



The Promise of the Gospel:

*True Joy
Forever!*

By Rev. Douglas VanderMeulen

Anyone is at liberty to use material from this booklet with or without credit. In preparing this booklet, the writer has received help from many sources. He believes the material contained herein is a true statement of Scriptural truth, and his desire is to further, not restrict, its use.

All Scripture quotations are taken from the New American Standard Bible copyright The Lockman Foundation (1977).

The Promise of the Gospel – True Joy Forever!

In this vast and wonderful world, there are an endless number of things to experience, to know and to enjoy. There are many questions that are important to ask, and many truths that – if better understood – would enrich our lives immeasurably. Some of these things have to do with science, economics, sports, entertainment or the fine arts. The vast majority of these wonders we will never have time to fully explore.

Yet, beneath the surface of everyone's life is a gnawing ache that will not go away. It can be denied, ignored or suppressed, but it will not disappear. After endless activity and tasting all the wonders of this world, that sense of emptiness eventually returns. And for good reason: God stirs our hearts to take pleasure in Him. God has made us for Himself and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Him. It is in the presence of God that we find the fullness of joy and pleasures forever (Psalm 16:11)!

..the most important question that may ever be asked is, "How can I be prepared to live with God and receive His spiritual blessing forever?"

We live on this earth for a few short decades, but we will live in the age to come forever. Everyone will be raised from the dead to live forever in one of two ways: under the guilty verdict of God's just judgment, or as the object of His eternal love and blessing. Therefore the most important question that may ever be asked is, "*How can I be prepared to live with God and receive His spiritual blessing forever?*" This question is most important of all because it deals with that which will last forever.

The answer to this question is found only in the Bible. While God reveals Himself in nature as the Creator and Sustainer of

everything that exists, it is in the Bible alone that He reveals Himself as Savior (Romans 1:20-23, II Timothy 3:15). It is in the Bible alone that God tells us of His wonderful love and what He has done for us in His Son Jesus Christ.

The question concerning how we are accepted by God and receive all of His rich blessings is too important to leave to man's traditions, opinions, or religious experiences. God alone is able to speak for Himself, and He has spoken to us in the life and words of His Son Jesus Christ and in the written words of His prophets and apostles (II Peter 1:20-21, II Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 1:1-3). The Bible alone has the authority to bind the conscience of a person, for it alone is the very word of God (Hebrews 4:12).

By Grace Alone!

The word "gospel" means good news. The good news of the gospel is that God promises to provide everything He requires of us to live forever with Him in heaven. God freely gives eternal life as a gift out of the richness of His grace, mercy and love (Ephesians 2:4-8). There are at least two reasons why heaven must be given as a gift and cannot be earned or deserved.

First, God's personal perfect righteousness is the straightedge by which He will judge us fit for heaven or not. Jesus says that in order to go to heaven we must be "perfect, as your father in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). We are not going to so-and-so's heaven, or your personal heaven, or the heaven of a particular country, culture, or religion. So our status before God is not a result of how we compare with others, but how we compare to His perfect righteousness. God Himself is the standard to Whom we must all give account.

Yet the Bible clearly affirms that we all sin and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Therefore, we are not fit for heaven. The proof is that we do not love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and do not love our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22:36-40). If the Lord should keep count of the ways we fall short of His glory, who would be able to stand in the presence of His infinite holiness?

Second, eternal life must be a gift of grace because it is impossible for us to earn it. The Bible teaches that even if we could keep every last detail of what God's law has required of us, yet stumble at a single point, we would be guilty of breaking all of God's commandments (James 2:10). This is what the Bible calls the curse of the law. Once we try to relate to God based upon doing what He requires, we are obligated to actually keep all His commandments perfectly (Galatians 3:10). The Bible also says that the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23). Therefore, a person can only be saved from God's just judgment by God's free gift of grace alone and not according to righteous deeds he or she has done (Titus 3:4-7). The promise of the gospel is that God reconciles sinners to Himself and makes them His beloved children as a gift (II Corinthians 5:18-21).

