

## **3 things** *your family, friends, or neighbors can't tell you because you'll get mad at them...*

What they want to tell you is a simple message, but it makes people mad. Why? Because these three things cause you to have to honestly look at yourself, and in doing so, you will come to realize that you're just not as great as you think you are. Your loved ones can't tell you because instead of listening, and then looking at yourself honestly, you will instead look at your loved ones as judgmental or accusatory. In reality, they are not judging you, but what they want to tell you will cause you to feel judged, but that's a good thing!

Your loved ones seek you no harm. They desire to give you this message because they love you. Please don't lose sight of that. In the world today, good is called evil, and evil is called good. That is certainly true in this instance. They only seek your good, but you will not see it that way...you will think they have done evil to you just by wanting you to hear this message. Please open your heart, put down your guard, and listen without any preconceived ideas.

We don't know you so we can't possibly be judging you. It is out of love that we bring you this message. Yes, love for you as one who was created in God's image...but more importantly, because of our love for God. We pray that you will not only listen...but that you will hear the Word of God and heed it.

These 3 things are certainly true.....

*Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. 1 Corinthians 15:1,3-4*

This is the Gospel, and it is quite simple. And as a matter of fact, it is the utter simplicity of the Gospel that will keep many people out of heaven. Jesus said that the gate is narrow and few will find it. <sup>1</sup>

What is the message of the Gospel? Here it is: Man has fallen. We are hopeless sinners, separated from God. We are all dead in our sin and owe a debt to God we cannot pay. We cannot save ourselves. We need someone to save us, someone to pay for our sin, someone to pay our debt. We cannot, no man can. Sin carries the death penalty, payable only by a sinless blood sacrifice. [we can't pay for our own sins because we are all sinners] but God sent His Son [Jesus], who lived a sinless life so He could die for us, paying the penalty He didn't owe. God requires that we repent and trust in the only One [Jesus] who can truly save us. <sup>1</sup>

Simple? Way too simple? Yes. For those who will perish it is [foolishness]. Yet it is difficult. It is difficult because it demands death to self. It demands admitting we can do nothing on our own. It demands picking up a cross and following Jesus by obeying Him and yielding to His will as revealed in scripture. <sup>1</sup>

That is the message and human pride can't deal with it. <sup>1</sup>

So we ask you to put down your pride, set it aside, and listen to the simple message of the Gospel. In all your protesting you are missing the message of love and forgiveness that has been worked out on your behalf. Will you still find fault with God after you have heard all that He has done for you because of His love for His creation?

The first thing you need to know is that *Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures*. That in itself will make you mad. Why? Because surely you will say “I’m not a sinner, I’m a good person at heart. I don’t need anyone to die for me.”

But you see, it’s all a matter of perception. When the standard of measure, as to what makes a person “good” or “bad”, comes from you or from society, that standard is not based on the truth, but is based on opinion. Now, if we take the scriptures, the Word of God, and use that as our standard, then we will see that our perceptions do not measure up.

There is always a “true” measure by which everything is compared, a “standard” to be used. We use them every day. We use a ruler to measure the correct length; we use a scale to measure the correct weight, etc. There are standards of these measurements that everyone agrees are correct. The amazing thing is that we trust these measurements everyday. We have come to know and believe that an inch as shown on a ruler, is actually an inch; and a pound as weighed on a scale, is actually a pound. Now someone could come along and protest and say that they are no longer going to accept the “inch” measurement as being valid. What would you call that person? Well I’m sure you would call him a fool, because everyone knows that an inch is an inch and to decide that it is now not an inch, would be foolish. Not only that, but for there **not** to be a standard measurement of an inch would cause havoc in our everyday life. Can you imagine buying a house that was built by a builder who didn’t want to conform to the standard measure of an inch, but instead decided that he felt like an inch should be a little shorter? Would you buy a house from him? No, you would not trust his measurements. You would think him foolish and wonder if he has lost all sense of reason.

