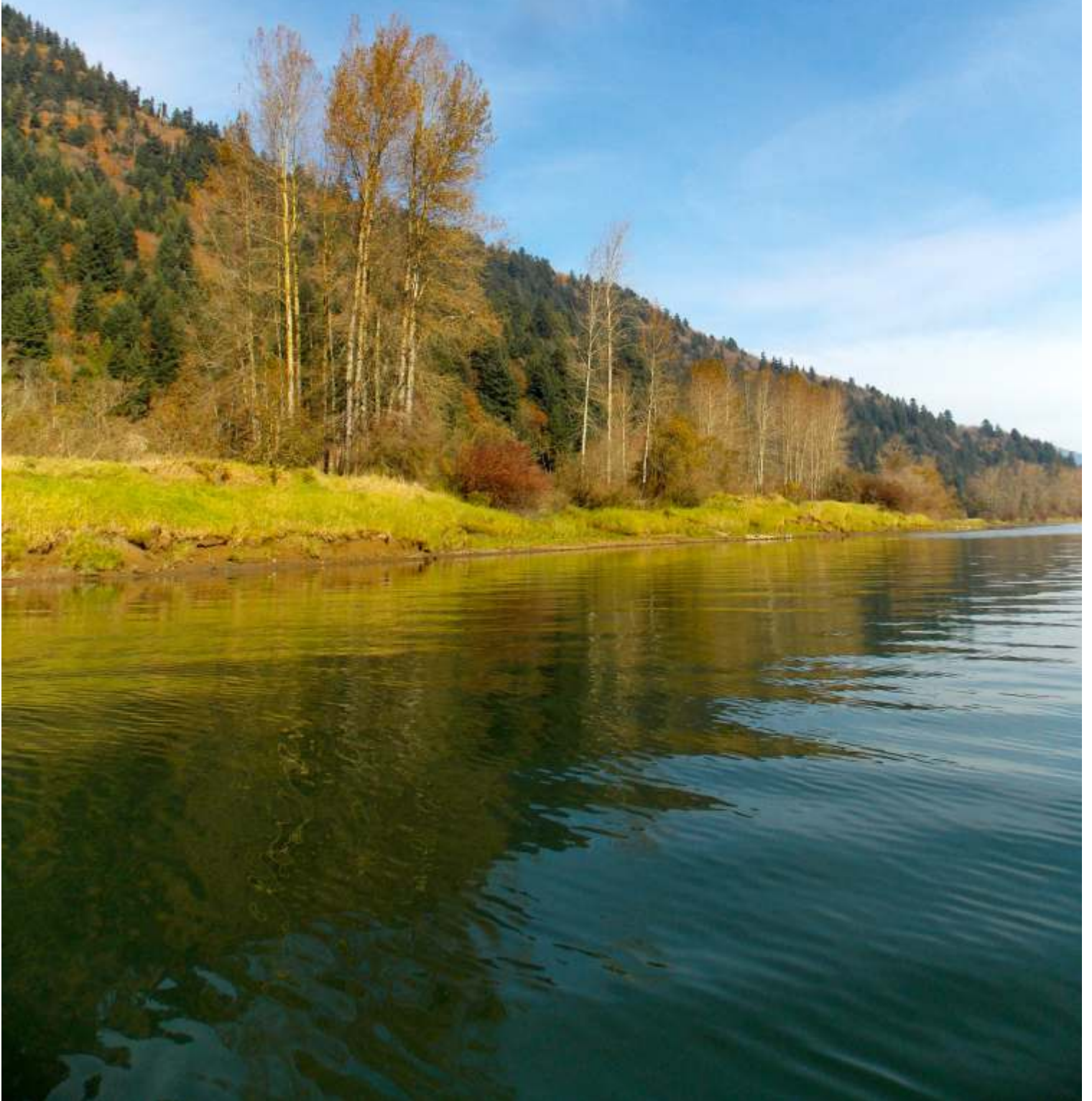


THE PENTECOST

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Cover photo: Powell River, BC

Above photo: Reception Pass, WA

The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls. Jesus tells us more about the pearl of great price. Join with us as we open up this great parable along with several others. We will also discuss post flood history. God bless you.