"a person can only be saved from God's just judgment by God's free gift of grace alone"

The Bible tells us that God is love (I John 4:7-8). It also explains that the salvation He provides for sinful mankind is an expression of His love (John 3:16, I John 4:9-10). God's love is not like ours (Romans 5:8, I John 3:1-2). We love because we find someone or something lovely or lovable. That which we find attractive about someone draws out our love for him or her. But this is not true of God's love. God does not love us because we are attractive or desirable to Him; God loves us in spite of ourselves.

God hates sin and all things sinful. We sin because we are sinful. Therefore there is nothing in us that could ever draw God toward us or cause Him to pour out His love upon us. In fact, God demonstrates His own unique love when He saves us while we are yet sinful, helplessly enslaved to our sins, and totally repulsive to Him (Romans 5:8).

He makes us pleasing to His perfect holiness and righteousness. Why? Because He desires to make known the surpassing riches of His mercy, grace and love that is unknown among mankind (Ephesians 2:7, 3:18-19, I John 3:1). By grace alone, God the Holy Spirit supernaturally unites us to Christ, releasing us from the bondage of our sin, raising us from spiritual death, creating new life in us, and clothing us with all the righteousness of Jesus Christ (Romans 3:23-26, II Corinthians 5:21, Philippians 3:9-10).

We have answered at least in part why God forgives us of our sins and makes us objects of His eternal blessing. It is because of His grace alone! But how is God able to forgive us all our sins? The Bible informs us that God, while He is love, is much more than love. God is also perfectly holy, righteous and just. Salvation must meet man's desperate need as a sinner before a holy, just and righteous God.

How can a Holy God allow sinful people into His presence without destroying them? How can He clear us of our guilt and not violate His unassailable justice? How is God able to make us lovely and desirable to Himself and not compromise His perfect righteousness? The answer is so simple, yet entire books have been written to explain it. How? By Christ alone!

Because of Christ Alone!

Every sinful person who was ever saved from God's holy wrath and righteous justice was saved only because of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, *"I am the way, and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me"* (John 14:6). As already mentioned, the word gospel means *"good news."* The good news

The good news is not what we must do to be saved, but that Christ has reconciled to God sinners such as ourselves.

is not what we must do to be saved, but that Christ has reconciled to God sinners such as ourselves. Only Christ's sinless life, perfect obedience, substitutionary death, resurrection and ascension are able to answer all of God's holy attributes and satisfy all that God requires in saving sinners.

Christ is able to do this because He is the infinite God-man. He is truly God and truly man. As God, Jesus is perfectly sinless. His delight is to do all of God's law and He has hidden it in His heart (Psalm 40:7-8). While on earth Jesus was so delighted in keeping His

Father's commands that He said, *"My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work"* (John 4:34).

As true man, Jesus was born under the law and kept it perfectly. He did this not only for Himself, but for us as our representative, so that His obedience could be counted as our righteousness (Romans 5:19, II Corinthians 5:21, Philippians 3:9).

As God, Christ has the power of an indestructible life (Hebrews 7:16). Therefore, He is able to satisfy God's entire wrath against our sin without being destroyed. As true man, Jesus is able to die on the cross in our place, taking upon Him all the guilt and punishment for our sins that God's justice requires (II Corinthians 5:21, Galatians 3:13, Romans 3:23-26).

Because He is both truly God and truly man, He alone is able to save sinners. Christ alone can pay the price to redeem us by taking our sins upon Himself and clothing us in His perfect obedience, causing us to be holy and blameless in God's sight (I Corinthians 1:30-31, II Corinthians 5:21, Ephesians 5:25-27, Jude 24-25). He has done everything necessary for sinners to be righteous before God and treated to every spiritual blessing in heavenly places (Ephesians 1:3).



Jesus perfectly kept all that the holy law requires, thus fulfilling God's righteousness. He satisfied God's justice by dying under God's just wrath in our place. In doing this, Jesus didn't merely make salvation possible *if we do* the right things. On the contrary, He has redeemed sinners from eternal death and everlasting judgment, reconciling them to God (Matthew 1:21, Mark 10:45, Luke 19:10, John 17:1-3). Truly, this is good news!

