

The Gospel Of Christ And The Problem Of Sin



How The Gospel Addresses The Problem Of Sin

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How The Gospel Addresses The Problem Of Sin

INTRODUCTION

1. A number of years ago a book came out with the title: "**Whatever Happened To Sin?**"
2. This is a relevant question, for today "sin" is often taken too lightly...
 - a. By the world
 - b. Even by the church
3. Exactly what is sin? The Bible speaks definitively, describing sin as:
 - a. A transgression of the law of God - **1 Jn 3:4**
 - b. A failure to do what you know to be right - **Ja 4:17**
 - c. Doing that which violates your conscience, even if the act is right within itself - **Ro 14:23**
4. The Bible also reveals the seriousness of sin, which is seen...
 - a. In its **universality** - "*all have sinned...*" (**Ro 3:23**)
 - b. In its **consequences** - "*The wages of sin is death...*" (**Ro 6:23**)
5. Even so, I am not sure that many people, even some Christians, truly appreciate...
 - a. The problem of sin
 - b. How the gospel of Christ effectively addresses this problem!

[The goal of this lesson is to introduce thoughts that should increase our understanding and appreciation of "**How The Gospel Of Christ Addresses The Problem Of Sin**". We begin by first noticing...]

I. THE PROBLEM OF SIN

[There is...]

A. THE "LOVE" OF SIN...

1. Sin does have its pleasurable nature - **He 11:24-25**
2. It is this pleasurable side that makes it easy for men to love sin, which in turn can then blind them to the truth - **Jn 3:19**

B. THE "PRACTICE" OF SIN...

1. The seriousness of this aspect of sin is seen in that ALL have sinned! - **Ro 3:23**
2. Even Christians continue to practice sin at times - **1 Jn 1:8-10**

C. THE "STATE" OF SIN...

1. Those who both love and practice sin are said to be **dead "in" sin** - **Ep 2:1**

2. This pertains to our relationship to God; as far as He is concerned, our practice of sin places us in a **state** in which we are **dead "to" Him!**

D. THE "GUILT" OF SIN...

1. In the Scriptures, this refers primarily to "**legal**" guilt, but it often includes as well "**emotional**" guilt
2. We may try to deny or suppress this truth, but a **Holy God** still recognizes our guilt before Him - **Ro 3:19**

E. THE "POWER" OF SIN...

1. Jesus spoke of the enslaving power of sin - **Jn 8:34**
2. Sin is so powerful, that even when a person wants to do good, outside of Christ they are unable to do so consistently - cf. **Ro 7:14-21**

F. THE "RESULT" OF SIN...

1. "*The wages of sin is death*" (**Ro 6:23**)
2. In the Scriptures, death includes the idea of separation (e.g., physical death is the separation of body and spirit - **Ja 2:26**)
 - a. The result of sin is "**spiritual death,**" or separation from God
 - b. Such separation exists in this life, but even more so in the life to come! - **Re 21:8**

[Such is the problem of sin. Do we appreciate what a serious problem it really is? How does the **Gospel Of Christ** address this problem? Bear in mind that the gospel consists of:

- ✓ **Facts to believe**
- ✓ **Commands to obey**
- ✓ **Promises to receive**

The **facts to believe** are concisely stated in **1 Co 15:1-4**, which reveal things that God has done in Christ. These things which God has done make it possible for the **commands** and **promises** of the gospel to really address the problem of sin! Consider...]

II. HOW THE GOSPEL ADDRESSES THE PROBLEM OF SIN

[First, the "**Commands**" of the gospel; the command to...]

A. "BELIEVE IN CHRIST" ADDRESSES THE "LOVE" OF SIN...

1. That it is necessary to believe is evident from **Mk 16:15-16**
2. When a person really believes in Christ and the **facts** the gospel tells about Him...
 - a. They will come to **hate** sin for what it cost God and Christ
 - b. They will have the attitude expressed by the Psalmist in **Psa 119:104**
3. The point is, true faith helps to eliminate our love for sin

B. "REPENT OF SINS" ADDRESSES THE "PRACTICE" OF SIN...

1. The gospel clearly calls mankind to repent - **Ac 2:38; 17:30-31**
2. When a person truly repents (a decision of the mind that leads to a change of action), they will cease living a life devoted to the practice of sin

C. "BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST" ADDRESSES THE "STATE" OF SIN...

1. Remember, outside of Christ our state is "**dead in sin**"
2. The gospel includes the command to be baptized - **Mk 16:15-16; Mt 28:18-20**
3. When we are baptized, our "**state**" changes
 - a. For baptism puts us in Christ - **Ga 3:27**
 - b. In Christ, we are now "**dead TO sin**", no longer "**dead IN sin**" - **Ro 6:1-7**

[And now for the "**Promises**" of the gospel; the promise of...]

D. "REMISSION OF SINS" ADDRESSES THE "GUILT" OF SIN...

1. Remission of sins is promised to those who repent and are baptized - **Ac 2:38**
2. When sin has been remitted, there is no longer any guilt!

E. "THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT" ADDRESSES THE "POWER" OF SIN...

1. The gift of the Holy Spirit is likewise promised to those who repent and are baptized - **Ac 2:38**
2. With the help of God's Spirit, we are no longer under the power of sin - **Ro 8:12,13; Ep 3:16,20**

F. "ETERNAL LIFE" ADDRESSES THE "RESULT" OF SIN...

1. Instead of spiritual death and eternal separation from God, we can have spiritual life and eternal communion with Him!
2. As Paul put it so succinctly: "*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" (**Ro 6:23**)

CONCLUSION

1. In succeeding lessons we will examine these **commands** and **promises** more carefully
2. But I trust that we see "**How The Gospel Of Christ Addresses The Problem Of Sin**" in a wonderful and powerful way!

Have you let the gospel address your problem of sin? By...

- ✓ **Believing the facts of the gospel?**
- ✓ **Obeing the commands of the gospel?**
- ✓ **Receiving the promises of the gospel?**

Do so, and through Jesus Christ you can overcome the problem of sin!