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The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

Matthew 13:45-46

Jesus, when looking for an object to compare the kingdom of heaven to, chose a pearl of great price. Fine pearls were very valuable and costly in Jesus' day, as they are to some extent today. In Jesus' day it was dangerous to dive for pearls and many a diver ruined his health in such a pursuit. This only added to the value of pearls.

In this parable a merchant sees a costly pearl and decides to sell everything he has in order to obtain it. So it is with God's kingdom. To obtain citizenship in God's kingdom one must relinquish the right of all things, even his life, to Christ.

Here we see that salvation is not something that a man or woman automatically falls into. Instead, salvation is something men and women choose. The merchant chose to give up all to obtain the pearl. So it is with eternal life. Some would say; "Jesus, how can You put so much emphasis on the human agency in such parables?" Jesus is calling men and women to make a choice for Him, but making this choice is empowered by God. God meets with us and supplies the ability to do what we would normally not, namely to commit all of our lives to Him.

Bring your heart to Jesus, knock, seek, ask and commit your life and heart to Him. He will write His law upon it and make it new. Then your outer life will be an expression of your inner-heart life. The fruit of your life will be good because it grows out of the root of Christ.

Friend, do not settle for anything less than true conversion. When you receive Christ by faith, there is a confirmation brought to your heart. Your spirit attests to the fact that Jesus is there, and you know it.

To receive Christ means making a full surrender of your heart

to Him. Oh, let Jesus have your heart. Only God knows the extent of the windings of a twisted heart. Let Jesus have your heart and unwind and re-create it. Do not convince yourself that you can merely believe in Jesus casually without making a commitment to Him. Many profess to believe in Him but their belief has never produced an inner witness or a rest in actual salvation. To gain this you must enter through the door of commitment to Jesus. Give Him your life. Call out to Him.

Friend, if you do not know Jesus, what are you holding on to? Is it your own will, your own pride, your own life? Friend, if you will stand up and say; "I am done with these things forever" and run to Jesus, and let Him embrace you and surrender to His Lordship, He will make you a child of God. Never mind what choices others have made, choose Jesus yourself and give Him all.

Friend, put your heart on the side of truth and godliness. Put your heart in Jesus' hands. Even now He stands ready and willing to forgive all who will come to Him in repentance and faith. Friend, once a person has his heart convicted, broken and awakened to its need of God, there is only one thing left to do, surrender to Jesus. God's eyes run to and fro throughout the earth to see who will make the commitment to surrender all. What does He see when His eyes stop on you?

Friend, if you do not know Him, cry out to Jesus that He would change your heart. Friend, a natural man has a mere natural life, aspiring to earthly and fleshly things, following his instincts. When Jesus is given a person's heart and life He changes it to become spiritual. God's kingdom is a spiritual kingdom. Its subjects have been changed and have holy desires and motivations.

Friend, choose to give Jesus all. On the cross Jesus died for you and for me. This is the stopping place, the cross of Jesus. Do not move past it. I have said that it was dangerous for divers to gather pearls and many ruined their health in the process. This made the value of the pearls even greater. Friend, Jesus did more for you than dive to the sea floor. Jesus, the sinless Son of God, died for you and for me. Jesus died for our sins. Nails were driven through His hands and His feet and He was erected

on a cross to die slowly in agony. Jesus died to satisfy God's justice and judgment of our sin. Then He rose from the dead in three days. A pearl was created that day. Now, friend, it is for you to choose to sell all, sell out and receive the pearl of God's kingdom, the pearl of salvation. Commit all of yourself to Him. Call out to Him now. He stands with ears open and arms outstretched to receive you. God bless you.

Shawn Stevens

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Scripture taken from the King James Version.

