for you! Let it feed you as you prepare! The more you are fed the more you have to give to your group.
- There is no set time on how long a lesson may take. Lessons could be slowed down and take several weeks to finish. Perhaps in leading a group, one question captivates the group and leads to a fruitful conversation. If that happens, that is good! You are in no hurry. If you can finish the material in a week, then great! But if it takes several, that is great as well! The important thing is that they receive deeply from the gospel of Jesus.
- Pray about your lesson! Pray as you prepare! Pray as you teach! Remember we do not teach or exercise our gifts in our own strength. The Holy Spirit is the one who opens the heart and mind. Pray for the Spirit to move in your heart and the heart of the group.

May our merciful Triune God bless your study and your group that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith-- that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

In Christ,

Prison Discipleship Ministry

## Lessons in Salvation -- Lesson 4 "How Does the Good News Become My Good News?"

### Introduction:

We can never find hope by looking inside ourselves, Hope is found by looking outside ourselves to Christ. This week we look at what it means to look to Christ and to truly know Him as our hope and salvation.

**Read these passages at least five times then answer the questions as best you can:**

<sup>20</sup> Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified (declared righteous) in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin. (Romans 3:20)

<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast. (Eph 2:8-9 NKJ)

<sup>8</sup> But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart " (that is, the word of faith which we preach): <sup>9</sup> that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. (Rom 10:8-9 NKJ)

Can a person go to heaven just by being a good person? Why not? What is the purpose of God's law (the Ten Commandments)?

Salvation comes through \_\_\_\_\_. Is faith something that you work up inside yourself? From where does faith come?

What does Romans 10 say about how we are saved?

What does Paul mean by "believe in your heart"?

Can a person know for certain that he is going to heaven when he dies? Explain.

## Lessons in Salvation -- Lesson 4 “How Does the Good News Become My Good News?”

### Review Lessons 1, 2 and 3:

Lesson 1 – the sinfulness of man and how sin separates us from God.

Lesson 2 – the Gospel is God’s answer to our sinfulness.

(Based on who comes, you might want to spend the whole time here especially if everyone is new.)

Lesson 3- The Good News is the proclamation of the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Jesus.

### Read these passages at least five times then answer the questions as best you can:

**<sup>20</sup> Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified (declared righteous) in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. (Romans 3:20)**

Read 3:9-30 as time permits and comment.

The culture says, “Down deep you are good.” But what does this passage say about that?

First, notice v. 9. It says that both Jews and Greeks are under sin. When the bible speaks of Jews and Greeks, it is the bible’s way of saying all of humanity. Everyone, without exception, who is descended from Adam is under sin.

Second, notice that it says in v. 10-12 the repetition of “no one” It says that “no one is righteous” What that means is that none of us, when we stand before God’s holy law can say we will be found innocent. All of us have failed to live up to the holy standard of our loving God. It also says that “no one seeks for God.” None of us left to ourselves look to God to save us from our sins. Often, we are seeking God for many things but not for what God offers himself to us for. We look for him to solve all our problems, maybe make us wealthy, maybe keep us healthy, we only look to him when we have a problem. But we do not seek him for him. We do not seek him left to ourselves for him to wash away our sins and seek him by living to his glory and by his word.

Third, notice how deep and in what ways we are under sin. Notice the words “throat, tongue, lips (v.13) and mouth (v. 14)” These are words that speak about how we use our mouth and describe our mouth. Jesus tells us that our mouths are simply a reflection of the sin in our hearts. Consider Mark 7:15-23, “15 There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him.” 17 And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable. 18 And he said to them, "Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, 19 since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?" (Thus he declared all foods clean.) 20 And he said, "What comes out of a person is

what defiles him. 21 For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, 22 coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. 23 All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

What Paul is saying is that sin is rooted deep in our hearts. We need Jesus to cleanse us from the inside.

Also notice the words "feet (v. 15), Path (v. 16), and way (v. 17)" These are words that speak of our walk, in other words, how we conduct our lives. Not only do we have a sinful nature deep in our very core, but we also commit the sinful acts that come from our sinful heart. We are at the core sinners, and so we sin.

Fourth, notice the summary Paul gives in vs 19-20, "Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. 20 For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

We all stand guilty. None of us can give a defense or an excuse to our holy God for our sins. When we stand before the holiness of God and reflect upon our own sinfulness, our mouth is stopped. And we know that no work we can do could ever take away the sins we have done. If God is good, loving, and just (which he is!) God cannot simply let sin go unpunished. And so, we know that none of us can be justified by keeping the law. We need a savior!

**<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is the gift of God,* <sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast. (Eph 2:8-9 NKJ)**

Read 2:1-10 as time permits and comment

Notice First, v. 1 says that we were dead in our trespasses and sins. What does it mean we were dead? It means that we did not have any spiritual life in us. Our sin has separated us from life with God. Remember in the garden, God warned Adam that on the day he disobeyed God he would surely die. And notice, we are dead in our trespasses and sins. What does it mean to trespass? It means to cross a border we were not supposed to cross. We have all crossed the borders God has created for us, his law. All of us have violated that line and we are all guilty for that sin. But sin is not just something we do; it is also something we are in our very nature. So, the writer stresses that it is our trespasses and sins that show our death before God.