The Gospel Of Christ And The Problem Of Sin

The Gospel's Answer To The "Love" Of Sin (Faith In Jesus)

INTRODUCTION

1. In the previous lesson, we introduced "**How The Gospel Addresses The Problem Of Sin**"
2. In this lesson we focus our attention to that part of the problem which is the "**love**" of sin...
 - a. We saw that sin does have its pleasurable side - **He 11:24-25**
 - b. This pleasure makes it easy for men to love sin...
 - 1) Such love often blinds men to the truth - **Jn 3:19**
 - 2) Such love definitely alienates one from the love of the Father - **1 Jn 2:15**
3. The gospel of Jesus Christ answers the problem of the "**love**" of sin by commanding us to have "**faith**," in particular, to "**believe in Christ**"
 - a. E.g., notice **Mk 16:15-16**
 - b. Faith can be defined as "a strong conviction, assurance"
 - c. When we come to have the **right kind of faith**, we will come to no longer **love** sin, but even to **hate** it!
 - d. As the Psalmist expressed in **Psa 119:104**
4. In this study, I want to do two things:
 - a. Define the **kind of faith** the gospel requires to really hate sin
 - b. Briefly consider the **evidence** the gospel presents to create that kind of faith

I. THE FAITH NECESSARY TO HATE SIN

A. FAITH IN JESUS AS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD...

1. That the gospel requires such faith is clear - **Jn 20:30-31; 1 Jn 5:13**
2. I.e., a strong conviction that Jesus of Nazareth, son of Mary, was indeed:
 - a. The Messiah foretold by the Jewish prophets - **Ac 2:36**
 - b. More than just a good man, but the only begotten Son of God - **Jn 1:14**

B. FAITH THAT JESUS DIED FOR OUR SINS BECAUSE GOD LOVED US...

1. Believing that Jesus died for our sins is a necessary part of the gospel - **1 Co 15:1-3**
2. Understand...Jesus died for OUR sins!
 - a. Just as the Scriptures foretold He would - **Isa 53:4-6**
 - b. Why, because God loves us! - **Jn 3:16; Ro 5:8**

C. FAITH THAT GOD RAISED JESUS FROM THE DEAD...

1. This fact is also an important part of the gospel

2. Consider **1 Co 15:3-4; Ro 10:9****D. HOW SUCH FAITH CAUSES US TO HATE SIN...**1. **If we are strongly convicted that...**

- a. Jesus was truly the beloved Son of God
- b. He was really the Christ, the promised Messiah
- c. God loved us so much (and hated sin so much) that He sent His Son to die for us
- d. God raised Him from the dead to prove to us that His death was an acceptable sacrifice for sin

...then how can we not hate sin?2. **With such faith, we now hold sin responsible for...**

- a. Making the death of Christ necessary in the first place!
- b. The anguish God must have felt when He:
 - 1) Saw the separation between Him and us!
 - 2) Deemed it necessary to have His Son die for us!
- c. The pain and agony suffered by Jesus!
 - 1) In the garden of Gethsemane - **Mt 26:39**
 - 2) On the cross of Calvary - **Mt 27:46**

3. When we understand and really **believe** these things, then we will say with the Psalmist: *"Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I HATE every false way."* - **Psa 119:104**

[This is the kind of faith called for in obedience to the gospel, and the kind of faith which effectively deals with the **love** of sin! But how does one gain this kind of faith?

Faith comes from the Word of God (**Ro 10:17**). Indeed, as the apostles of Christ proclaimed the gospel, they presented evidence designed to create faith in the hearts of their listeners...]

II. THE EVIDENCE THAT CREATES SUCH FAITH**A. EYEWITNESS TESTIMONY CONCERNING JESUS' RESURRECTION...**

- 1. An important foundation upon which faith in Christ was based!
 - a. Jesus knew this was how people would come to believe on Him - cf. **Jn 17:20**
 - b. Therefore, in their preaching and teaching, the apostles appealed to this line of evidence...
 - 1) Peter - **Ac 2:32; 3:14-15; 4:33; 10:39-41**
 - 2) John - **Jn 20:30-31; 1 Jn 1:1-3**
 - 3) Paul - **1 Co 15:3-8**
- 2. How strong is this evidence? Consider...
 - a. **The number of witnesses**
 - 1) This affects the strength or weakness of any testimony
 - 2) E.g., the OT required at least two or three - **Deu 17:6**
 - In this regard, the strength is very strong - **1 Co 15:5-8** (over 500 people!)
 - b. **The character of these witnesses**
 - 1) Some had not believed in Christ prior to His resurrection
 - a) Like His brothers in the flesh - **Jn 7:3-5; Mk 3:21**

- b) But after the resurrection, they too became disciples! - **Ac 1:14**
 - 2) Some were disciples who had been skeptical after His death
 - a) E.g., Thomas - **Jn 20:24-25**
 - b) Only after hard, empirical evidence did he believe - **Jn 20:26-28**
 - 3) Some were former enemies who had violently opposed Christ (e.g., Paul)
 - They were not gullible people willing to believe anything!
 - c. **The nature of their testimony**
 - 1) Hard, empirical evidence - **Jn 20:25; Ac 10:40-41; 1 Jn 1:1**
 - 2) Objective, not subjective evidence
 - Testimony that cannot be attributed to hallucinations, dreams, etc.
 - d. **The transformation which took place**
 - 1) Prior to the resurrection, they were cowards who had lost hope!
 - a) They fled at His arrest - **Mk 14:50**
 - b) Peter denied Him
 - c) They hid for fear of the Jews - **Jn 20:19**
 - 2) Yet, after the resurrection, they were praising God and proclaiming Christ boldly as having been raised from the dead!
 - a) Praising God in the temple - **Lk 24:52-53**
 - b) Proclaiming Christ, despite persecution - **Ac 5:28-32, 41-42**
 - 3) Even an honest Orthodox Jew admits that the transformation in their lives is strong evidence for their testimony:
 - a) **"If the disciples were totally disappointed and on the verge of desperate flight because of the very real reason of the crucifixion, it took another very real reason in order to transform them from a band of disheartened and dejected Jews into the most self-confident missionary society in world history."** (PINCHAS LAPIDE, former chairman of the Applied Linguistics Department at Israel's Bar-Iland University)
 - b) Lapidé concluded that a bodily resurrection could have possibly been that reason! (TIME, May 7, 1979)
 - The change in the apostles gives strength to their testimony
 - e. **The high moral standard they taught and lived**
 - 1) Exhorted the disciples to live holy lives - **1 Th 4:1-7**
 - 2) Lived their own lives in an unimpeachable way - **1 Th 2:10-12**
 - Does this sound like people who would propagate a lie if they knew better?
 - f. **The sacrifices they paid in life and death**
 - 1) They endured much hardship because of their testimony - **1 Co 4:9-13**
 - 2) All but one of the apostles died violent deaths because of their testimony of the resurrection
 - 3) Even James, Jesus' brother, was thrown off the temple and clubbed to death for his refusal to recant his eyewitness testimony of the resurrection of Jesus!
3. Deny the resurrection of Jesus, and you impugn the honesty and integrity of these witnesses!
- a. They would have had to be rank liars and frauds, out to deceive the world!
 - b. Yet, these are the very ones...
 - 1) Who tell us what we know of Jesus, whose life and teachings has transformed

the history of the world and the lives of millions!