Through Faith Alone!

We receive all the benefits of Christ's life, death and resurrection through faith alone. This begs the question, what is faith? Faith is not some strange or mysterious religious feeling or experience. To have faith is to believe someone or something; faith always has an object that it believes.

..saving faith believes God, trusting Him to fulfill all that He has promised.

We live by faith every day. We express faith every time we open a bottle to enjoy our favorite drink, or open a can of our favorite soup, or take medicine that claims to be helpful for our colds. Do

you really know what is in that bottle, can or medicine? No! You simply trust that the manufacturer wants to help and not harm you. You believe the manufacturer's words to be true.

In a similar way, saving faith believes God, trusting Him to fulfill all that He has promised. God has promised all the benefits of Christ's redeeming work to be graciously applied to the sinner through

***What matters
is
our standing
before God.***

faith alone. True faith believes that God is able and willing to do that which He promises: granting us the forgiveness of sins, counting us to be perfectly righteous, and giving us eternal life only because of Christ's perfect life and death in our place (Romans 4:19-25). Jesus is God's Son in whom He is well pleased. Through His redeeming work, Christ has reconciled sinners to His Father, making them adopted children in whom God is well pleased. We receive all these promises by faith alone!

But where do we get such a faith? How can we who have been nothing but faithless toward God ever find a faith that trusts Him to do that which He has promised? Amazingly, out of the richness of His love, God supplies everything we need to be saved, including the faith to believe Him for our salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9, Philippians 1:29).

One of the wonders of God's love is that He provides faith through the power of the Holy Spirit in the hearing of the gospel to open our hearts to respond to the teachings of the Scriptures concerning salvation (Galatians 3:2-3, Acts 16:14).

Faith comes from hearing and hearing from the word of God (Romans 10:17). God loves sinners so much that He leaves none of our salvation to chance. He provides all that we need to be saved by grace alone through faith alone.

The gospel is *God saves sinners*. It is not others' opinions, nor is it what we think of ourselves that matters. What matters is our standing before God. The Bible says that because of Christ's meritorious work, those who are truly redeemed can freely and boldly enter into God's presence, never again to fear His condemnation (Romans 8:1, Hebrews 4:16). Christ's perfect redeeming work guarantees our free access to God, and our heavenly Father will never forsake us. In this life, the true believer remains a sinner; yet, even now he or she stands in the presence of God's glory with great joy, holy, blameless and beyond reproach because of Christ alone (Jude 24).

By Grace Alone, Because of Christ Alone, Through Faith Alone!

So the most important question that may ever be asked is *“How can a sinful person be reconciled to a holy God and be regarded as an object of His favor forever?”* The answer is that we are saved by God's grace alone, because of Christ's perfect obedience alone, received by us through God's free gift of faith alone.

The good news of the gospel is that God saves His people from their sins and makes them able to stand in His presence blameless with great joy

As it was for Abraham, so it is for us. The Bible says that Abraham believed that “what God had promised, He was also able to perform, therefore it was also credited to him as righteousness” (Romans 4:21-22). The apostle Paul goes on to tell us that these things were not written only for the sake of Abraham, *“but for our sake also,”* who will be credited with the righteousness of Christ. We receive this righteousness because we believe in Him who

raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was crucified because of our transgressions, and was raised for our justification (Romans 4:24-25).

No one gives God the honor, glory or obedience that He deserves. We owe Him, our Creator and Sustainer, everything that we are and have, for in Him we live, move and have our existence (Acts 17:28). Sadly, it is often the most religious among us who most grievously rob God of His glory (Romans 1:18-25, 10:2). Graciously, He overlooked the times of mankind's ignorance before Christ's death, but is now declaring that all people everywhere should repent. He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through Jesus Christ whom He raised from the dead (Acts 17:30-31). A man from the city of Philippi asked the apostle Paul, "What must I do to be saved?" The apostle answered him saying, "*Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved, you and your household*" (Acts 16:31).