So it goes with us. God, who created us, has given us limits and boundaries on our behaviors and actions. He set the standard of moral and ethical behavior, right and wrong. He has revealed His standards throughout history by His spoken and written word. That is the standard that we must now measure up to. He has spoken, and we must listen. If we look at the scriptures, we will quickly see that we have not lived up to His standard of moral and ethical behavior. His standard is perfection as He is perfect. You see, God is holy and righteous and just and we were created in His image. Even though we were created in His image, we are not God; we are human and have not lived our lives perfectly. We have not kept to God’s holy standard, we have broken God’s holy laws, we have sinned. Not only have we not lived perfect lives, but we have lived as if there were no God, we have lived ungodly lives not wanting to be accountable. Therein is the fact that we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

God completely understands that we can’t live up to His standard. That’s why He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, to take on the form of a man, like us, and die on our behalf. Why did someone have to die for you? Good question. God has declared that the penalty for our sin is our death. He requires a blood sacrifice to remove our sin and appease His wrath against us. That sacrifice is called an “atonement”. It is written...*“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.”* Leviticus 17:11 Atonement means the reconciliation of the guilty to God by a divine sacrifice. Jesus’ death on the cross was the ultimate and final sacrifice for our sins. Why is Jesus the only acceptable sacrifice to God? Good question. The blood sacrifice necessary to atone for sin must be a sinless sacrifice. Jesus was our sinless substitutionary atonement. You see, Jesus is the only one who can die for us. He is the only one because He is the only sinless man who ever lived. Jesus was fully God and fully man. You say “How can that be?” We do not know, but He was. It is a mystery of God beyond our comprehension. The whole atoning work of Christ was a legal action whereby Jesus substituted Himself for sinners and paid the requirement of the punishment for sin which is death.<sup>4</sup> As a result of Jesus’ atonement, our sin is transferred from us to Him, and God then grants us forgiveness. Jesus’ substitutionary atonement is the basis for our salvation. As it is written *“when He [Jesus] had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”* Hebrews 1:3 And again...*“But this Man [Jesus], after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.”* Hebrews 10:12 *“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”* John 1: 7... *“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God”.* 1 Peter 3:18

When we come to know and believe that these things are certainly true, then not only are our sins forgiven, but we then receive what is called “justification”, without which no man will see heaven. Every unbeliever has a legal standing before God of condemnation. In heaven’s sight, all unsaved people [unbelievers] are in a state of condemnation, destined for eternal punishment. No man or woman has the power to change that standing before God. The unbeliever cannot lessen his guilt, offset it with [deeds], nor work his way out of condemnation.<sup>2</sup>

Justification is a verdict regarding us.<sup>2</sup> It is a declaration that takes place in the courtroom of God, before the throne of God, at the justice bar of God.<sup>2</sup> Once a believer puts their trust in the shedding of Jesus’ blood as the basis for the forgiveness of their sins, the believer is declared judicially righteous. Justification is a legal declaration by God in heaven concerning a man, that he [now] stands righteous in God’s sight.<sup>2</sup> In justification, God takes His own righteousness and credits it to the believer. He justifies us by our faith alone. He justifies the person who looks away from himself and trusts in Christ alone for their righteousness.<sup>2</sup> We then have the righteousness of Christ “credited to our account”. You see we must be righteous to enter heaven. Without the righteousness of Christ, we have no hope.

So, our salvation is all the work of God. He is the forgiver, He is our sacrifice, He is the justifier. He is the reconciler, the redeemer, the restorer. That makes people mad. Why? Because it makes them accountable to God. They can’t work out their own eternity. They have to admit they need to be forgiven. They have to admit that there is a God and that they have offended Him. They have to admit that they need His pardon and His forgiveness. They have to do it God’s way, not their way. That flies in the face of our pride. We do not want to be accountable to anyone. We do not want to “owe” anyone anything. But the truth is, we owe a debt to God we cannot pay. When you come to see you owe this debt to God, and you see that God has provided for that debt to be paid through the death of His Son, will you still find fault with God?