- 2) Who gave us the New Testament, containing the highest standard of morality the world has ever known!

-- **Does it make sense to call such men liars and frauds?**

[To accept their testimony and the fact of the resurrection is not only rational, it is the beginning of the kind of faith which will come to hate sin! But there is even more evidence which creates this kind of faith...]

B. FULFILLED MESSIANIC PROPHECY...

1. This was also an important foundation upon which faith in Christ was based
 - a. Jesus used this to strengthen the faith of His disciples
 - 1) The two disciples on the road to Emmaus - **Lk 24:25-27**
 - 2) The apostles - **Lk 24:44-47**
 - b. In their own teaching and preaching, the apostles appealed to fulfilled prophecy
 - 1) Peter - **Ac 2:29-31; 3:18,24**
 - 2) Philip - **Ac 8:35**
 - 3) Paul - **Ac 17:2,3**
2. How strong is this evidence? Consider...
 - a. There are at least **330 prophecies** in the OT fulfilled in Jesus Christ!
 - 1) Twenty-nine (29) were fulfilled in one day!
 - 2) Such prophecies were spoken at various times by many different people during the ten centuries from 1500 B.C. to 500 B.C.
 - b. The science of probabilities demonstrates that it is nigh to impossible Jesus fulfilled these prophecies out of coincidence
 - 1) In one study (by Peter Stoner), **eight (8) prophecies** were considered:
 - a) The likelihood of anyone fulfilling just these eight by chance was calculated to be 1 in 10 to the 17th power
 - b) This would be like finding on the first try, while blindfolded, a marked silver dollar in a pile of silver dollars two-feet high covering the entire state of Texas!
 - 2) In another study (also by Peter Stoner), **forty-eight (48) prophecies** were considered:
 - a) The likelihood of a coincidence was 1 in 10 to the 157th power!
 - b) How big a number is 10 to the 157th power?
 - 1] Counting at the rate of 250 a minute...
 - 2] It would take you 19 million times 19 million times 19 million years to count such a number!
 - c) Remember, that is just calculating the chance of any one man coincidentally fulfilling 48 prophecies - Jesus fulfilled 330!
 - c. Look at it another way...
 - 1) Your chances of surviving a fall from 10,000 feet without a parachute is 1 in 10 million - would you "willingly" jump and take such a chance?
 - 2) Yet to reject Jesus because one thinks fulfilling 330 prophecies was coincidental is **infinitely more risky** than jumping out of an airplane at 10,000 feet without a parachute!

- 3) We would say that anyone who jumped out of an airplane with such odds against survival is either stupid, crazy or ignorant of the risks
- 4) What about someone who takes the chance of rejecting Christ in view of the overwhelming odds he is wrong about Christ???

CONCLUSION

1. This is the kind of evidence in the Word of God to create faith in Jesus as the Son of God:
 - a. **Eyewitness testimony of the resurrection of Jesus** by numerous, reliable witnesses
 - b. **Fulfilled messianic prophecy** that overwhelmingly convinces any informed, rational and objective person!
-- Yes, *"faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."* - **Ro 10:17**
2. What kind of faith?
 - a. **A faith that hates sin...**
 - 1) For what it did (separated us from God)
 - 2) For what it cost (the death of God's only begotten Son)
 - 3) For what it can do when engaged in by the unrepentant Christian (crucify again the Son afresh - **He 6:4-6**)
 - b. **A faith that loves God...**
 - 1) For what He has done
 - 2) For what He is doing
 - 3) For what He will do
 - c. **A faith that will...**
 - 1) Do whatever God desires me to do, to rid my life of the guilt of sin (e.g., faith, repentance, and baptism)
 - 2) Utilize whatever blessing God offers to overcome the problem of sin (e.g., remission of sins, gift of the Holy Spirit, the promise of eternal life)

Do you have that kind of faith which the gospel both gives and requires...a loving and obedient faith?

"If you love Me, keep My commandments." (Jn 14:15)

The Gospel Of Christ And The Problem Of Sin

The Gospel's Answer To The "Practice" Of Sin (Repentance Of Sin)

INTRODUCTION

1. Paul declared that he was not ashamed of the gospel because it was God's power to save those who believe - **Ro 1:16-17**
 - a. We saw in general terms how the gospel saves us from the **problem** of sin (first lesson)
 - b. Our previous lesson dealt more closely with **faith** as the gospel's answer to the **love** of sin
 - c. This lesson shall focus on **repentance** as the gospel's answer to the **practice** of sin
2. That the **practice** of sin is a serious problem is seen in that...
 - a. **All** have sinned - **Ro 3:23**
 - b. And **even Christians** continue to sin at times - **1 Jn 1:8-10**
3. The gospel of Jesus Christ answers the problem of the **practice** of sin by commanding us to "**repent**"...
 - a. E.g., notice **Lk 24:45-47; Ac 2:38; 3:19; 17:30-31; 26:19-20**
 - b. When a person truly repents, they will cease the practice of sin!
4. Unfortunately, the call to repent is often neglected in preaching the gospel today...
 - a. By those who preach "faith only"
 - b. By some who react to "faith only" by emphasizing "baptism"
5. As the passages listed above clearly reveal, one cannot truly preach the gospel of Christ without the call to repentance
 - a. But what is repentance?
 - b. What are indications that repentance has occurred?
 - c. What leads one to true repentance?

[In **2 Co 7:9-11** we find the most elaborate discussion on repentance found in the Scriptures, and it will serve as the basis for much of our study. Based upon this passage, let's begin with...]

I. THE DEFINITION OF REPENTANCE

A. MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT REPENTANCE...

1. **That repentance is "sorrow"**
 - a. **2 Co 7:9-10** shows that repentance is an **outcome** of sorrow
 - b. Not the sorrow itself
2. **That repentance is "a changed life"**
 - a. Or a converted life

- b. **Ac 3:19** shows that repentance and conversion are two separate things
 - 1) Peter says to "**repent**" and "**be converted**"
 - 2) Peter is not being redundant; rather, the one leads to the other
- 3. As we shall see, the order is actually this:
 - a. First, there is **sorrow**
 - b. Then, **repentance**
 - c. And finally, **a changed life** (conversion)

B. A PROPER DEFINITION OF REPENTANCE...

- 1. The Greek word is **metanoeo** (meta=change, noeo=thought or mind)
- 2. W. E. Vine's definition:
 - a. "a change of mind"
 - b. "signifies to change one's mind or purpose"
 - c. "this change of mind involves both a turning from sin and a turning to God"
- 3. So we can think of repentance as "**a change of mind**" in which we **decide** to "**turn from sin and turn to God**"; a decision...
 - a. **Preceded** by sorrow
 - b. **Followed** by a changed life

[Having therefore defined repentance, how do we know when repentance has occurred? Let's take a look at...]