The Bible says there is fullness of joy and pleasure forever in the presence of God (Psalm 16:11). The good news of the gospel is that God saves His people from their sins and makes them able to stand in His presence blameless with great joy (Jude 24, Matthew 1:21). God is calling out a people for His name from all over the world (Revelation 5:9).

*God supplies
everything
we need to be
saved, including
the faith to
believe Him for
our salvation*

He may be calling you to become a part of His people and to carry on His mission in the world (Matthew 28:18-20). The appropriate response to God's call on your life is repentance and faith in Jesus Christ (Luke 24:46-47). "*Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.'*" (Mark 1:14-15)

Glory to God Alone!

STUDY GUIDE

The Bible Alone!

The Bible is the Word of God. At least 254 times in the Old Testament the phrase “the word of the Lord” is found. When the prophets spoke or wrote, they fully believed that they were speaking or writing the word of God and not merely the words of men.



In Matthew 15, Jesus is in a discussion with Jewish religious leaders and teachers concerning a ceremonial practice that was common among certain Jews of that day. In Matthew 15:4 Jesus quotes from what is commonly called the Ten Commandments found in the Old Testament book of Exodus, chapter 20. Jesus prefaces His quote saying, “For God said.” Two verses later (verse 6), Jesus calls this passage “the word of God.”

The phrase “the word of God” is used repeatedly throughout the New Testament to describe the Old Testament writings (Matthew 15:6, Mark 7:13, John 10:35). It is also used to describe the teaching of Jesus and the apostles (Luke 5:1, 8:21, 11:28, Acts 4:31, 13:5).

Read II Peter 1:16-21. In this passage Peter, who was an eyewitness to Jesus’ life and ministry, speaks about seeing Jesus at the Mount of Transfiguration (Read Matthew 17:1-13 for more details). Here Peter, James and John have the privilege of seeing the glory of Jesus even before His resurrection. But according to II Peter 1:18-21, did Peter consider his eyewitness experiences or the scriptures to be more reliable?

Reread II Peter 1:21. What makes the Bible written by men so reliable?

Who is the ultimate author of the Bible? See II Peter 1:21, II Timothy 3:16, John 17:17.

The Bible is the word of God. As such, it is not like any other book ever written. The Bible contains the complete will of God. Also, everything we must believe in order to be forgiven sin and be in a place of God's eternal blessing is contained in it (II Timothy 3:16-17, I Peter 1:10-12).

What does II Timothy 3:15 show to be one of our primary benefits received from the Bible?

The Bible is not simply a record of historical events and religious truisms. God has so inspired the Scriptures that it is highly profitable to us in our knowledge of Him, His will, our sin and ourselves. Read II Timothy 3:16-17 and list 5 effects or benefits the Bible has for our lives.

1.	4.
2.	5.
3.	

Because of God's special care for us and provision for our salvation, He commanded His prophets and apostles to commit His revealed Word to writing. God Himself wrote with His own finger what is commonly called the "Ten Commandments" (Exodus 34:27, 31:18). Therefore, the writings of the Bible are called "sacred writings" and "Scriptures of God" (II Timothy 3:15-16).

While the Bible has much to tell us about what we should believe and do, it is ultimately a book about Christ – Luke 24:25-27, 44-47, John 5:39, 46. God continues to reveal His eternal Son Jesus Christ through the Bible. God is very concerned that we rightly understand who Jesus is and what He has done for us. Therefore, God has made sure that the Bible is pure (Psalm 12:6, 18:30).

Verses to Memorize

II Timothy 3:15-17, II Peter 1:21.

Grace Alone!

The Bible is very clear that we are reconciled to God and saved from His just judgment because of grace alone. While some think they were righteous before God because of their own religious deeds, it is the one who knows his sin, and is broken over it, who finds forgiveness with God.

Read Luke 18:9-17. In this passage Jesus tells a short narrative called a “parable.” A parable is a short fictitious story that could actually occur in life. Jesus often used parables to teach about His kingdom and the spiritual qualifications for living in it.

