**God’s Plan for Me Lesson 1: Living Without Christ**

Are you saved? Nothing is as important as being saved. Food, water, clothing, and shelter are important. However, these things are only brief, but salvation is eternal.

The gospel has been given because of the need for salvation. “Gospel” literally means “good news.” The best news in the world is that we can be saved. Of course, before any of us can seek salvation, we must be convinced that we are lost sinners.

The first gospel (good news) sermon ever preached is found in Acts 2:14-40. In this sermon the people were told they were sinners, even guilty of crucifying Jesus. Their response was, *“Brethren, what shall we do?”* (Acts 2:37). They only asked such a question because they saw themselves as sinners. They knew they were lost and were anxious to find out what they needed to do to get rid of their sins and be saved.

You and I will never ask, “What shall we do?” until we see ourselves as sinners needing salvation. But when we admit our guilt and become willing to follow God’s way, we can be sure He will save us. Sin is terrible – it separates us from God. Give sober attention to this study and apply it to your own life.

**The Meaning of Sin**

Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4). You can see from this Scripture that sin is anything which is opposed to God’s law. In other words, any thing which goes against the teaching of the gospel (the New Testament) is sin. Here’s the way John said it: *All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not leading to death* (1 John 5:17). There are three different ways in which we can sin.

1. We sin by doing things which God’s Word plainly names as sins, such things as fornication, adultery, drunkenness, idolatry, lying, stealing, murder, hatred, and covetousness. For more information concerning the things we must avoid, see: Matthew 15:19, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 4:25-31, 5:3-4, 2 Timothy 3:2-4, and 1 John 3:15.

2. Not only do we sin by doing the things listed above, but we also sin by failing to do good when we have the opportunity. In other words, God not only wants us to refrain from evil – He also wants us to act in doing good. James said, *“Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin”* (James 4:17).

3. We also sin when we have wrong attitudes. The New Testament doesn’t just disapprove of outward acts – it goes to the heart of the matter and deals with the motives, intentions, and desires. You may see this in such passages as: Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28, Mark 7:21.

**The Origin of Sin**

Sin started with Satan. John said, *“The one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning”* (1 John 3:8). For this reason those who live a life of sin are spoken of as being children of the devil (John 8:44, 1 John 3:10).

Satan is always trying to lead us into sin (John 13:2, Acts 5:3). He does this through temptation (1 Corinthians 7:5, 1 Thessalonians 3:5). Temptation appeals to our natural, fleshly desires (James 1:14, 1 John 2:15-17).

It is not a sin to be tempted. It is only when we yield to temptation that we are guilty of sinning (James 1:12, 15). Even Jesus was tempted, but He did not sin (Matthew 4:1-11, Hebrews 4:15). The fact that Adam and Eve were tempted by what the devil placed before them was not sin. The sin came when they yielded to the temptation and went against God’s law.

The same is true of us. God does not count us sinful because we are tempted – it is when we give in to the temptation and go against God’s law that we become guilty of sin.

**All Have Sinned**

Every responsible person has sinned. None of us can say, “Not guilty.” Paul said, *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”* (Romans 3:23). Since all of us have sinned and the penalty for sin is death (Romans 6:23), we must depend on the grace of God if we are to be saved. That grace is available. Paul tells us we are, *“…being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus”* (Romans 3:24).

We cannot receive salvation on the worth of our own morals and goodness – we are sinners. It makes no difference whether we have sinned little or much; we have violated God’s law. Therefore, we must admit our guilt and seek forgiveness according to God’s plan. The good news is that God has provided a way by which we can be saved.

**The Effects and Results of Sin**

The effects of sin are seen everywhere: separated families, prisons, war, and unhappy people. Without Christ people are miserable. The Bible speaks plainly concerning the condition of those living in sin:

1. They are spiritually sick (Matthew 9:12).

2. They are lost (Luke 19:10).

3. They are children of the devil (John 8:44).

4. They are slaves of sin (Romans 6:16).

5. They live in darkness (Colossians 1:13).

The final result of sin is death. The Bible speaks of two types of death: fleshly and spiritual. Fleshly death is a result of Adam’s sin, not of our own personal sins. All people, regardless of their spiritual condition, must face death of the flesh. However, everyone will be raised or resurrected from the dead. All people will be resurrected regardless of whether they lived good lives or evil lives. *“For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive”* (1 Corinthians 15:21-22). *“Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment”* (John 5:28-29).