II. THE SIGNS OF REPENTANCE

A. SEVERAL SIGNS ARE MENTIONED IN 2 CO 7:11...

- 1. **diligence** (KJV, carefulness)
 - a. This can be defined as "earnestness, zeal, sometimes with haste accompanying it"
 - b. I.e., being quick to do what is right!
 - c. The examples of conversion in the book of Acts demonstrate this diligence by the fact every conversion described in detail shows people obeying the gospel after one lesson!
- 2. **clearing of yourselves**
 - a. To clear one's self of blame
 - b. E.g., to quickly stop doing what is wrong, if such is the case; or to quickly respond to the offer of forgiveness if one realizes they are guilty of sin
- 3. **indignation**
 - a. This involves a sort of anger, hatred
 - b. I.e., toward the SIN which required the repentance
- 4. **fear**
 - a. Lest the sin be repeated
 - b. Lest the sin should not be quickly removed
- 5. **vehement desire**
 - a. I.e., a "fervent wish"
 - b. Especially to be right in God's eyes
- 6. **zeal**
 - a. "eagerness and ardent interest in pursuit of something"

- b. In this case, to turn from sin and turn to God
- 7. **vindication** (KJV, revenge)
 - a. As the NIV puts it "what readiness to see justice done"
 - b. To do the right thing!

B. SUCH ARE THE SIGNS OF TRUE REPENTANCE...

- 1. Not apathy
- 2. Not half-hearted service
- 3. But a desire to do "*works befitting repentance*" - **Ac 26:20**

[Now that we may have a better idea as to what repentance is and what indications are that it has occurred, let's consider what is involved in...]

III. THE PRODUCTION OF REPENTANCE

A. GODLY SORROW PRODUCES REPENTANCE...

- 1. Note carefully Paul's words in **2 Co 7:9-10**
 - a. Not simply "sorrow", but one that is "godly"
 - b. For there is such a thing as "sorrow of the world"
- 2. The difference between "godly" sorrow and "worldly" sorrow
 - a. **"Worldly" sorrow** is a selfish kind of sorrow
 - 1) E.g., when one is sorry because he got caught
 - 2) E.g., when one is sorry because what one did made himself look bad
 - 3) In "worldly sorrow", one is concerned about one's self!
 - b. **"Godly" sorrow** is sorrow directed toward GOD ("godly" is literally "according to God")
 - 1) I.e., one is sorry because their actions are sins against a Holy God - cf. the attitude of David in **Ps 51:4**
 - 2) Also, one is sorry because of the price God must pay to have our sins removed
 - c. Some more differences...
 - 1) "worldly" sorrow produces regret
 - 2) "godly" sorrow suffers loss in nothing
 - 3) "worldly" produces death
 - 4) "godly" sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation

[Desiring such repentance in ourselves and others, how can we produce the "godly sorrow" that leads to repentance?]

B. PRODUCING GODLY SORROW THAT LEADS TO REPENTANCE...

- 1. Nathan's rebuke to David provides some insight - **2 Sam 12:7-12**
 - a. Make an appeal to God's love - **7-8**
 - b. Reveal the sin - **9**
 - c. Warn of the consequences - **10-12**
- 2. The **gospel of Christ**, when properly taught, is designed to produce "godly sorrow" in the same way, and in turn, repentance
 - a. It appeals to God's love as a basis for repentance - **Ro 2:4**

- b. It reveals our sin - **Ro 3:23**
- c. It warns of the consequences - **Ro 2:5-11**

CONCLUSION

1. The gospel of Jesus Christ, properly presented and understood, can help produce the kind of **repentance** that will effectively deal with the **practice** of sin!
2. Have you truly repented of your sins? Can you look at your life and see indications...
 - a. That you have really had a "change of mind"?
 - b. That you made "a decision to turn from sin and turn to God"?
3. Make no mistake about it...
 - a. If you have not yet obeyed the gospel...you have not repented!
 - b. If you have become slack in your service to God...you are in need of repentance!
4. If such is the case, then you are in need of a healthy dose of "godly sorrow", brought about only by realizing...
 - a. God's love for you
 - b. The fact you are still in your sins
 - c. And the consequences if you do not repent
5. If you **believe** the good news of God's love for you, and **godly sorrow** has prompted you to have a "change of mind", why not do those "**works befitting repentance**"...?
 - a. Confess your faith in Christ and be baptized into Christ for the remission of your sins (if that is your need)
 - b. Confess your sins and ask for the prayers of the brethren (if such is your need)

Let the gospel of Christ address the practice of sin in your life through its call to repentance!

The Gospel Of Christ And The Problem Of Sin

The Gospel's Answer To The "State" Of Sin (Baptism Into Jesus Christ)

INTRODUCTION

1. We have been examining how the gospel addresses the **problem** of sin in this series of lessons
 - a. Our first lesson dealt with this subject **in general terms**
 - b. Then we looked more closely at:
 - 1) The command to **believe** as the gospel's answer to the **love** of sin
 - 2) The command to **repent** as the gospel's answer to the **practice** of sin
2. In this lesson, we shall examine how the command to be **baptized** is the gospel's answer to the **state** of sin...
 - a. Beginning with the "Great Commission", an important part of preaching the gospel was including the command to be baptized - cf. **Mk 16:15-16**
 - b. As the apostle and others went out preaching Christ, they taught the necessity of baptism:
 - 1) Peter on the day of Pentecost - **Ac 2:36-38**
 - 2) Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch - **Ac 8:35-39**
 - 3) Peter and the household of Cornelius - **Ac 10:48**
 - 4) Paul in recounting his own conversion - **Ac 22:16**

[Why this emphasis on baptism? It helps us to appreciate its importance when we see how baptism changes the "**state**" of sin...]

I. BEFORE BAPTISM, ONE IS DEAD "IN" SIN

A. ONE'S CONDITION OUTSIDE OF CHRIST...

1. Read carefully **Ep 2:1-3**
2. Note the **state** or **condition** one find himself in regards to sin
 - a. They are **dead "in" sin**, and as a result are "**dead to God**"
 - b. As for having a relationship with GOD, there is none!

B. WHAT GOD'S GRACE MAKES POSSIBLE...

1. Now read carefully **Ep 2:4-9**
2. By God's mercy, love and grace (and not any meritorious works of our own)...
 - a. Those "**dead in trespasses**" (dead in sin) were **made alive together with Christ!**
 - b. Those who were dead in sin were **raised together with Him!**

[Outside of Christ, one is dead in sin; yet by God's grace we can be made alive! This raises an important question: "**When**" and "**how**" does a persons who is "**dead in sin**" become "**alive**"

with Christ" and "raised together with him"??? Here's the Biblical answer...]

