



This is the Gospel...

the Good News!

What is the purpose of life? This question has been asked for centuries. The Bible gives us a clear answer – Life is about relationship.

From the book of Genesis through the book of Revelation, the Bible shares a relational message. This message is called the Gospel, or the Good News. When people understand the message and embrace God's offer, they not only discover the purpose of life—they discover Life itself.

YOU AND I WERE CREATED FOR A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Chapters 2 and 3 of Genesis tell us that Adam was created in the image of God and given the capacity for relationship with God. The story reveals conversation, cooperation, partnership, and relationship between Adam and God.

God's desire for relationship was not limited to Adam. He entered covenant relationship with Israel . . . "I will also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people" (Leviticus 26:12). Jesus stressed the importance of relationship by instructing His disciples to abide in Him (John 15:1-10), by promising to reveal Himself to those who love Him (John 14:21), and by referring to His followers as friends (John 15:15). Each passage shows God's desire for relationship.

John 15:1-10, "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me. ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and *so* prove to be My disciples. ⁹ Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰ If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

John 14:21, He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.

John 15:15, No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.

OUR SIN SEPARATED US FROM THAT RELATIONSHIP

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Sin is breaking God's law, and there's a penalty for sin. Romans 6:23 tells us the punishment for breaking God's law: "The wages of sin is death." Wages are what we earn for what we've done. According to the Bible, we have all earned death.

When the Bible speaks of death, it speaks primarily of separation. When we die physically, our spirit is separated from our body. In similar fashion, when we died spiritually because of sin, our spirit was separated from God's Spirit. "But your iniquities [*or sin*] have made a separation between you and your God" (Isaiah 59:2).

THERE IS NOTHING THAT WE CAN DO ON OUR OWN TO RECONCILE THIS RELATIONSHIP

Many people believe good deeds will make them right with God. Unfortunately, there is no definitive marker for "adequate goodness." The Bible does not say, "If you are good most of the time, you are acceptable to God," or "Three good deeds will offset one bad deed." Without a definitive standard for goodness, how good is good enough?

The Bible helps us see that our problem is not a lack of goodness; our problem is the effect of sin. We could never reconcile our relationship with God because sin brings death and deception. Ephesians 2:1 teaches that without Christ, we were dead in trespasses and sins. Second Corinthians 4:3-4 reveals that without God's intervention, we are blinded to the truth by the god of this world. We can do nothing to reconcile with God because dead people don't act, and deceived people don't believe.

Ephesians 2:1, And you were dead in your trespasses and sins

2 Corinthians 4:3-4, And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,⁴ in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS TO PAY THE PENALTY OF OUR SIN

1 John 4:10, In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

The penalty of sin was death. Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sin. His sacrifice made reconciliation possible. “For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Romans 5:10).

JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD THAT WE MIGHT HAVE LIFE

While Jesus’ death paid the penalty for our sin, it is His resurrection that brings us the hope of eternal life. “Blessed be the God and Father...who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3).

Jesus’ death paid our sin debt; Jesus’ resurrection makes relationship a reality.

JESUS OFFERS ETERNAL LIFE (OR A RECONCILED RELATIONSHIP) TO THOSE WHO WILL REPENT OF THEIR SIN BY PLACING FAITH IN HIM

Jesus spoke often of eternal life (John 3:16, 4:14, 5:39, and 6:40). Many people assume that eternal life is going to heaven when you die. But that’s not what Jesus said. In John 17:3 Jesus said, “This is eternal life, that they may know You (*God*).” Eternal life is to know God. It is to experience a reconciled relationship with God.

John 3:16, For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

John 4:14, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.

John 5:39, You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me.

John 6:40, For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.

According to the Bible, eternal life is given to those who will turn from their sin by placing faith in what Jesus has done for them. The Bible describes the act of turning from sin as repentance. It does not mean people will be sinless, but they will desire a relationship with God more than sinful activity.

HOW CAN ONE RECEIVE ETERNAL LIFE?

John 3:36 tells us that “He who believes in the Son has eternal life.” You can receive eternal life by placing faith in what Jesus has done for you. What did Jesus do? He died on the cross for your sins. He rose from the dead that you might have life, and He offers eternal life to you when you repent of your sin and place faith in Him.

Following Jesus Christ is a journey that never ends, but it can begin with a simple prayer. Use this prayer to guide you . . . “God, I know that I’ve sinned. I recognize that my sin has separated me from you. I believe that Jesus died on the cross for my sin, and that He rose again on the third day. As best I know how, I turn from my sin by placing faith in what Jesus has done for me. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.”

If you have placed faith in Christ today, we encourage you to share this decision with others. In fact, you can share it with us today by clicking: <http://thisisthegospel.nextmeta.com/content.cfm?id=318>

WELCOME TO THE FAMILY!

* This article and related information can be accessed at **This is the Gospel** (<http://www.thisisthegospel.com>). You can read the material in English, Arabic, or Spanish.

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