

Packer, J.I. "Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God"; Inter-Varsity Press; 1961 (quotes from pages 70-71)

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THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST



PROLOGUE

The GOSPEL of Jesus Christ is GOOD NEWS. One reason it's such good news is that it's not all about us, but all about GOD. That may sound disappointing at first, but it's actually the key to true happiness and lasting joy.

“Then I looked, and I heard around the throne... the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, ‘Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!’”
(Rev. 5:11-12)

The rest of this booklet shows how true happiness and joy are found only when we can shout these same words from the bottom of our hearts.

THE TRUTH ABOUT GOD



“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” (Gen.1:1) This means that God is the owner and master of the world. He is **“Lord of heaven and earth.”** (Acts 17:24b) God is far bigger than all our ideas of Him. **“He does not live in temples made by man... We ought not to think that the divine being is an image formed by the art and imagination of man.”** (Acts 17:24c, 29) God does not fit in any of our boxes. As Creator, God is supreme over everything.

**GOD IS FAR
BIGGER
THAN ALL OUR
IDEAS OF HIM**

God is the Giver and Sustainer of life. **“He Himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.”** (Acts 17:25b) This means that God doesn't need anything at all from us – **“nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything.”** (Acts 17:25a)



Instead, we are completely dependent on God. God didn't make the world and then leave it to run on its own. Even today, we are dependent upon God for every breath we take, every meal we eat, "and everything."

Because God is our Creator and Sustainer, it is our highest privilege and responsibility to seek after God, and serve Him, and worship Him. **"He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God."** (Acts 17:26-27)
"God created man in His own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." (Gen. 1:27)

**GOD
CREATED MAN
IN HIS OWN
IMAGE**



We were created in God's image so that we, uniquely among all God's creation, might know Him and enjoy Him and bring Him glory.

"Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created." (Rev. 4:11)

As the Creator, Sustainer, and Ruler of all things, God is also the righteous Judge of all the world. **"He has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness."**

(Acts 17:31)

**THIS IS THE
TRUTH ABOUT GOD.**

THE TRUTH ABOUT SIN



Sin is any failure to perfectly obey God's Law. **"For the one who obeys the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it."** (James 2:10; NET) **"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."** (Rom. 3:23)

For many of us, our sin is not in blatant, outward deeds of criminal activity, but in our heart's refusal to honor God, as God. **"For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened... they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever!"** (Rom. 1:21, 25) Jesus said, **"You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts."** (Luke 16:15)

It's because God always looks at the heart that Jesus could say: **"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment... You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart."** (Mat. 5:21-22, 27-28)

When asked what was the greatest commandment in God's law, Jesus responded: **"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself."** (Mat. 22:37-39)





The Bible tells the story of a man who was extremely good and moral in his own sight and in the sight of all others – but not in the sight of God, because His heart was covetous. Even in the midst of all his good deeds, he was still breaking God's law - living for self rather than for God. (Luke 18:18-27)

**NO ONE
NATURALLY
SEEKS FOR GOD
ON GOD'S OWN TERMS**

Now maybe we can see how true these words are: **“There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God.”** (Rom. 3:10-11; NASB) No one naturally seeks for God on God's own terms – according to God's own revelation of Himself. **“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way.”** (Isa. 53:6)

We may reject God entirely and shake our fists in His face, or we may deny He exists, or we may invent our own ideas about God and our own self-serving ways of coming to Him – but all of us have turned—every one—to his own way.

Our sin makes us guilty, and this guilt brings upon all of us God's righteous judgment. **“The LORD of hosts will be exalted in judgment, and the holy God will show Himself holy in righteousness.”** (Isa. 5:16) **“Because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. He will render to each one according to his works... for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.”** (Rom. 2:5-6, 8) **“For the... unbelieving... 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.”** (Rev. 21:8)





We are all deserving objects of God's everlasting wrath. **"Sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned."** (Rom. 5:12)

**THIS IS THE
TRUTH ABOUT SIN.**

THE TRUTH ABOUT JESUS



God is not only holy and righteous; He is also loving and merciful. In God's infinite love and mercy, He sent His only Son to provide salvation for sinners. The Bible says of Jesus, **"He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth."** (1 Pet. 2:22) Jesus Himself said: **"I can do nothing on my own... I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me."** (John 5:30) Jesus lived the life that none of us can ever live. He was perfectly holy and righteous.

He never broke even one of God's laws – even in His heart. He always loved God with all of His heart, soul, mind, and strength, and His neighbor as Himself.