II. IN BAPTISM, ONE DIES "TO" SIN

A. PAUL'S DISCOURSE ON BAPTISM...

1. Notice carefully what Paul teaches in **Ro 6:1-8,11**
2. Please note what Paul is **not** saying...
 - a. That baptism is a **symbolic** demonstration of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ engaged in by those who have **already** died to sin (as taught by many churches, though baptism is never described in these words in the Bible)
 - b. That baptism is a **public** profession of one's faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (likewise taught by many, despite several examples of baptism in private - **Ac 8:35-38; Ac 16:30-34**)
 - c. Nor that one "dies to sin" in **repentance** and then is buried with Christ in baptism (as many of my own brethren teach)

B. PAUL EXPLAINS WHEN AND HOW ONE DIES TO SIN...

1. It happens **when they are baptized into Christ**, which is a baptism into His death - **Ro 6:3-4**
2. It is **in baptism** that one is "**crucified with Him (Christ)**" - **Ro 6:6**
3. It is **in baptism** that we **die to sin**, and then are "**freed from sin**" (from it's guilt, consequence, and power) - **Ro 6:7**
4. The following illustration might be helpful:

HOW BAPTISM CHANGES THE "STATE" OF SIN

BEFORE BAPTISM	IN BAPTISM		AFTER BAPTISM
We are...	We are...	We are...	We are...
DEAD "IN" SIN	BURIED WITH CHRIST	RAISED WITH CHRIST	DEAD "TO" SIN
DEAD "TO" GOD	BY BAPTISM INTO	Co 2:12	ALIVE "TO" GOD
Ep 2:1	HIS DEATH	TO NEWNESS OF LIFE	Ro 6:11
	Ro 6:3-4	Ro 6:4-5	Ga 3:26-27
	\	/	
	\CHRIST'S/		
	DEATH/		
	\		
	United in a likeness		
	of His death, we are...		
	CRUCIFIED WITH HIM		
	Thus, we...		
	DIE TO SIN		
	And we are...		
	FREED FROM SIN		
	Ro 6:6-7		

5. Notice that our **state** in regards to **sin** has changed (and also our state in regards to

God, as well!) - **Ro 6:11**

- a. Before baptism into Christ, we were dead **in** sin, and dead to God!
- b. But after baptism into Christ, we are dead **to** sin, and alive to God!

[How can such a simple act of immersion in water bring out about such a significant change? From **Co 2:11-13**, we learn that this change takes place through faith in the working of God...]

III. BAPTISM IS A SPIRITUAL "CIRCUMCISION"

A. NOTE WHEN AND HOW OUR SINS WERE "CUT AWAY"...

1. It is **when** we were buried with Christ in baptism! - **Co 2:11-13**
 - a. Though "dead in trespasses" we were made alive!
 - b. Remember **Ep 2:4-9**, that it involved God's grace and mercy?
 2. **How** were our sins cut away? Note that we were raised...
 - a. Through **faith** (this is man's part, expressed by submitting to baptism)
 - b. In the **working of God** (this is God's part, who through grace cleanses us by the blood of Christ and by His Spirit causes us to be born again - cf. **Jn 3:5; Ti 3:5**)
- Yes, baptism is a "*working of God*" by which He imparts wonderful blessings to those submit to it, **not** a "work of man" by which one tries to earn or merit salvation!

B. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A PENITENT BELIEVER IS BAPTIZED...

1. God performs a "spiritual operation" (the "*circumcision of Christ*")!
 - a. He who was dead in sins has his sins removed (by Jesus' blood shed in His death)
 - b. And thus he who was dead in sin is made alive!
2. Coming forth from the watery grave, he is raised together with Christ (**Co 2:12**)
 - a. Having "put on" Christ in baptism.
 - b. Note: "*For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have PUT ON Christ.*" - **Ga 3:27**
3. This is how one **truly receives Jesus Christ** into their life!
 - a. Not by saying "the sinner's prayer" (which is no where taught in the Scriptures)
 - b. But by submitting to the command of Christ to be baptized into His death for the remission of sins! - **Mk 16:16; Ac 2:38; Ga 3:27**

CONCLUSION

1. No longer dead "**in**" sin, but dead "**to**" sin, God's work on us in baptism truly changes the **state** of sin!
2. This explains why in the preaching of the gospel of Christ, the command to be baptized naturally follows the commands to believe and repent - cf. **Mk 16:15-16; Ac 2:36-38**

Are YOU really "dead to sin" and "alive to God"? Only if you have been scripturally baptized (immersed in water by the authority of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins - **Mt 28:18-19; Ac 2:38**) can you be CERTAIN that through the "working of God" your sins are forgiven and you have been raised together with Christ! If you have not been baptized, then...

"...why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." - Ac 22:16

For a more detailed study on the subject of baptism, please see another Executable Outlines study entitled "**Baptism - A Special Study**"

The Gospel Of Christ And The Problem Of Sin

The Gospel's Answer To The "Guilt" Of Sin (The Remission Of Sins)

INTRODUCTION

1. We have been examining how the gospel saves us from **the problem of sin** in this series
2. Our last three lessons dealt with **commands** found in the gospel which, when obeyed, effectively answer several specific problems of sin...
 - a. The command to **believe**, when obeyed, solves the problem of the **love** of sin
 - b. The command to **repent**, when obeyed, solves the problem of the **practice** of sin
 - c. The command to **be baptized**, when obeyed, solves the problem of the **state** of sin
3. In this lesson and those to follow, we shall turn our attention to the **promises** of the gospel...
 - a. Again, bear in mind that the gospel of Jesus Christ contains:
 - 1) **Facts** to be believed
 - 2) **Commands** to be obeyed
 - 3) **Promises** to be received
 - b. We have seen how keeping the **commands** of the gospel deal with the problem of sin
 - c. Now we want to be sure to appreciate how the **promises** we receive upon obeying the gospel are also effective in dealing with sin...

[In the first lesson of this series, we touched briefly upon the **guilt** of sin. Let us first elaborate on this point...]

I. THE "GUILT" OF SIN

A. THE BIBLE DECLARES ALL ARE GUILTY REGARDING SIN...

1. This was Paul's first main point in writing the epistle to the Romans - **Ro 3:9-11**
2. Even if a person breaks only one commandment! - cf. **Ja 2:10-11**

B. THIS GUILT REFERS PRIMARILY TO "LEGAL" GUILT...

1. In the sense of having violated the **law** of God
 - a. In this way, everyone has sinned - **Ro 3:23**
 - b. This makes them "transgressors" of the law - cf. **1 Jn 3:4**
 - c. Other synonyms are used to describe those who have violated God's law:
 - 1) "lawless"
 - 2) "disobedient"
 - 3) "workers of iniquity"
 - 4) "ungodly"
2. This "**legal guilt**" is real, whether or not a person...

