

How Can I Be Saved?

Lesson 1: Faith in Jesus (Part 2)

Vocabulary:

to reference context	permanent indeed	unforgiveness resentment	to overcome to hold on to
specific	master	pride	verdict
to set something free path	progress selfishness	drunkenness magic	to expose plainly
suffering	to cheat	harmful	in the sight of
wrong turn (idiom)	impurity	smoking	counselor
authority	lust	illegal drugs	to be troubled
to confirm	sexual immorality	idolatry	to accept (n. acceptance)
slave	gossip	to admit	

Discussion

In the first part of Lesson 1 about salvation, we learned about God’s perfect plan to save his children from sin, punishment, and eternal separation from their holy and loving Father. We learned how God taught the ancient Jewish people the concepts of holiness, sin, and forgiveness through the sacrificing of animals. We saw how men’s hearts were revealed: how they turned their relationship with God into rules to follow. They became proud over their own obedience, rather than humble and grateful for God’s mercy. Yet God did not give up on the children he loved. In fact, he loved them so much that instead of punishing them with the physical and spiritual death they deserved, he offered himself as a perfect sacrifice for their sins and gave them this promise: Whoever trusts in his Son Jesus for salvation and turns away from his old life of sin to live a new life for God receives eternal life. God sent his Son Jesus, the living Word of God made human, to save us from eternal separation from our heavenly Father and to teach us how to have an everlasting relationship with him.

From your reading in the Gospels this last week, do you think Jesus is the Word of God? Did he speak and act in the way God would speak and act? Explain.

Perhaps you are still wondering, should I put my faith in Jesus? Will he really save me? How can I follow a God that I don’t know? Perhaps you have already put your faith in Jesus, but you need to be reminded of who he is and his promises for your life. This study will continue to explore who Jesus is and the hope he can bring you as you place your faith and trust in him for your life and salvation.

Jesus is the Light of the World

Jesus tells us how we can *know* that his teachings are true. He says to the Jews who doubt him, “If you continue to obey my teaching, you are truly my followers. Then you will know the truth. And the truth will make you free” (John 8:31-32, ICB). To understand which “teaching” Jesus is **referencing**, we must look at the **context** of Jesus’s statement. In other words, is there a **specific** teaching that we must first obey to know the truth? Jesus first explains to the Jews that he is “the light of the world” (8:12, NIV). He promises that if we follow him, then he will **set us free** from the dark world of sin: “Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (8:12).

Jesus wants us to believe that he is the “light of the world.” What does this phrase mean?

What does it mean to walk in darkness physically? What does it feel like? What does it mean to walk in darkness spiritually? Describe a time when you walked in spiritual darkness. What did it feel like?

When we walk in darkness with no light at all, we can’t see where we are going. Perhaps we bump into things and get hurt, or we get lost because we can’t see the **path**. In the dark, we might feel afraid of people because they can hurt us. We live in fear of pain and death. In the spiritual world, the darkness also represents the world of sin, evil, and separation from God. As we chose the path of sin, we can experience **suffering**, sadness, and broken relationships. We search for love, but we can experience pain instead. We wander without purpose, meaning, and direction. We can feel a sense of emptiness and deep loneliness.

When Jesus says that we will have the light of life, he is promising us that if we follow his teachings and his way of life, he will show us the way to God and the way to true love and life. We will never have to be afraid because he is with us – in danger, in suffering, and even in our mistakes and **wrong turns**. Jude 24-25 says, “God is strong and can keep you from falling. He can bring you before his glory without any wrong in you and give you great joy... To him be glory, greatness, power, and **authority** through Jesus Christ our Lord for all time past, now and forever...” (ERV).

Jesus **confirms** his promise when he says, “Everyone who sins is a **slave** to sin. Now a slave has no **permanent** place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So, if the son sets you free, you will be free **indeed**” (8:36).

What does it mean to be a slave to sin and to be set free from sin?

What is Jesus saying about his power over sin in your life?

A slave is a person who is owned or controlled by someone else. A slave cannot stop being a slave by himself. He must be set free by his **master** or by the ruler who rules over the master. In this case, sin is our master, but Jesus is the ruler or Master over sin. As God, he is the only one who can truly set us free from being slaves to sin and darkness.

You might be wondering, “Do I really need to be set free from sin? What is sin? Am I really a slave to sin? Do I really need Jesus’s sacrifice to be saved?” Perhaps we don’t even recognize sin in our lives, or we have no desire to change. Perhaps we’ve tried to change but have never seen any **progress**. Jesus says that if we believe that he is the only way to God, the only truth, and the only true light of life (8:12, 14:6), then we *will* be set free from sin. God’s plan of salvation will be fulfilled in us. Change is possible, but this is not something we can do by ourselves. We need Jesus.

What is sin? Write down some examples of sin, and discuss why these are sins.