We will not have to answer for the sins of Adam. God does not hold us responsible for the sins of others, but only for our own personal disobedience of His law (2 Corinthians 5:10). *“So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God”* (Romans 14:12). Death of the spirit is the penalty for our own sins – the Bible calls it *“the second death.” “But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death”* (Revelation 21:8).

This horrible death is an eternal separation from God and Christ. It keeps the person who continues in sin from going to heaven. Jesus said to those who refused to turn from wrong ways, *“I go away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come”* (John 8:21). *“These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power”* (2 Thessalonians 1:9). This is the final result of a sinful life. Read Romans 6:23 and James 1:15.

**Hell Is Real**

It’s a horrible place where, *“…there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth”* (Matthew 13:42). The horror of it is increased by the fact that those who go there, *“…will be tormented day and night forever and ever”* (Revelation 20:10). For more information, read Matthew 23:33, 25:46, Mark 9:43-48, Luke 12:5, 13:25-28, 1 Corinthians 6:9, Galatians 5:21, Ephesians 5:5, Hebrews 10:27-31, and Revelation 21:27, 22:14-15.

God doesn’t want any of us to go to hell. Hell was, *“…prepared for the devil and his angels”* (Matthew 25:41). It is only when people live their lives in obedience to Satan rather than God that they are given a place in hell. It is not God’s will that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9). This is why He has provided the way for us to escape the guilt of sin. He offers a plan for escape, which we will study in our next lesson.

We are free to choose – we can choose the way that leads to hell or the way that leads to heaven. God will not force any of us to follow the way of salvation (John 5:40). But He invites us and gives us the opportunity to come to Him if we will (Revelation 22:17).

Are you living in sin? If so, we hope this study, showing the terrible results of sin, has caused you to decide to seek God’s help. In our next lesson we will consider the way of escape God offers through the gospel.

**True or False (write T or F in the blank):**

\_\_\_ 1. The word “gospel” means “good news.”

\_\_\_ 2. We will not seek salvation until we know we are lost.

\_\_\_ 3. The only way to sin is to commit an act of wrong.

\_\_\_ 4. We always sin when we are tempted.

\_\_\_ 5. Sin started with Satan.

\_\_\_ 6. Jesus was tempted just as we are.

\_\_\_ 7. All people will be resurrected some day.

\_\_\_ 8. We will be held spiritually accountable for Adam’s sin.

\_\_\_ 9. All unrighteousness is sin.

\_\_\_ 10. We can earn salvation by our own goodness.

**Multiple Choice (write the letter in the blank):**

\_\_\_ 11. *“There is none \_\_\_\_\_, not even one”* (Romans 3:10).

**a - happy b - sinful c - righteous**

\_\_\_ 12. *“For all have \_\_\_\_\_ and fall short of the glory of God”* (Romans 3:23).

**a - made mistakes b - sinned c - blamed others**

\_\_\_ 13. *“For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was \_\_\_\_\_”* (Luke 19:10).

**a - valuable b - lost c - stranded**

\_\_\_ 14. *“Brethren, what shall we \_\_\_\_\_?”* (Acts 2:37).

**a - do b - purchase c - believe**

\_\_\_ 15. *“It is not God’s desire that any should \_\_\_\_\_”* (2 Peter 3:9).

**a - work hard b - be happy c - perish**

\_\_\_ 16. *“For the wages of sin is \_\_\_\_\_”* (Romans 6:23).

**a - pleasure b - death c - silver and gold**

\_\_\_ 17. *“…the free gift of God is \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Romans 6:23).

**a - eternal life b - great wealth c - strong victory**

\_\_\_ 18. *“It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the \_\_\_\_\_”* (Hebrews 10:31).

**a - devil b - evil one c - living God**

\_\_\_ 19. *“Therefore to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is \_\_\_\_\_”* (James 4:17).

**a - much easier b - sin c - lawful**

\_\_\_ 20. *“So then each one of us shall give an account of himself to \_\_\_\_\_”* (Romans 14:12).

**a - God b - the police c - the court**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***Four Lakes Church of Christ  302 Acewood Boulevard  Madison, WI 53714-2511  www.fourlakescoc.org *** [***fourlakeschurch@gmail.com***](mailto:fourlakeschurch@gmail.com)