The Parable of the Good Fish and of the Bad Fish

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew 13:47-50

This parable illustrates and warns of the final separation between the wicked and the righteous. This is a judgment parable and it serves to warn us of the consequence of rejecting God. The fishing technique used in this parable was familiar to Jesus' audience, especially to those of His disciples who were fishermen. Fishing was done by different means in their day as it is in our day. Sometimes fishermen fished with a line and a hook. Other times, they fished with a smaller net called an amphiblestron. However, when fishermen were going after a large school of fish they would use a dragnet. A dragnet was used by a team of fishermen and was set up between two boats, in deep water. Such a net could span a distance of as much as half a mile. Floats held up the top of the net while weights pulled down the bottom. When the net swept through an area it picked up everything in its path. When fishermen arrived at shore they began separating the good, usable fish from the bad fish and other sea creatures.

This is the picture. God's end-time dragnet sweeps the earth and gathers all of humanity onto the shores of the judgment seat of Christ and angels separate the wicked from the righteous men and women. The bad fish are those whom the angels throw away. These wicked are cast into the furnace of fire where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. This is to be feared above all things, to be thrown into the furnace of fire.

Friend, are you a "good fish?" Are you a "bad fish?" What if you were to be gathered into God's dragnet today, having a heart and soul condition like you presently do? Are you ready

to be sorted and sifted? Or do you need to undergo a great inward change? The answers to these questions are too important to ignore. Friend, settle the question of your soul's salvation. How do you settle the question? Open your eyes to what Jesus has done for you. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to earth to die for sin. He did not die for His own sins; He died for your sins and for mine. We are sinners. He is sinless. We are guilty. He is innocent. We deserve judgment. He stepped forward and suffered judgment on our behalf, that we might be forgiven. Jesus Christ was crucified and laid in a tomb. Then, in three days, He rose from the dead.

Friend, it is not your own personal self-righteousness which will make you a good fish. The righteousness of Christ is there to stand in your place. Jesus Christ's is the only sacrifice that will satisfy God. If you have not already done so, you must accept the righteousness of Christ, His finished work. This righteousness must be accepted. It must be applied to your life by repentance and faith. Repentance is making the choice to turn from self rule and surrender your life up to God, to follow Him and His way. Faith is believing and trusting in Jesus. Faith is a voluntary trust in Jesus and it follows an awareness that we have sinned against God and are in desperate need of His forgiveness. Faith is like the hand that grabs on to a rope to be pulled to safety. Faith grabs ahold of God's promises and fastens the heart to them like a drowning man fastens his grip onto the side of a lifeboat. Friend, have you responded to God with faith and repentance? If you have not, let your whole heart and mind be taken up with the thought of Christ's sacrifice for you. Then make your decision to turn to the Lord, forsake your old life and follow Him. This decision must be a decision of the heart, not just a thought in your mind. Your decision must be a voluntary trusting in Christ. This is faith. Friend, if you are trusting in your own good deeds and your own goodness to please God, you are making a big mistake. You need to be converted spiritually. You need a new heart. God wants to give you a new heart but you must turn to Him in faith.

Friend, if you have not done so, pledge your life to God. Commit yourself to His mercy. Renounce your self-rule. It is

better to gnash your teeth now in contrition and repentance than to gnash your teeth on the Day of Judgment. Tell Jesus that you want to be a good fish in His dragnet. Faith and repentance are voluntary and the choice is yours. Repentance is voluntary surrender. Faith is voluntary trust. Friend, there is coming a day in which God's great dragnet will sweep the world. We will all be gathered and separated for eternity. The choice of becoming a good fish is open to you now, in this life, in these days of God's mercy. Jesus died on a cruel cross so that you and I could be forgiven of sin and rescued from God's judgment. Make your choice today of voluntary surrender and voluntary trust. Pray to Christ in your own words. He loves you enough to die for you.

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THE PARABLE OF THE WHEAT AND THE TARES

Matthew 13:24-30

24 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

Matthew 13:36-43 :

36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.