Sin is anything that hurts God, others, and ourselves. Examples of sin might include **selfishness**, lying, **cheating**, **impurity** or **lust**, **sexual immorality**, **rebellion**, anger, loving money, **gossip**, **unforgiveness**, **resentment**, **pride**, **drunkenness**, **magic**, doing something **harmful** to our bodies (such as **smoking** or using **illegal drugs**), or **idolatry**. Idolatry can include the worship of people or statues, but idolatry is also

placing someone or something above our relationship with God, such as school, a job, family, friends, a relationship, or spouse. Sin comes in many forms. Maybe we have a hard time saying we're sorry or **admitting** that we're wrong. Maybe we don't spend time with God or think much about him. Maybe we think that we are perfect and never sin, or that our sins are not as bad as others. This is called self-righteousness. The more we learn about sin, the more we see that we are all sinners who need God's salvation and forgiveness.

Look at some of the examples of sin and underline the sins that you have in your life or have experienced in the past. Share. (See also Galatians 5:19-26, Ephesians 4:17-32, 5:3-20, II Timothy 3:1-5.)

Looking at your list, do you want Jesus to help you to **overcome** these sins? Explain.

Even if you already believe in Jesus and have not seen change or growth in some areas, Jesus can help you to overcome sin and your desire for sin, for sin is no longer your master. This is his promise. But if we are **holding onto** sin in our hearts, then we will never truly come into the light or understand the truth. We may always stay in a place where we question God or Jesus and never seem to be able to follow his teachings. Jesus tells us the truth about why this happens:

¹⁹This is the **verdict**: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds [or actions] were evil. ²⁰Everyone who does evil hates the light and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be **exposed**. ²¹But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen **plainly** that what they have done has been done **in the sight of** God. (John 3:19-21, NIV)

According to Jesus, why do people not come into his light and follow him?

Jesus says that if we truly come into the light, we will expose our sin. Why will a person who is following Jesus want to do this?

Jesus promises us that if we believe that he is God and Savior of the world (John 8:24, 27-28) and expose our sin, he *will* transform our lives. Then we will *know* the truth because we see how he has changed us! But if we refuse to believe, hide our sin, or hold onto sin, then we will never see the truth. We will remain in darkness and eternal separation from our Father in heaven. To the Jews in John 8, Jesus says this: "I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am he [God the Father and the Messiah], you will indeed die in your sins" (8:24).

Have you ever come into the light of Jesus? If yes, describe that experience. How has following Jesus changed your life? If you do not want to come into his light, talk about why and what might help you.

Jesus is Our Counselor

When Jesus says, "Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will *have* the light of life" (8:12), he also means that he will be *in* us. How can Jesus be in us? Jesus explains in John 14 when he says, "But the **Counselor**, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and

remind you of everything I have told you” (14:26, CSB). Do you remember when Isaiah [i-ZAY-uh] the prophet called the Son born of a virgin, “Wonderful Counselor”? This Counselor is Jesus’s Spirit living in us when we place our faith in him. He will be in us to remind us of everything he taught. He will lead us to what is true and right and help us in our time of need.

Jesus goes on to say that the Holy Spirit will bring us peace: “Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give as the world gives. Your heart must not **be troubled** or fearful” (14:27).

How does the world teach us to have peace? How will Jesus’s peace be different?

The world teaches us to have peace in our job, our education, our money, relationships, marriage, family, appearance, health, or social status. We’re at peace if we have cars, food, and clothes. Jesus promises to provide enough for us (Matthew 6:25-34), but he is offering a different kind of peace – a peace that he will be with us in danger, sadness, suffering, pain, and even death. He promises us a peace that we have been made right with God and that we can feel secure that the Father **accepts** us and loves us. We can find our peace in his **acceptance**, not the people’s acceptance of us or in the things of this world. Jesus never promises us a life without suffering, but he does promise to be with us, guide us, and comfort us when we suffer. He explains more about his peace in John 16: “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you *will* have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (16:33, NIV).

If you are a follower of Jesus, have you ever felt Jesus with you during a time of suffering? If you are not a follower of Jesus, have you ever experienced suffering and felt alone and wanted a true friend to be with you? Explain.

From the study on faith in Jesus, we’ve learned that Jesus is God’s plan for our salvation. God sent himself, his Word in the form of Jesus, to show us how to be saved and how to follow his plan for our lives: to turn from sin and live a life of loving God and others. Jesus is able to help us because he is the light of the world and our divine Counselor who lives inside us if we put our faith in him and his sacrifice for our sins.

Does Jesus’s message of salvation give you peace? Explain.

This Week:

Write in your journal:

1. Continue reading one of the Gospels. Make a note of Jesus’s actions, words, and way of life. Is Jesus the light of the world? Do you think his teachings are true and right? Write your thoughts.
2. Write a letter to Jesus about the sins in your life and what his forgiveness means to you. Write about what a new life in Christ would look like for you. Share your letter with a Christian friend.
3. Go to the E²T² [Transform](#) page of [Connectthenations.com](#). At the top of the list of studies, open the documents: *The Promises of God* and *My Identity in Christ*. Read a few verses each day to strengthen your faith and remind you of Jesus’s promises for your life.
4. Complete the next study: *Hope in Jesus*.