To whom does Jesus address this parable? Vs. 9

In the parable there are two characters, one a Pharisee, the other a tax collector. Tax collectors in those days were known for their corrupt and sinful ways and were considered social outcasts. List what you learn about these two men from verses 11-13.

The Pharisee	The Tax Collector

Read verse 14. Which of these two men does Jesus say goes away justified before God?

Read Psalm 51. King David wrote this Psalm after he had committed adultery and murder. After David committed adultery with Bathsheba and she had become pregnant, he arranged for her husband to be killed in order to cover up his sin. Clearly these are serious sins with dire consequences.

Read Psalm 51:1-5 again. According to verse 1 what is true of God's character in which David places his hope?

David violated his marriage covenant with his wife, violated Bathsheba and had her husband killed. Yet, according to verses 3-4 whom did David sin against?

We don't normally think or speak as if our sins against other people are ultimately against God, but it is not unusual for the Bible to do so. For example, read Genesis 39:1-10 (the key verses are 8-9). When Potiphar's wife is trying to seduce Joseph to commit sexual sin he rejects her. For Joseph, while he acknowledges his master Potiphar, to commit adultery with Potiphar's wife was first and foremost a sin against whom?

While our sins may deeply affect other people, all our sins are ultimately against God.

Return to Psalm 51 and read verse 4. According to this verse, what is David's view of God's judgment of his sin?

The Bible teaches us that man is sinful and because of this he commits acts of sin. By sinful, the Bible means that the character of man has changed so that his nature is no longer the way it was created in the Garden of Eden. Man's sinful nature is expressed in specific acts of sin. In David's case these sinful acts included adultery and murder. Read Psalm 51:5-9. According to these verses, when did David become sinful?

Jesus teaches us about the relationship between our sinful nature and our sinful actions. Read Mark 7:14-23. According to Jesus, do our sinful acts of sexual sin, thefts, murders, coveting and other wickedness make us sinful, or do we commit these sins because we already have a sinful heart?

Verses 20, 21, 23. Is the problem and power of sin outside or inside of us?

Can we change our sinful nature simply by changing our behavior? Look up Jeremiah 13:23.

Read Psalm 51:10-13. What is the remedy for David's sinful nature and guilt?

Read Psalm 51:14-19. What is David's response to God's wonderful grace?

The “good news” of the gospel is that God promises to give us new natures with new hearts and new minds. God promises to not simply change our actions but change the very source of our sins: our sinful nature. Read God’s great promise in Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Ezekiel 36:25-28.

Verses to Memorize

Ephesians 2:8-10; Titus 3:5-6

Because of Christ Alone!

The word “gospel” means good news. The good news of the gospel is not what we must do to be saved, but that Christ has reconciled to God sinners such as ourselves. Many religious people believe that there are many ways to God. But Jesus did not share this conviction.

Read John 14:6. According to Jesus, exactly how many ways are there to God?

What is that way?

Read Romans 3:19-20. List at least four things that the law of God does.

1.	3.
2.	4.

From what these verses say about the law of God, what role does it have in our salvation?

Read Romans 1:18. What is God's response toward every person's sin? Read also: Psalm 5:5-6, Job 34:22, Psalm 11:5-6.

Read Romans 3:20-23. According to verse 23 how many of us are guilty before God?

Now for some good news! According to Romans 3:21-22, the law not only tells us about our sin, but about the way in which we may be found righteous before God. What is that way?

Read Romans 3:24. According to this verse, how are we justified, or counted righteous before God? Is it something we do or is it a gift that we receive?

Is this gift based upon something we do or something that Christ has already done?

Read Romans 3:25. What does this verse tell us about how God has responded to previous sins we have committed? Has He given us what we deserved?

The word "propitiation" is not one we often use in day-to-day conversation (*If you are reading from a New International Version Bible instead of the word "propitiation" it reads "...a sacrifice of atonement..." This is not a satisfactory translation*). The meaning

of propitiation is to turn away anger or wrath. As one writer states, “Propitiation is a personal word; one propitiates a person.” What the Bible is saying is that God is angry when people sin and that if they are to be forgiven, something must be done to *propitiate* His anger. The death of Jesus is the propitiation for our sins. This means God’s just judgment and holy wrath against our sins was poured out on Jesus Christ. The “good news” of the gospel is that the death of Christ is the means God uses to remove His divine wrath from sinners.

