

Evangelism Training

Truth 3: Christ is the Savior of sinners.

I. Introduction

Our study of God's character and humanity's sinfulness in the last two lessons now gives us a proper foundation for appreciating the heart of the gospel, the person and work of Jesus Christ. As evangelists, we must make sure that we are proclaiming something more than moral living. The gospel is not, "Do better" or "Start attending church." The gospel is the good news that God's Son has come into the world to save underserving sinners and that all who believe in Him are saved from judgment and given eternal life. In this lesson we will consider what Jesus achieved and how we are to proclaim Him to the lost world around us.

II. The Person

a. The Christ

"Christ" is not Jesus' last name. It is His title that the NT writers join to His personal name. This title refers to the divine anointing of Jesus. In the OT, priests and kings were anointed with oil to symbolize God's choice and empowerment (1 Sam 16:12). But Jesus is not just another notable figure in the Bible. He is the ultimate "Anointed One." While other men were empowered by the Holy Spirit to function temporarily as priests and kings, Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit "without measure" (John 3:34; Isa 11:1; John 1:31; Isa 42:1; 61:1) to redeem God's chosen people, reverse the curse which Adam's sin brought into the world, and to reign forever over the kingdom of God. Jesus is called "the Christ" because He was chosen by God and empowered by God's Spirit to become the Savior of the world.

b. The Son of God

The New Testament reveals that Jesus of Nazareth, a real historical person who lived during the 1st century, is the only true Son of God. Consider just a few examples from the Gospel of Mark:

Mark 1:1 "the Son of God" (author)

Mark 1:11 "You are My beloved Son" (God the Father)

Mark 3:11 "You are the Son of God!" (demons)

Mark 5:7 "Jesus, Son of the Most High God!" (demons)

Mark 9:7 “This is My beloved Son.” (God the Father)

Mark 14:61 “the Son of the Blessed One” (high priest)

Mark 15:39 “Truly this man was God’s Son!” (Roman centurion)

c. True God

When the Bible speaks of Jesus as the Son of God, it is claiming that He is truly God. He is not a lesser divine being, as if there were two or more gods. He is not an angel or a man who was adopted by God the Father at some point in time.

Rather, He is God the Son who shared the Father’s glory before the world came into being (John 17:5). The Jews repeatedly accused Jesus of blasphemy because they understood that He was claiming deity for Himself.

John 5:18 For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

Mark 2:7 “Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?”

Mark 14:64 “You have heard the blasphemy.”

d. True Man

Jesus is also truly human. He possessed (and continues to possess) a human body and soul. When He was miraculously conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary, the Son of God added a true human nature to His person, a miracle that we refer to as “the incarnation.” But how can this be? How can one person possess two natures, one human and one divine? Like the doctrine of the Trinity, this truth cannot be fathomed by human understanding. Yet the Bible teaches it, and the church has worked hard over the centuries to define and defend this important doctrine against many errors.

The Council of Chalcedon (451 AD): “truly God and truly man...begotten before all ages according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the virgin Mary...two natures...one person”

III. The Work – Death & Resurrection

We will spend our whole lives plumbing the debts of Christ's work. For our present purpose, we will now only briefly survey what He accomplished through His death and resurrection.

- a. On the cross, Jesus Christ solved “the great dilemma” (Rom 3:26).

Recall the crisis that we mentioned in the last two lessons. The holiness of God and the sinfulness of man creates a dilemma. God is merciful, and He desires to forgive sinners. But God is also holy, and He cannot leave sin unpunished. To forgive a sinner without punishing the sin would violate God's character, which is impossible: “He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous, both of them alike are an abomination to Yahweh” (Prov 17:15). Therefore, the wisdom of God solved this problem by sending Jesus Christ into the world.

On the cross, the guilt of our sins was put to (reckoned, imputed, counted to) His legal account. He presented Himself as a “guilt offering” for fallen man (Isa 53:10). On the cross, the Father punished His Son in our place, and He was “crushed” under the weight of God's “wrath” (Isa 53:10; Rom 5:8). Jesus experienced more than the physical agony of the cross. He also experienced the punishment that we would have suffered in eternal hell if He had not come into the world for our salvation.

- b. The resurrection vindicated Christ by proving the following:
 - i. That He is truly the Son of God (Rom 1:4).
 - ii. That He has defeated sin and death (Acts 2:24).
 - iii. That He will return to judge the world (Acts 17:31).

IV. How do we proclaim Christ to sinners?

As we can see from the previous sections, the Bible reveals a great deal about the person and work of Jesus Christ. You cannot possibly hope to communicate all of this in one, or even multiple, evangelistic conversations. Bear in mind that evangelism is essentially the good news about Jesus Christ. Therefore, every time you communicate anything true about Jesus to an unbeliever, you are engaging in biblical evangelism. But having said that, do your best to communicate the following truths:

- Jesus is the Son of God who came into the world to save sinners.
- Jesus died on the cross to pay sin's penalty.
- Jesus rose from the dead, proving His victory over sin and death.

Here is an example of how you might communicate these truths to a friend:

“I am a Christian because I know that only Jesus Christ can save me from my sins. The guilt of my sin is so great that nothing I do can ever make up for it. Ultimately, I need a mediator to stand between me and God. I need someone who is both truly God and truly man to intercede for me. I need a divine savior because only God can save me from the judgment that I deserve. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is this perfect Savior that we all need. He is the Son of God who came into the world to save sinners. After living a perfect life and obeying all of God's commandments perfectly, He died on the cross to pay sin's penalty. God punished Him in the sinner's place, and Jesus died under the wrath of God. But Jesus did not stay dead like the leaders of the world's false religions. He rose from the dead, proving that sin's price had been paid and that sin and death have been defeated. Salvation cannot be found anywhere else. Only Jesus can save us from our sins.”

Homework

- Memorize Truth 3 and at least one verse from this card.
- Write a paragraph explaining the person and work of Christ to an unbeliever.
- Read *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*, pgs. 14–20.
- Read *Essential Christian Doctrine*, pgs. 310–318. If you have the larger version, *Biblical Doctrine*, then the same readings can be found at pgs. 589–602.
- Share the gospel with one of your three unbelievers or at least make some definite plans to do so. Consider doing this with another Christian. We are bolder together.