- a. Is aware of their actual guilt (**ignorance** does not excuse one of guilt before God)
- b. Feels any sense of emotional guilt (more on this shortly)
- They are still held accountable before God as "guilty" of sin - **2 Co 5:10**

C. FOR MANY, THERE IS ALSO THE "EMOTIONAL" GUILT...

- 1. But this really only a **side effect** of the "legal" guilt of sin
 - a. Though it does include some terrible consequences: anxiety, depression, fear, doubt
 - b. *"There is no peace, saith the LORD, for the wicked."* - **Isa 48:22**
- 2. Some may not experience the emotional consequence of "legal" guilt...
 - a. Because they have rejected their conscience to the point of it being "seared"
 - e.g., **1 Ti 1:19-20; 4:1-2**
 - b. Such people have "legal guilt", nonetheless!

[Yet the gospel of Christ declares that when we obey its **commands**, then one of the **promises** we receive is **the remission of sins**, which effectively deals with **the guilt of sin...**]

II. THE "REMISSION" OF SINS

A. THE PROMINENT PLACE OF "REMISSION OF SINS" IN THE GOSPEL...

- 1. The blood of Jesus was shed for the remission of our sins - **Mt 26:28**
- 2. Remission of sins is to be preached to all nations - **Lk 24:45-47**
- 3. Peter told people they could receive remission of sins in the name of Jesus...
 - a. By believing in Jesus - **Ac 10:42-43**
 - b. By repenting and being baptized in His name - **Ac 2:38**

B. WHAT DOES THIS "REMISSION OF SINS" INVOLVE...?

- 1. The word remission means "to remit", and involves a **dismissal, release**
- 2. A key synonym often used in some translations is the word "**forgiveness**"
- 3. Other terms and metaphors found in the Bible to describe the "remission" of sins:
 - a. **"taken away"** - **Jn 1:29; Ro 11:27**
 - b. **"blotted out"** - **Ac 3:19**
 - c. **"washed away"** - **Ac 22:16**
 - d. **"covered"** - **Ro 4:7**
 - e. **"not imputed"** - **Ro 4:8**
 - f. **"set free"** - **Ro 6:17-18**
 - g. **"purged"** - **He 1:3; 2 Pe 1:9**
 - h. **"remembered no more"** - **He 8:12**
- 4. All of these signifying the removal of the guilt of sin from the sinner!
 - a. A legal term used to describe a sinner whose sins have been so forgiven is the word "**justified**"
 - b. Which means "**not guilty**" - cf. **1 Co 6:11**

C. NOT JUST REMOVAL OF "LEGAL GUILT", BUT "EMOTIONAL GUILT"...

- 1. We can now have a **perfect** conscience
 - a. Something the Old Law could not do! - cf. **He 9:8-10; 10:1-4**

- b. But by the blood of Christ, it is possible to have this "perfect" conscience - cf. **He 9:14; 10:22**
2. A **perfect** conscience in the sense that we have real reasons not to feel guilty for our sins: they are **totally** forgiven by the blood of Christ!
 - a. Therefore, there is no need to have fear, doubt, anxiety, or depression over our spiritual condition
 - b. Instead, we can have peace and joy through the justification that comes by grace - **Ro 5:1-2**

CONCLUSION

1. This is the **promise** given to those who obey the gospel that effectively deals with the problem of the guilt of sin...
 - a. Your sins are remitted!
 - b. You are released from the guilt of your sins!
 - 1) From your **legal guilt** for breaking God's law
 - 2) From your **emotional guilt** burdening your sensitive conscience
2. Again, how does one receive this promise of "remission of sins"?
 - a. By obeying the **commands** of the gospel...
 - 1) Believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, who died for your sins!
 - 2) Repent of your sins, deciding in your mind to turn from sin and turn to God
 - 3) Be baptized into Jesus Christ
 - a) By the simple act of immersion in water
 - b) In which by God's grace you are raised to walk in newness of life!
 - b. Note how the last command (baptism) in particular answers the problem of guilt...
 - 1) First, the legal guilt - cf. **Ac 2:38; 22:16**
 - 2) Also, the emotional guilt - cf. **1 Pe 3:21** (The "answer of a good conscience", or as the NASV puts it, "an appeal to God for a good conscience")

Have you accepted the gospel's promise of **remission** of sins to deal with the **guilt** of your sins, by submitting to the commands of the gospel...?

The Gospel Of Christ And The Problem Of Sin

The Gospel's Answer To The "Power" Of Sin (The Gift Of The Holy Spirit)

INTRODUCTION

1. We are continuing to examine how the gospel saves us from the **problem** of sin
2. We have seen that the **commands** of the gospel effectively deal with various aspects of sin:
 - a. The command to **believe** when obeyed solves the problem of the **love** of sin
 - b. The command to **repent** when obeyed solves the problem of the **practice** of sin
 - c. The command to **be baptized** when obeyed solves the problem of the **state** of sin
3. And we have also begun to notice that the **promises** in the gospel relate to different aspects of sin's problem; e.g., the promise of the **remission of sins** takes care of the **guilt** of sin
4. In this lesson, we shall examine another **promise** given to those who obey the gospel of Christ: **the gift of the Holy Spirit!**

[Before we can really appreciate the part the Holy Spirit plays in the life of the Christian, we need to understand...]

I. THE POWER OF SIN

A. SIN'S POWER VIVIDLY DESCRIBED...

1. Paul describes the condition of one under the power of sin - **Ro 7:14-25**
 - a. I understand Paul to be describing the dilemma of one outside of Christ
 - 1) Even though he speaks in the first person
 - 2) From the context I believe he is demonstrating how the Law of Moses was inadequate to deal with the sin problem - cf. **Ro 7:7-14** with **Ro 8:1-4**
 - b. Others feel that he is describing the inner warfare that goes on inside of everyone, including Christians (which is certainly taught in **Ga 5:16-17**)
-- But the reason I take the view that I do is seen as we continue on...
2. Notice that the person in this text is described as:
 - a. *"sold under sin"* (14)
 - b. having *"sin that dwells in me"* (17,20)
 - c. in *"captivity to the law of sin which is in my members"* (23)
 - d. *"wretched man that I am"* (24)
 - e. in a *"body of death"* (24)-- Is this the condition of one in Christ? Not in light of what Paul goes on to say in **chapter 8**
3. This is the power of sin and the condition of all who do not have the help of God!