Read II Corinthians 5:21, Isaiah 53:4-5, 10-11, I Peter 3:18, I John 4:10.

Verses to Memorize

I Peter 3:18, Romans 5:19, II Corinthians 5:21, Acts 4:12.

Through Faith Alone!

Faith always has an object that it trusts. That is to say, faith believes something or someone. Faith does not look inward for a particular feeling or experience but rather it looks outward and believes something. The Bible presents Abraham as the prime example of what it means to be a man of faith. Abraham believed God and was counted as righteous.

God promised Abraham that through his descendants He would bless the nations of the world (Genesis 12:1-3, 15:1-6, 17:1-8). In Romans 4 the apostle Paul explains how Abraham is an example of what it means to be counted as sinlessly righteous by God.

Read Romans 4:1-4. Was Abraham's righteousness based upon his own good works?

Read Romans 4:4-8. According to these verses, what kind of person qualifies to be counted righteous by God?

According to these verses, what is the promised blessing of the gospel?

Read Romans 4:18-22. How did Abraham glorify God?

Was Abraham's faith an inward feeling or was it believing God?

What did Abraham believe about God?

What was the result of Abraham believing this about God?

Read Romans 4:23. Why has God chosen to tell us this about Abraham – for Abraham's benefit and/or ours?

Read Romans 4:24-25. In order for us to be counted righteous by God, which of God's promises are we to believe?

Verses to memorize

Ephesians 2:8-10, Romans 4:5-8.

Suggested Further Reading

The Holiness of God, by R.C. Sproul

Holiness, by Joel R. Beeke

Putting Amazing Back Into Grace, by Michael Horton

The Attributes of God, by A. W. Pink

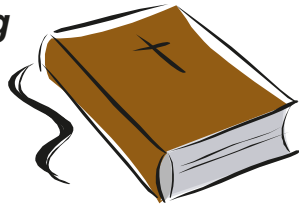
Grow In Grace, by Sinclair Ferguson

Healthy Christian Growth, by Sinclair Ferguson

Reading the Bible, by Geoffrey Thomas

Knowing God, by J. I. Packer

Redemption, Accomplished and Applied, by John Murray



Glossary of Terms

Ascension – Forty days after Jesus’ resurrection from the dead He ascended to heaven (Acts 1:9-11) where He was seated at the right hand of His Father.

Commandment/Ten Commandments/Law – God’s law – The law of God is anything and everything that God requires of man. It is summarized in the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21.

Eternal life – Eternal life is both quality and length of life. As to its length, all people will be raised from the dead to live forever, either in heaven or in hell. When the Bible speaks of eternal life in the qualitative sense, it means sharing the excellence of God’s own life on a creaturely level (II Peter 1:2-4, Colossians 3:3:4, Galatians 2:19-20).

Glory of God – The glory of God is the manifestation of all of His attributes. He is perfectly holy, righteous, just, good, wise, eternal, immortal, unchanging, almighty, all knowing, and equally present everywhere at the same time.

Gospel – The word gospel comes from a Greek word *evangel*, which means “good news.”

Holiness of God – God’s holiness is first and foremost the distinction between Himself and everything He has created. God alone is eternal, independent, self-sustaining and self-derived. Secondly, the word holiness means sinless, and only God is sinless (Romans 3:23, 8:18-22, Job 15:15).

Infinite God-Man – Truly God and truly man – Jesus is one person with two distinct but united natures. He is at once both perfectly and truly God and at the same time perfectly and truly man, yet without sin (John 1:1-2, 14).

Justification – Justification is God forgiving sinners and declaring them to be righteous (Romans 4:25-5:1). The promise of the gospel is that God justifies the ungodly (Romans 4:5-6).