The second thing you need to know is that *Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried*. We will all die physically. We will all die and be buried, but we will all live on spiritually. There is a spiritual death that is certain for unbelievers. This spiritual death will entail eternal separation from God. That separation will take place at our physical death and it is instantaneous. We will either spend eternity with God in heaven or spend eternity separated from Him in hell. Now there are those who say that hell is not a real place...or if it is real we won’t be “tormented” there. Well we won’t debate that with you now. All you have to do is to read God’s Word and you will clearly see that there is a place of eternal punishment spoken about by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. But the point you’re missing is that, in any case, if you die in your sins, if your sins are not forgiven this side of eternity you will suffer eternal separation from God. That in itself will be unbearable. God is the only perfect thing in existence. He is where love and kindness and compassion and mercy come from. We would not know them except He has shown them to us. The Bible says that we love because God first loved us. You can’t imagine an eternity separate from the love of God. You have not experienced that in this life. The love of God is all around you. He makes His love to shine on the just and on the unjust. You may be ungodly, but you are still receiving the benefit of God’s love toward His creation. You just don’t realize it. You have forgotten that every good and perfect thing comes from God.

The Bible says that every man knows that there is One True and Living God because He has given us that knowledge and He has shown it to us in His creation. This is certainly true. You can see that every civilization has sought after some kind of god, however; they have not listened to the One True God, the Creator. The Bible says that God has so clearly shown us that He exists that we are now all without excuse. God says that on the day of judgment, no man will be able to give the excuse that he didn’t know that there was in fact only One True and Living God. The Bible says that *“although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man-and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.”* Romans 1:21-23

Do you see that? God says that professing to be wise they became fools. They know the truth, they know there is a holy standard, but instead of believing the truth about God and holding themselves to His standard, they change Him into something that He is not and thus they have become fools.

The world says that the message of the Gospel that Jesus Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose again on the third day is foolishness...

*Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, **to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness**, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 1 Corinthians 1:20-25*

Do you see that? The Cross of Jesus Christ is a stumbling block and foolishness to those who are perishing but to those who believe it is the power of God. The Apostle Paul said that without the Gospel you are perishing and you are blind.

*But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. 2 Corinthians 4:2-4*

Jesus said...

*"...even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God." John 3:14-21*

Do you see that? Jesus says that if we believe in Him we will not perish but have ever lasting life. Do you also see that Jesus says that you won't believe and come to the truth about your sin because you don't want your sin to be exposed. You hate the light of the Gospel because it sheds His light on your deeds. You hate Jesus and the Bible and any believing Christian who tries to point you to the truth of God's Word because it causes the light of Christ's righteousness to shine on you thus making your sin evident to you. It puts you in an unfavorable light. Jesus says you love to be in the dark so that your deeds will not be evident to everyone. Is that true of you?

Jesus said...

*"I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." John 8:12*

Beloved, do not despise the light of Jesus Christ. He seeks you no harm. He loves you with an everlasting love. Jesus stooped down from Heaven and hid His glory while He died on that cross to save you from your sins. How can you still find fault? He is only about your good. Listen to Him. Let the light of His righteousness shine on you so that you can see that you have no righteousness of your own with which to pay the debt you owe to God.

Jesus said...

*“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”* Matthew 7:24-27

Beloved you will certainly fall and perish without believing in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. We beg of you not to be like a foolish man who will not listen to reason, who says in his heart there is no God to whom he is accountable. Listen to the Word of God and heed it.

It is certainly true that you will die and you will be buried. And it is certainly true that you will face Jesus Christ, your Lord and Savior on that day. Will you stand before Him condemned or justified?

The third thing you need to know is that ***He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures..***

Beloved Jesus Christ died on that cross but He is not dead today. He rose from His grave on the third day. He is now seated at the right hand of His Father in Heaven. He is alive and waiting to receive all who believe in Him.

Beloved His resurrection is your only hope.

*“Truly these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which **He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him [Jesus] from the dead.**”* Acts 17:30-31

Do you see that? Jesus' resurrection is our assurance from God that He intends to judge us according to His righteousness. That's why the Gospel is good news! For those who believe there is now no condemnation. Remember the justification we receive from God when we believe and put our trust in Christ's righteousness and not our own? Remember God will declare us righteous because we believe what Jesus did for us? That's why, if you believe, you will not be condemned on the Day of Judgment. You will be able to stand before Jesus and enter into glory because you will be clothed in His righteousness.

Through the resurrection, God has proven that Jesus' death satisfied His righteous requirements. It is the only sacrifice God will now accept for the forgiveness of our sins. Just as Jesus was raised to glory, those who believe in Him will be raised to glory as well.