37 He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;

38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;

39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

In this incredible parable Jesus uses another agricultural picture to speak a spiritual truth. This time the parable is of a field which has good seeds sown into it during the day and at night an enemy sows tares into the same field. Both the wheat and the tares sprout up and when the tares are noticed by the field owner's servants they ask the field owner how this happened and whether or not the field owner would like for them to pluck out the tares. The owner knows that an enemy has planted the

tares but the owner does not want to pluck out the tares just yet. He is concerned that wheat might get plucked out at the same time if the tares are dealt with too early. At the time of harvest the wheat and the tares will be separated. The wheat will be gathered into the owner's barn and the tares will be gathered into bundles and burned.

This parable is one that Jesus gives the interpretation for. The sower is Jesus, the field is the world, the good seeds are the children of the kingdom, the tares are the children of the wicked one (devil). The enemy is also the devil. The reapers are the angels.

In this awesome scene, at the end of the age, humanity will be gathered up by angels assigned to this work, and divided. Here we are told of two groups, the wheat and the tares, the children of the kingdom and the children of the wicked one. The children of the kingdom are God's children, born again, believers, and followers of Jesus. The children of the evil one are the devil's children and their judgment is to be cast into the furnace of fire.

This furnace of fire can be interpreted as the lake of fire which the Bible warns us of in Revelation 20:15. In this furnace is wailing and gnashing of teeth. This is a very fearful picture of judgment as God's divine indignation is unleashed. The chambers of God's judgment are awful places for any soul to end up. This is a place of wailing. People will be shocked on their arrival in such a place. It will be like resting in a boat and then suddenly going over the edge of a waterfall. Many souls are drifting downstream to such an end. There are souls drifting on their oars not even hearing the rumble of the falls.

Friend, what about you? Are you a son of the kingdom or a son of the evil one? Are you a daughter of the kingdom or a daughter of the evil one? Your eternal destiny depends on whose son or daughter you are. I am not talking about natural lineage. I am talking about spiritual lineage. You are either a child of God or a child of the devil. We are racing on to the day of judgment. When we look back over our lives we will see that sin yielded very little pleasure and a lot of heartache. However, a life lived for God and His kingdom yields joy everlasting.

Who would choose God's wrath over His mercy? Men fear the wrath of other men but how much worse is the wrath of God. He has a furnace for the tares. No amount of self-righteousness will acquit us on the day of harvest/judgment. Only the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to us will give us acceptance with God on that day. He is an impartial judge. There is forgiveness, pardon, grace and mercy for those who will turn to God and put faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus died for your sins and mine, in our place so that we could be pardoned. Then He rose from the dead. By believing in what He has done for us and by turning our lives over to Him, committing to follow Him, we can be forgiven and made a child of the kingdom. Friend, there is mercy for you but you must choose it. Choose mercy while mercy's terms have not expired. Come to the cross of Jesus Christ. At the cross of Christ, God meets man. On God's side of the cross, the work of redemption is done. Jesus paid the price by dieing for us and no other sacrifice is needed to redeem man. On man's side of the cross the choice to repent and believe is for many still there. Make the choice today. Do not let death cut you down, or the harvesting angels cut you down without first settling this matter. Jesus has thrown you the rope of salvation. All you have to do is grab hold of it. To do so you must let go of indifference, unbelief, self-rule. If these things are in your hands then your hands are not free to grab the rope of salvation. Let go of what you are holding and grab on to Jesus and His salvation.

Friend, if you don't know the Lord's salvation in your own life, pray to Him now. Pray in your own words a prayer, perhaps something like this.

Jesus Christ, as I look at my heart and life it looks like it is growing into the shape of a tare. I do not want this to be. I need You. If it was up to the angels they would have plucked me out of the field by now, but You have told them to wait until the end of the age. It is this waiting time that I am now living in and I don't want to waste another minute of it. I don't want to be thrown into the furnace of fire. Jesus, have mercy on me. You died for my sins and paid the price for me to be pardoned. Then You rose from the dead. This is the truth and I believe it. Forgive

me for all of my sins. Make me Your own. I let go of my self-will and self-rule and by faith grab hold of Your rope of salvation. Pull me out of the kingdom of darkness into Your kingdom of light and love. Make me a child of the kingdom. I choose to repent and follow You.