Kingdom of God – The kingdom of God is central to the entire Bible. At its heart is the reigning and ruling of Jesus Christ over all of heaven and earth (Matt 28:18, Psalm 2). He is not merely the king of the Jews, but is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 17:14, 19:16, I Timothy 6:15, Daniel 2:37).

Meritorious Work – Throughout all of Christendom there is one thing that has never been debated or contested and that is the necessity of good or meritorious works to get to heaven. The question is not, “Do we need good works to be saved?” The question is, “By whose good works are we saved, ours or Christ’s?”

Reconcile/Reconciliation – The Bible teaches that because of our sins, we are not merely separated from God but are at enmity with Him. We may or may not be aware of this hostility but it is there nonetheless. The beauty of God’s love is that while we were sinners Christ died for our sins to remove the enmity between God and us (Romans 5:1-11).

Redemption/Redeemed – The Bible equates sin with slavery. In fact, Jesus says “everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin” (John 8:34). This slave/sin motif runs throughout the Bible in both Old and New Testaments. The biblical words “redemption” and “redeemed” come out of the slave market vocabulary. Redemption is the price paid to purchase a slave. The “redeemed” were the slaves who had been purchased. Jesus’ death is the redemption price paid to free us out of the slave market of our own sin and the curse of God’s law (Galatians 3:13, I Peter 1:18).

Repent/repentance – Biblical repentance is first a change of mind, a change in how we think about God, sin and ourselves. Part of our salvation is a new nature, heart and mind that “joyfully concur” with God and His law (Romans 7:22, Hebrews 8:10). We no longer view God’s commands negatively or as a burden, but they become the very desire of our heart (I John 5:2-5).

Resurrection – Resurrection is being raised from the dead. Jesus died hanging on a cross to redeem us from the curse of the Law (Galatians 3:13). His resurrection from the dead three days later is proof that He is the Son of God, and that He has defeated the power of sin and death (I Corinthians 15:51-58, Romans 1:4).

Righteousness – Righteousness is the moral perfection of God that is the standard of what is right. God’s righteousness is expressed in the Ten Commandments. To perfectly keep God’s commands is to act righteously.

Salvation – The prophet Jonah declared, “Salvation is from the Lord” (Jonah 2:9). We are saved first from God’s holy wrath (Ephesians 2:3, I Thessalonians 1:10). Secondly, we are saved from our sins (Matthew 1:21). We receive salvation from God as a gracious gift and promise.

Savior – Christ became sin on our behalf in order that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (II Corinthians 5:21, Ephesians 5:25-27, Colossians 1:21-22). He is our Savior, the only who can save us from the guilt, power and presence of sin (Matthew 1:21). We contribute nothing to our salvation.

Sin/Transgression – The meaning of the word “sin” is “missing the mark.” The mark or “bull’s eye” is God’s righteousness. The meaning of “transgression” is “cross the line.” We transgress when we cross the line of righteous conduct established in God’s law.

Sin/Sins – The Bible makes a distinction between “sin” as an abstract principle and “sins” as specific acts of sinning. When the Bible uses the word “sin” or “sinful” it is often describing the corruption of the human nature that occurred as a result of the rebellion of our first parents Adam and Eve (I John 1:8). When the Bible uses the word “sins” it is often expressing specific acts that transgress God’s holy law.

Substitutionary Death – Jesus is called the “Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). In the Old Testament lambs and other animals were sacrificed and their blood was used to cover the sins of the Israelites, who deserved death for sinning against God. These sacrificial animals were foreshadowing the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who died in the place of sinners and shed His own blood to satisfy the penalty for our sins against God (Isaiah 53:5-6).

Wages of sin – The wages of sin is the consequence of disobeying God. Just as a worker receives “wages” for working, so a sinner is paid for sinning. The wages of sin is eternal death, forever separated from God’s love and blessing, and experiencing His judgment and holy wrath for all eternity (II Thessalonians 1:8-9, Matthew 25:46, Luke 13:27-28).



Community Baptist Church

3535 25th Street South
Fargo, ND 58104

www.cbcfargo.com