B. SIN'S POWER AFFECTS EVERYONE...

1. "All" have sinned - **Ro 3:23**
2. Even Christians must confess they often sin - **1 Jn 1:8,10**
3. For it continues to play a strong role in our lives...
 - a. It prompts the flesh to wage war against the soul - **1 Pe 2:11**
 - b. It tries to take advantage of our desires, and if it does, can lead to spiritual death - **Ja 1:13-15**
4. If not controlled, sin will continue to enslave us! - cf. **Jn 8:34**

[But the gospel of Christ offers to all who obey its commands a wonderful **promise** to deal with the power of sin in our lives...]

II. THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**A. THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT WAS PROMISED...**

1. To those who believe in Jesus - **Jn 7:38-39**
2. To those who repent and are baptized - **Ac 2:38-39**
3. To those who obey God - **Ac 5:32**

B. THOSE WHO RECEIVE THIS PROMISE...

1. Are "*the temple of God*" (collectively, as the church) - **1 Co 3:16-17**
2. Are "*the temple of the Holy Spirit*" (individually, in our bodies) - **1 Co 6:19**
3. Have the "*Spirit of God (who) dwells in you*" - **Ro 8:9-11**

C. WE CAN NOW DEAL WITH THE POWER OF SIN...

1. With the Spirit's aid, Christians no longer need to be dominated by the power of sin!
 - a. Christians are to "put to death the deeds of the body" - cf. **Ro 8:12-13; Co 3:5-11**
 - b. The Holy Spirit helps us through His indwelling!
 - 1) "**The Holy Spirit by its indwelling strengthens the human spirit to enable it to control the flesh.**" (David Lipscomb)
 - 2) "**The Christian's being successfully under the control of his own spirit is conditional, the condition being that the Holy Spirit shall dwell in him and help him.**" (Moses Lard)
 - 3) "**To them (i.e., Christians) the Spirit is given as a helper of their weakness...and by its aid they overcome the flesh.**" (B.W. Johnson)
 - 4) "**Internally, the Spirit aids by ministering strength and comfort to the disciple in his effort to conform to the revealed truth and will of God.**" (J.W. McGarvey)
2. Compare this with the condition we saw described in **Romans 7**...
 - a. In **chapter 7**, the man was described as in "captivity" to the law of sin which is in his members - **Ro 7:23**
 - b. But according to **chapter 8**...
 - 1) In Christ, one is "set free" from this law of sin and death - **Ro 8:2**
 - 2) By the help of the Spirit, one is no longer a "debtor" - **Ro 8:12-13**

D. THE CHRISTIAN HAS REAL "POWER" TO DEAL WITH SIN!

1. Paul wanted the Ephesians to appreciate this "power" - **Ep 1:19-20**
 - a. Notice: it is according to the same power that raised Jesus from the dead
 - b. By what power was Jesus' resurrection accomplished?
 - 1) *"...declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."* - **Ro 1:4**
 - 2) *"...if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."* - **Ro 8:11**

-- I.e., by the power of the Spirit of God!
2. Paul prayed that the Ephesians would be strengthened inwardly through this "power" or "might" (i.e., the Spirit of God) - **Ep 3:16**
 - a. How great is this "might" or "power" in us?
 - b. Note carefully **Ep 3:20**, where it is stated that God is:
 - 1) *"able to do"*
 - 2) *"exceedingly"*
 - 3) *"abundantly"*
 - 4) *"above all that we ask or think"*

-- *"according to the power that works in us"!*
4. This should make us appreciate more the statement of Paul later in his letter to the Ephesians: *"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might."* - **Ep 6:10**

[The source of that strength and mighty power the Lord provides is the indwelling Spirit in the lives of Christians! Consider, therefore...]

III. THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS GIFT**A. FOR THE CHRISTIAN...**

1. This wonderful promise should serve as **motivation** not to sin
 - a. For you are a "temple" of the Holy Spirit - **1 Co 6:18-20**
 - b. When you sin, you deeply offend the Spirit! - **Ep 4:30; He 10:26-29**
2. This wonderful promise should provide **encouragement** in your fight against sin
 - a. You are not alone in your efforts! - **Ph 2:12-13**
 - b. You have whatever power you need to overcome the sins you face! - **Ph 4:13; 1 Jn 4:4; 1 Co 10:13**
 - 1) This does not mean that we can become "sinless" - **1 Jn 1:8**
 - 2) For we do not have perfect knowledge of God's will, and can therefore be guilty of "sins of ignorance"
 - 3) But it does mean we can overcome those sins of which we are aware!
3. This wonderful promise means we have **no excuse** for our sins
 - a. We cannot say, "I can't help myself"
 - b. We cannot say, "The devil made me do it"

-- If we sin, it is because we have chosen to refuse the aid God has given us!

B. FOR THE NON-CHRISTIAN...

1. Don't put off obeying the gospel until you have "reformed yourself"
 - a. Many people mistakenly think that they cannot become a Christian until they overcome all their bad "habits"
 - b. Yet **Romans 7** demonstrates the futility of trying to do this without Christ!
2. God will take you "as you are"..
 - a. Provided you will:
 - 1) Believe (trust) in His Son Jesus (that he died for your sins) - **1 Co 15:1-3**
 - 2) Repent of your sins (i.e., have a change of mind in which you decide to turn from your sins and start living for God) - **Ac 17:30-31**
 - 3) Be baptized into Christ for the remission of your sins (an immersion in water as commanded by Christ and His apostles) - **Mt 28:19-20; Mk 16:15-16; Ac 2:38; 10:48**
 - b. Then God by His grace will:
 - 1) Forgive you of your sins (release you from the **guilt** of sin)
 - 2) Give you the gift of the Holy Spirit, Who through His indwelling will help you "reform" as you heed the Word of God (free you from the **power** of sin)

CONCLUSION

1. Don't you desire these wonderful promises?
 - a. Freedom from the guilt of sin?
 - b. Freedom from the power of sin?
2. By the grace of God, when you obey the gospel you receive..
 - a. Not only "the remission of sins" **to deal with your past**
 - b. But "the gift of the Holy Spirit" **to help with your future !**

To those who desire to accept these gracious provisions of God, I can only tell you to do the same thing the apostle Peter told the people of his day:

Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." -- Ac 2:38-39

To receive the promises of the gospel, you must obey the commands of the gospel!

The Gospel Of Christ And The Problem Of Sin

The Gospel's Answer To The "Result" Of Sin (The Gift Of Eternal Life)

INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose in this series of lessons has been to help us understand and appreciate how the gospel of Christ is indeed God's power to save us - **Ro 1:16-17**
2. We have examined various aspects of **the problem of sin**, and then how **the gospel of Christ** with its commands and promises effectively addresses the problem of sin
3. To summarize thus far...
 - a. When the command to **believe** is obeyed, the **love** of sin is addressed
 - b. When the command to **repent** is obeyed, the **practice** of sin is dealt with
 - c. When the command to **be baptized** is submitted to, the **state** of sin is changed
 - d. When we have obeyed these commands, we receive wonderful promises...
 - 1) **Remission of sins**, which removes the **guilt** of sin
 - 2) **The gift of the Holy Spirit**, which enables us to deal with the **power** of sin
4. In this final lesson, we shall examine another promise which deals with the **result** of sin: the promise of **eternal life** - **Ro 6:23**

[In the first lesson, we touched briefly on the result of sin; we shall now examine it more carefully...]