Amen.

Scripture quotations taken from the King James Bible

POST-FLOOD HISTORY

We spent some time in the last issue of The Pentecost discussing the events of creation and world history up to, and including, the Great Flood. The history of the world did not end with the flood for God, in His grace, spared Noah, his family and all of the creatures who were inside the ark. At God's appointed time, the flood waters began to recede from the Earth. The ark came to rest atop of Mount Ararat and Noah, his family and the animals were released. God blessed Noah and his sons and instructed them to multiply and populate the Earth.

Noah's descendants did not follow in his godly example and it wasn't long before humanity, once again, was thoroughly corrupt. With every generation things continued to worsen and, instead of following God and His ways, "... but every man did that which was right in his own eyes." (Judges 17.6).

The Bible teaches that "All unrighteousness is sin: ..." (1 John 5.17). Jesus Christ further taught that "... from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man." (Mark 7.21-23). Sin resides in the hearts of men and women, staining them and marking them as transgressors of God's laws. When we are ruled by sin, we become self-centered and self-driven. We then join a pursuit to obtain more for self. Ironically, the path to self-gratification is also the path to self-destruction.

The Bible warns of being "... hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." (Hebrews 3.13). Sin not only stains and marks us, it hardens us, so that we can walk further down its pathway. The person in this condition is capable of all things vile and abusive. Jesus also said; "... Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." (John 8.34). Slavery to sin is the worst kind of slavery. Stained and marked, the slave continues down his path, becoming more hardened. If he is not reconciled to God before his death, at the point of his death, he is taken to a place of judgment that the Bible calls hell.

God, seeing mankind and each of us personally in this condition, was moved with compassion and determined to do something about the situation. His solution came in the form of a person, His very Son, Jesus Christ.

The Bible teaches that in the past God spoke to people through His prophets and that now, in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Own Son (see Hebrews 1.1-2). Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Before His birth an angel appeared to His mother, Mary, saying these words:

"And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke 1.31-35).

We read that "the Son of the Highest" and "the Son of God" would be the title of this Holy Child. At the time of Jesus' baptism, the Bible records that the heavens were opened to Jesus and He saw the Spirit of God descending upon Him. Suddenly, there came a voice from heaven saying; "...This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3.17). Jesus Christ frequently referred to God as His Father.

As well as being the Son of God, Jesus Christ had no sin in Him. He was innocent and clean of any and every offence that you and I have committed. The Scripture refers to Him as the One " Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:" (1 Peter 2.22). The Scripture also says that "... in him is no sin." (1 John 3.5).

Jesus Christ healed the sick, cast out demons and taught the people. However, He had a greater purpose in coming to Earth than any of these things. He came to save mankind from mankind's greatest plight, slavery to sin and eternal judgment. Sinful mankind was still facing God's judgment of death because God's original commandment, in the garden of Eden, required death as a penalty for disobedience to God. All of our individual sins were stacking up and recorded as offenses against God. God had declared; "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezekiel 18.4). God's solution to our plight is the sinless Jesus dying in our place, taking the penalty of death, that He did not deserve, upon Himself. The Bible says; "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Corinthians 5.21).

In fulfillment of Scripture, Jesus Christ was betrayed by a friend and brought before a Roman governor. False charges were made against Him, and He did not argue in His own defense. At the will of the angry crowd, He was sentenced to crucifixion. He was whipped, beaten and a crown of sharp thorns was placed upon His head. He carried a heavy cross for part of the distance to the place of execution. Nails were driven into His hands and feet, pinning Him to the jagged wood. As He suffered there, He heard the cry of someone beside Him; "... Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." (Luke 23.42). It came from a thief who was being crucified alongside Jesus. In desperation, knowing he would die, this thief implored Christ. Jesus spoke to him these words; "... Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke 23.43). Forgiven of his sins, the thief was now destined to spend eternity with Jesus. Darkness fell and, in His dying moments, Jesus cried out with a loud voice.