And we walked as dead men and followed Satan and the world. Living only for ourselves and seeking to carry out the passions of our flesh (taking whatever our flesh craved such as sex, drugs, and to use our body in any way we see fit and not care at all how God told us how to honor him with it). And to sum up our condition, Paul says that we were by nature children of wrath. We rightly deserved the fullness of a loving Gods wrath against sin. We are sinners, and we have sinned, have not lived for him, and lived only for ourselves. We deserve his wrath.

But notice the first two words of verse 4 "But God." We could not save ourselves, But God can save us. V.4 says God is "rich in mercy" and "because of the great love with which he loved us" Pause there on that. Let these words sink in. God is rich in mercy, and he loves you.

And notice, God is rich in mercy and loves us “even when we were dead in our trespasses” In other words, you can never be too sinful for Jesus to save you. Consider 1 Tim 1:12-16, “12 I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, 13 though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, 14 and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 15 The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. 16 But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.

Paul did not simply write these words, HE LIVED THEM! He was a murderer, a kidnapper, and a persecutor of God. But God had mercy on him as an example to us all that we all can find mercy in Christ. Jesus saves us by grace, seats us with him in heavenly places, with Jesus in relationship with him, so that for all eternity we share and experience the depths of his mercy and grace.

And notice how we share in the mercy of Christ. Vvs. 8-9, say, we are saved by grace through faith in Christ. It is not works that save us, it is the work of Christ for us that saves us. And the instrument of our salvation is not works, but faith. And faith, is a gift given to us by Jesus in his mercy to us. We are saved by the grace of Christ, through faith in Christ, all because of the work of Christ.

**<sup>8</sup> But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart “ (that is, the word of faith which we preach): <sup>9</sup> that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. (Rom 10:8-9 NKJ)**

**Can a person go to heaven just by being a good person? Why not? What is the purpose of God’s law (the Ten Commandments)?**

Romans 3:9-20 just told us that none of us are “good people.” We are all sinners. We all have lied, stole, not honored God, looked with lust (which according to Jesus in Matt 5:27-28 is adultery in our hearts), or had anger in our heart against another (Which according to Jesus in Matthew 5:21-22 is committing murder in our hearts). We are all guilty, we are not good people, we are sinners.

If we went before a judge and said, “you are right, I am guilty, but look at all the good things I do!” The judge will say, “all those good things you do, do not take away the crime you have committed.” If the judge just says, “you know, I’m a nice guy, you are free to go.” We would not consider that a good judge. That would be an unrighteous judge. God is not an unrighteous judge. He must judge, his love and goodness demand it.

The law was not given for us to keep it and earn heaven. It was to show us that we are sinners and need a righteousness that does not come from us but comes from outside of us. Gal 3:24 says that the law was a guardian, a schoolmaster, a tutor, a teacher. It was to show us two

things. First, how great is our sin and misery. But also, what a good work actually is. When we come to Christ, our sins are forgiven. We no longer have the guilt of our sins over our head. And remember, Christ came to us when we were sinners, dead in our sins and trespasses. And he has, by faith, made us alive in him. We do not keep the law to be in relationship with Christ, we are in relationship with Christ so we now can strive to keep the law, not out of fear of punishment, but out of love for so great a salvation. Consider Ephesians 2:10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." Jesus is making us little by little, more and more, to look like Jesus. And he has given us good works to walk in. He even gets credit for our good works! We have nothing at all to boast about when it comes to our works! He gets all the glory, for not only our salvation, but for all we do!

**Salvation comes through \_\_\_\_\_ . Is faith something that you work up inside yourself? From where does faith come?**

Faith. Ephesians 2:8-9

Faith is a gift of God. God not only gives salvation as a free gift, but He also gives the faith we need to receive that salvation.

**What does Romans 10 say about how we are saved?**

Romans 10:8-9

We confess with our mouth and believe in our heart.

**What does Paul mean by "believe in your heart"?**

What is true belief in your heart? knowledge, assent, trust

Knowledge -- of the facts

Assent – belief that the facts are true James 2:19 John 2:23-25. Demons know who Jesus is.

Trust -- Luke 4:41; Mark 1:34

All three must be present for a true salvation. The demons have knowledge and assent. (See lesson 3 under the question what it means to "hold fast.")

**Can a person know for certain that he is going to heaven when he dies? Explain.**

Yes. God wants us to have assurance. Jesus said in John 6:37-40, "37 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. 39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. 40 For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

Jesus wants you to know that anyone who comes to him in faith he will not be cast out. He will save all who come to him, and since he rose from the dead, it is a guarantee that we will

rise with him on the last day. If we look to Jesus, the Son, we have eternal life. We can have the most concrete assurance that we are saved. Jesus lived, died, and rose for us. And he told us that he will save and rise on the last day all who come to him in faith.

But John writes several more times that the entire reason he is writing to us is so we would have assurance of our salvation in Christ.

John 20:31

30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. (Jn. 20:30-31 NKJ)

1 John 5:11-12

11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. 13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God. (1 Jn. 5:11-13 NKJ)

And we grow in our assurance as we feed upon Jesus' promises to us as we hear them again and again in the means of grace. The means of grace are the places Jesus has promised to meet with us and grow us in his grace, feed us in his promises, and work deep in our heart. Means of Grace – God's tools for growing assurance of salvation: Church attendance; preaching of the word; repentance; sacraments (baptism and the Lord's supper); Bible reading; prayer; etc.