I. THE "RESULT" OF SIN

A. ONE RESULT OF SIN IS "SPIRITUAL DEATH"...

1. The death referred to by God when He warned Adam & Eve - **Gen 2:15-17**
 - a. Note: *"...for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."*
 - b. They did not die "physically" in the day they ate of the forbidden fruit, but they did die "spiritually" in that day
2. "Spiritual" death is "**separation from God**"
 - a. Death of any sort involves the idea of "separation"
 - b. Just as physical death is the separation of body and spirit - **Ja 2:26**
3. "Spiritual" death is what occurs when all sin - **Ro 5:12**
 - a. It occurs when we reach that "age of accountability" where we know the difference between right and wrong, and then violate God's law - cf. **Ro 7:9**
 - b. This is the "death" referred to in **Ep 2:1-3**
 - 1) All who are outside of Christ are "dead in sin"
 - 2) Those who are "dead in sin" are separated from God and all the blessings that would otherwise come from union with Him - cf. **Isa 59:1-2**

B. ANOTHER RESULT OF SIN IS "PHYSICAL DEATH"...

1. Because of their sin, Adam and Even lost access to the "tree of life" - **Gen 3:22-24**
2. Because access to the "tree of life" was lost, all mankind is subject to "physical" death - *"in Adam all die"* (1 Co 15:22a)

C. THE FINAL RESULT OF SIN IS THE "SECOND DEATH"...

1. This death is referred to in **Re 21:8**
2. This "death" involves **eternal** separation from God!
3. This "death" Jesus often spoke of and warned about - **Mt 10:28; 25:41-46**

[Truly, in more than one sense, *"the wages of sin is death"* (Ro 6:23); but the same can be said about *"the gift of eternal life"*! No matter what the **result** of sin, the **promise** of **eternal life** more than makes up for it!]

II. THE GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE

A. THE GOSPEL PROMISES EVEN NOW "ETERNAL LIFE"...

1. John speaks of this "life" as a present possession in **1 Jn 5:11-13**
2. This is "eternal life" in the sense of knowing God and Jesus in a special way, having fellowship with them - cf. **Jn 17:3; 1 Jn 5:20**
3. With this type of "eternal life"...
 - a. One is no longer "dead in sin"
 - b. One is no longer "separated from God"
 - c. The emphasis is on the **quality** of life, not quantity - cf. **Jn 10:10**
4. "Eternal life" in this sense begins when we rise from the watery grave of baptism
 - a. *"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."* - **Ro 6:4**
 - b. This is because in baptism...
 - 1) Our sins are forgiven by the blood of Christ - cf. **Ac 2:38; 22:16**
 - 2) We enter into a new relationship with God, having put on Christ - **Ga 3:26-27**
5. We who were once dead "spiritually", are now *"made alive"*! - cf. **Ep 2:1,4-9**

B. THE GOSPEL PROMISES "THE HOPE OF THE RESURRECTION"...

1. Jesus spoke of this "hope" in **Jn 5:28-29**
2. Paul wrote of this wonderful "hope" in **1 Co 15:20-23,50-58**
3. This hope of the resurrection we have is based upon our conviction that Jesus Himself was raised from the dead - **1 Pe 1:3**
4. With such hope, "physical" death has lost much of its sting - **1 Th 4:13-18**

C. THE GOSPEL PROMISES "THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE"...

1. In this sense, "eternal life" is still **a future promise** (and not a present possession)...
 - a. Jesus spoke of "eternal life" in this sense, in **Mt 25:46; Mk 10:29-30**
 - b. Paul spoke of "eternal life" as a future hope in **2 Ti 1:1; Ti 1:2**
2. This "eternal life", which is yet to be realized by those who are in Christ...
 - a. Comes **after** one has:

- 1) Been set free from sin (which occurs in baptism - Ro **6:3-7**)
- 2) Become a slave to God (which occurs when we present our selves as servants of righteousness - Ro **6:17-19**)
- 3) Produced the fruit of holiness - Ro **6:22**
- Note carefully what Paul says: "*...and the end everlasting life.*" Everlasting life comes at "the end" of a life that has borne fruit unto holiness! It is a gift, yes (Ro **6:23**), but in the text Paul is speaking about a gift that one receives at "the end" of the Christian's faithful life!
- b. Comes **after** the resurrection and judgment - Mt **25:31-34,46**
- c. Comes to those who patiently do the will of God! - Ro **2:4-7**
- d. Offers honor, peace and glory to those who receive it - Ro **2:8-11**
- e. Is beautifully described by the apostle John in Re **21:1-7; 22:1-5**

CONCLUSION

1. This is how the gospel addresses the **result** of sin; in response to:
 - a. "**spiritual death**" (where our sins separate us from God) there is "*eternal life*" (in the sense of knowing the Lord, which begins at one's conversion)
 - b. "**physical death**", there is "*the resurrection from the dead*" (which occurs at the coming of Christ)
 - c. The "**second death**" (eternal separation from God), there is "*eternal life*" (in the sense of eternity with God and Christ, which begins after the Judgment)
 - Thus the gospel of Christ effectively deals with the result of sin!
2. I hope that we better understand the wonderful grace of Christ; why Paul calls it "*the gospel of the grace of God*" (Ac **20:24**)...
 - a. Even the **commands** to be obeyed involve God's grace:
 - 1) We must believe in Christ, if we are to stop the love of sin; yet by grace God's Word produces such faith! - Ro **10:17**
 - 2) We must repent, if we are to end the practice of sin; yet it is God's goodness (i.e., by grace) which leads us to repentance - Ro **2:4**
 - 3) We must be baptized into Christ, if we are to change the state of sin; yet, even in this, it is by grace (for God is the one who is at work in cleansing our sins and regenerating us anew) - Co **2:12**
 - b. How much more are the **promises** of the gospel indicative of God's marvelous grace!
 - 1) The remission of sins removes the guilt of sin
 - 2) The gift of the Holy Spirit helps us to overcome the power of sin
 - 3) Eternal life is God's gracious gift in response to the result of sin

Have you accepted the grace of God by obeying the gospel of Christ? If not, may the words of Paul encourage you do so **today**...

We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. - 2 Co 6:1-2