Christ's body was taken down from the cross and a certain man, Joseph from Arimathea, received permission to bury the body in his own tomb. The body was wrapped in a linen cloth and placed inside the tomb. The tomb was then firmly sealed by a large rock and a guard of soldiers was stationed outside of it.

The reason for the soldiers being there was that Christ had prophesied that, after three days, He would resurrect from death. Although the authorities did not expect this to happen, they did suspect that Christ's disciples might try to steal the body and claim that He resurrected.

On the third day this Roman guard was met, not by the disciples but, by a mighty angel descending from heaven. The angel easily removed the stone and the guards, terrified beyond words, fled the scene. Out of the grave came the Lord Jesus Christ, triumphant over death. No power on earth or in hell could keep Him down or rob Him of His greatest victory. Word quickly began spreading throughout Jerusalem that Jesus Christ was alive, resurrected from the grave! (See John Chapter 20 and Matthew Chapter 28).

Jesus Christ said: " I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." (Revelation 1.18)

If Christ's death was, therefore, on our behalf, to free us from sin and sin's penalty and to restore us to fellowship with God, then how are we personally brought into this victory? At the beginning of Jesus's ministry, He made this public statement; "... repent ye, and believe the gospel." (Mark 1.15). Jesus called for two things, repentance and belief in the gospel. What is repentance? Repentance is a decision, made by us, to turn from our own ways (sin) and follow Jesus Christ and His way. It is the opposite of self-gratification; it is self-denial in whatever area or areas Christ requires of us. We don't have the ability within ourselves to reform ourselves and conform to God's way. However, God will supply the ability for us to follow Him if we ask Him to forgive and save us, and if we repent by the ability that He supplies. Jesus and His disciples carried this call to repentance far and wide. God was serious when He first commanded mankind not to eat of the forbidden tree. He is serious also in His New Testament commands and "... now commandeth all men every where to repent:" (Acts 17.30). We also read; "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." (Acts 3.19).

FAITH

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. " (Romans 5.1-2)

Friend, you may have done many good things in your life. You may have given generously to others. You may have gone out of your way to help someone caught in a struggle. You may even be knowledgeable about religion. However, God is looking for something specific from you and me. The Bible teaches; "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Hebrews 11.6). Jesus Christ spoke of a day when He would be coming back to Earth. Concerning that day, He asked this question; "... Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18.8). Jesus Christ, when He returns, will be looking for faith. On another occasion, Jesus asked his disciples this question; "... how is it that ye have no faith?" (Mark 4.40). Friend, perhaps He would ask you the same question. Do you have faith? Maybe you are asking; "What is it that I am to have faith in?" Begin believing the things which I have discussed; firstly, that out of our hearts rise sinful things that mark, stain and defile us; that when we sin, we become transgressors of God's laws and deserving of judgment. Next, believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He has no sin of His own; believe that He died in our place, as our substitute, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God; believe that He resurrected from death and, having victory over death, He can grant spiritual life to you and me. Next, believe that He will forgive, change and save us, if we come to Him in repentance and faith. Having accepted these truths, we must put our faith in the person of Jesus Christ. How do we do this? Faith can be expressed in prayer. Call out to Him, asking for forgiveness for your sins, and call out to Him, committing your life to follow Him. If we come to Jesus Christ in faith, He will receive us as God's child, purifying our hearts by faith. The

Bible tells us: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:" (John 1.12).

WE HAVE COME FULL CIRCLE

Remember the people who made up the society in which Noah lived. Remember how God's heart was grieved because the thoughts of their hearts were "...only evil continually." (Genesis 6:5). Their hearts were stained and marked by sin. They were self-centered, racing down the path of self-gratification and self-destruction. The self-destruction came to their own souls, and self-destruction became the destruction of their very lives as God erased them from the earth in a world-wide flood. The generations that descended from Noah also followed this sinful path, mostly ignoring God's ways.