**HE
NEVER
BROKE
EVEN ONE OF
GOD'S LAWS**



But when Jesus died, His was the death of a cursed sinner and lawbreaker. In His death on a cross, He suffered the torments of God's holy wrath in the place of sinners like you and me. The prophet Isaiah wrote of these things ahead of time to those who trusted in God, **“He lifted up our illnesses, he carried our pain; even though we thought he was being punished, attacked by God, and afflicted for something he had done. He was wounded because of our rebellious deeds, crushed because of our sins.”** (Isa. 53:4-5; NET)

**JESUS SUFFERED THE
TORMENTS
OF GOD'S HOLY WRATH
IN THE PLACE OF
SINNERS
LIKE YOU AND ME**

On the cross, Jesus cried out in spiritual and physical agony: **“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me.”** (Mat. 27:46)

The Apostles Paul and John wrote to Christians with these wonderful words, **“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.”** (Gal. 3:13) **“For our sake [God] made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”** (2 Cor. 5:21) **“In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”** (1 John 4:10; Propitiation means the turning away of God's wrath)

When God raised Jesus from the dead, He showed that Christ's sacrifice on the cross was not in vain, but that it was fully acceptable to God. **“[Christ Jesus] was declared to be the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead.”** (Rom. 1:4)





The Apostle Paul wrote to Christians in Rome, **“He was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.”** (Rom. 4:25)

And now the Bible tells us that Jesus has been **“exalted to the right hand of God.”** He is reigning now as King, preparing and ordering all things for the day of His return. (Acts 2:33-36) **“[God] has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”** (Acts 17:31)

In his life on earth Jesus gained a perfect righteousness for sinners. There is nothing that we could ever add to this righteousness. In His death on the cross, Jesus suffered God’s curse in the place of guilty sinners like us. **“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”** (Rom. 8:1)



The wrath of God is coming. And yet in God’s love, He has made the perfect provision for our salvation in His Son, Jesus Christ. **“There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”**
(Acts 4:12)

**WHAT, THEN, MUST
WE DO TO BE SAVED?**

THE TRUTH ABOUT REPENTANCE & FAITH




“God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent.” (Acts 17:30) Repentance is exchanging the mastery of sin for the mastery of Jesus Christ (Mat. 6:24). “Repentance is a change of mind and heart, a new life of denying self and serving the Savior as King in self’s place.” (J.I. Packer)

“The sorrow [for sin] that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation.” (2 Cor. 7:10) God is declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent – and believe.

“This is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ.” (1 John 3:23) **“Jesus [said], ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.’”** (John 6:29) **“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”** (John 3:16)

In the Bible, believing means trusting. “Faith is... the casting and resting of oneself and one’s confidence on the promises of mercy which Christ has given to sinners, and on the Christ who gave those promises... Abandon all confidence in [self] and... trust wholly in Christ and the power of His redeeming blood to give... acceptance with God.” (J.I. Packer)
“For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so that no one can boast.” (Eph. 2:8-9; NET)

Jesus stands now willing and waiting to welcome all who will come to Him in repentance and faith. **“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”** (Mat. 11:28) **“Let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.”** (Rev. 22:17)



**JESUS
STANDS
NOW**
WILLING & WAITING

**TO WELCOME ALL
WHO WILL COME TO HIM
IN REPENTANCE & FAITH**



THE TRUTH ABOUT ASSURANCE



When God saves us, He gives us a new heart with new desires. **“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”** (2 Cor. 5:17) As God’s new creation, we will naturally bear more and more of the fruits of repentance and faith. It’s in this way that we can **“have the full assurance of hope until the end.”** (Heb. 6:11)

The first fruit of repentance and faith is feeling the need to acknowledge our sins and regularly seek Christ’s cleansing. **“If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”** (1 John 1:8-9; NASB)


The second fruit of repentance and faith is that we gratefully walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which we have been called. (Eph. 4:1)

The question is this: Will you refuse to love the truth and be saved? Or will you **“confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead”**? (Rom. 10:9) **“For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, ‘Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame’... for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’”** (Rom. 10:10-13)

**THIS IS THE
TRUTH ABOUT
REPENTANCE & FAITH.**

“By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, ‘I have come to know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked... If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.” (1 John 2:3-6, 29; NASB)

The third fruit of repentance and faith is love for our brothers and sisters in Christ. **“We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death... Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of**




God and knows God...Whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him.” (1 John 3:14; 4:7; 5:1; NASB)

Remember, we don't place any trust in the fruit. We rely only upon the promises of God. We depend only upon God's faithfulness to His word and His free provision of salvation through Jesus Christ. God promises that He will keep us and enable us to persevere to the end of our lives in true repentance and saving faith.

**GOD PROMISES
THAT HE WILL GIVE
ETERNAL LIFE
TO ALL WHO BELIEVE**

“By God's power [you] are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” (1 Pet. 1:5)
“Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.” (1 Thess. 5:24; NASB)





“We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.”

(1 John 5:18)

God promises that He will give eternal life to all who believe. Jesus said, **“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.”** (John 5:24)

“This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life.”

(1 John 2:25; NASB)

**THIS IS THE
TRUTH ABOUT ASSURANCE.**

EPILOGUE

When we come to God in repentance and faith, then we will love the truth that it's not all about us, but all about God and His amazing grace to sinners like us.

“After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, and all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb... and crying out with a loud voice, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’ And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, ‘Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.’” (Rev. 7:9-12)