Beloved, you cannot stand before Jesus on the Day of Judgment and have any hope of eternal life with God while you are still in your sins. You must be perfect like your Father in heaven is perfect.

What God requires is that we put our trust in Him and not in ourselves. We must see that we are not righteous. We must admit that we are ungodly and unjust. It is God who justifies the ungodly!! He does not justify those who are righteous in their own sight.

*Also He [Jesus] spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified*

*rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”* Luke 18:9-14

*“But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, **his faith is accounted for righteousness.**”* Romans 4:5

*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): 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. **For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*** Romans 10:7-10

Do you see that? It is only by faith that you can attain true righteousness. There is nothing else you can do. You cannot do enough good deeds to earn the righteousness required to escape the condemnation of God and receive eternal life with Him. The gospel is not something *to do* but something *to be believed*.

***For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*** Ephesians 2:8-9

***But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*** Hebrews 11:6

Do you see that beloved? Do you see how simple the Gospel message is? It is by faith that you will receive eternal life.

*For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. **But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.** Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when 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. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.* Romans 5:7-11

Do you see that? God demonstrated His love for you. Christ died for you. Not after you believed...but while you were still a sinner. How can you still find fault?

*For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. **But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*** Titus 3:3-7

Do you see that? God is kind. God is loving. God is merciful. We will be heirs of eternal life. How can you still find fault?

Beloved, we beg of you to listen to reason. We beg of you to incline your ear and your heart toward God. God will forgive you. But you have to see your need to be forgiven. You most certainly will perish in your hard heart and your unbelief. Why would you want that? What causes you to not see the beauty of the Cross? Jesus said, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.* This is most certainly true.

Beloved, the Gospel is the good news of salvation for those who do not deserve it and have done nothing to earn it. It is freely given to those who will believe God.

Is it still too hard to believe or is your heart still too hard to believe it?

It's about believing God is who He says He is and that He will do what He said He will do. It is about believing that God took on flesh and became a human being in the Person of Jesus Christ (John 1:1,14). Jesus taught us the truth about God and lived a perfectly righteous and sinless life (John 8:46; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus then died on the cross in our place, taking the punishment that we deserve (Romans 5:8). Jesus rose from the dead to prove His victory over sin, death, and hell (Colossians 2:15; 1 Corinthians chapter 15). Because of all of this, we can have our sins forgiven and be promised an eternal home in Heaven - if we will just place our faith in Jesus Christ. All we have to do is believe that He died in our place and rose from the dead (Romans 10:9-10). We can be saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone. Ephesians 2:8 declares, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God." 3

We beg of you to receive the reconciliation that comes through the Cross of Christ alone. It is only by that narrow gate that you will be made right, reconciled to your Creator, and without that reconciliation you have no hope.

What does it mean to have faith in Jesus? Good question. It means that you have come to realize all that the scriptures say about Him is true. It means that you have seen your need for a Savior. You understand that you are a sinner worthy of death and that you cannot earn God's forgiveness in any way. It means abandoning all self-righteousness and self-confidence in your own works and deeds and casting yourself completely on Him for mercy and forgiveness. It means exchanging your natural hatred and rebellion against God for a spirit of grateful submission to His will.

It means that you have come to know that salvation is completely of God and not of you in any way, and it is to the glory of God alone. You see that salvation is offered freely to all who believe and trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

You understand that repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning away from your sin to God. Faith is belief in Jesus Christ and commitment of your entire person to Him as Lord and Savior.

When you have come to the end of yourself, then you will believe God.

When you have come to that end, you can speak to Him in prayer something like this...

Father, I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned and done evil in Your sight. I know that my sins have separated me from You. I have come to see the great love that You have for me and I am truly sorry and repent for my sins and I ask for the forgiveness that is found in the Cross of Jesus Christ. I believe that Jesus died for my sins, was resurrected from the dead and is alive with You now at Your right hand. I wish to turn from my past sinful life and turn to You. I seek to submit to Jesus Christ as Lord, Savior and my only hope. Father, give me Your Holy Spirit so that I may know the truth and seek to do Your will. In Jesus' Holy Name I pray. Amen.

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