Again God's heart is grieved. What can we expect will be His action upon ourselves? Jesus Christ spoke of a day in which He would come back to Earth. However, this time He would not be coming as a baby in a manger. This time He would be coming as the Judge of all the Earth. He called this time "the days of the Son of man". This is what He said specifically; "And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all." (Luke 17.26-27). Here Jesus was prophesying destruction upon the sinful generation that is alive at the time of His return. Jesus further said:

"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." (Luke 21.34-36).

Noah's generation had a "...preacher of righteousness,..." (2 Peter 2:5) Noah. I can imagine Noah pleading with them to turn to God and His ways. For many, it was probably only as the waters were rising upon them that they realized that they had deafened their ears to God's call, and that repentance and faith would have granted them entrance into Noah's ark. They were judged in a judgment of water. The unrepentant, who have no faith, at the time of Jesus' final coming, have been reserved for a judgment of fire.

The apostle Peter writes in 2 Peter 3.1-13:

"This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons

ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

The Bible tells us that, in the last days, scoffers will rise up, follow the pathway of sin and mock the truth that Christ is returning to Earth. Perhaps they will invent other theories to explain the world around them. Perhaps their theories are sophisticated and widely accepted, but they willfully forget the way it really came about, a result of creation by God. They also forget the judgment that fell upon Noah's society. God does not want to see us perish but, rather, to see us repent. We have seen the pattern of sin that the generations following Noah continued in. We have also seen the love of God displayed in sending His Son to die for our sins and then rising again from death. Jesus is the sinless Son of God, but He carried your sins and mine and took our penalty that we might be forgiven. Friend, if you have not done so already, it is time to repent and believe in the gospel. It is time to believe in Jesus Christ and put your faith in Him. God bless you.

Shawn Stevens

Scripture taken from the King James Version.

The following two articles came from the 1906 Apostolic Faith magazine, the official magazine of the Azusa Street Revival.

VISION AND MESSAGE

A sister who has been healed and baptized with the Holy Ghost related the following vision. "Two days ago the power of God came over me and He said 'Whatsoever ye ask in my name believing, ye shall receive.' [actual quotation of scripture reads: "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." Matthew 21:22 KJV] I said 'Give wisdom to speak to the people.' Immediately I was in a great hall with tables spread all about, and the Lord was the waiter, and I saw His beautiful, smiling face. He spoke to me and said, 'I have called my friends and they did not come, therefore go out and ask everyone you find to come to the wedding.' As I looked around to see something beautiful, the scene changed and I was in a hospital and saw poor creatures dying, looking like skeletons. I thought my call was to the hospital and telephoned to know when it was open for visitors, but the Lord revealed to me that it meant all those who are sick in their souls."

Reference :

The Apostolic Faith, Vol. 1. No. 2, November, 1906. Los Angeles : The Pacific Apostolic Faith Movement.

NO BOTTOM

We meet many honest souls these days who are under the delusion that they have committed the unpardonable sin. The following incident should be an encouragement to such.

A child of God was attacked by the enemy with the suggestion that she was forsaken of God and had committed the unpardonable sin. She was then on a mission field in the South, separated from other Christian workers; and without any apparent cause, the arch enemy who tempted our Savior told her that God hated her. The words, "God hates you" seemed to be continually shouted in her ears and she could not get away from it. She lost her faith and believed the enemy, not knowing his power. The next suggestion was, "Drown yourself in the river." She stood looking into the dark water, but the thought of her dear mother made her turn away.

She returned to her room, and throwing herself down, fell asleep and dreamed. She seemed to be on a boat on which all the people but herself were rejoicing and praising God. She heard the captain call out to the pilot, "Sound the depths and compare it with the love of God." The depths were sounded and the call came back "No Bottom! No Bottom!" She awoke in an ocean of God's love, all darkness past and the cry ringing in her ears, "No bottom!" For years since then she has been in Gospel work on both sides of the ocean.

Reference :

The Apostolic Faith, Vol. 1. No. 1, September, 1906. Los Angeles : The Apostolic Faith Movement.

