



## **“Preaching Jesus As Savior”**

**Kevin Presley**

We are involved in a series about preaching the Jesus of the Bible to a lost world. As recent surveys have shown, there is a great need to preach the person and work of Jesus to people who profess to be His church. We’ve learned how Jesus the Son of Man was also the Son of God—Immanuel or *God with us*. He was the Christ—the Anointed One by God and the Holy Spirit—to be our Prophet (representing God to us), our Priest (representing us to God), and our King (to rule over us). He has been made Lord—given power over all and master of all. These titles and offices that belong to the Lord Jesus that we have been studying are all vitally significant. They all point to Him as our Savior.

You see, Jesus is God’s answer for the root of every problem the world today faces and that is sin. He came to this world to save it, but what does that mean? In what sense did He come to save the world? In **Acts 5**, Peter and the other apostles were called into account for the preaching that they were doing despite the warnings of the Jewish leaders to stop. They were preaching Jesus and by the council’s own admission, they had filled the city of Jerusalem with the message of Jesus the Christ. Peter told the council that their allegiance was to a higher power than them—that is, God.

**Acts 5:30-31** **“The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.”**

Peter preached Jesus as Savior. When the apostles preached Jesus to the world, they didn’t preach Him as a great philosopher. They didn’t present Him merely as a great teacher, a revolutionary leader, or a positive influence. They preached Jesus as the Christ of God and as the Savior of the world. We’re not preaching Jesus if our preaching does not do three things: convict the world of their sins, point them to Jesus as the Savior from their sins, and preach what Jesus told us to preach about how they can be saved through Him. Today, we want to think about Jesus as not only Son, Christ, Lord, and King; particularly today, we want to think of Him as our Savior.

When King Jesus gave His marching orders to His ambassadors, the apostles, before ascending to His throne in heaven, He told them this:

**Mark 16:15-16** “And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”

The good news of the gospel is that Jesus came, died, was buried, and arose again to save sinners. Paul said those very facts constitute the gospel by which we are saved (**I Corinthians 15:1-6**). But how and why does that message save? Why do we even need a savior? We’ve already pointed out in this series of lessons that many fail to understand the person and the work of Jesus. That is an alarming trend in our religious world today. That’s proven by the fact that a growing number of self-professing ‘evangelical Christians’ don’t even believe that Jesus was actually God. They say He was a good teacher, a good man, sent from God to be a prophet or so forth, but He wasn’t actually God in the flesh. Therefore, they believe that one can go to heaven without believing and following Him and that people of all religions of the world will ultimately be saved. Friend, if we truly understand the claims of Jesus, there is no other conclusion that can be reached except that He is the one and only way through which man can approach a holy God and be saved.

The fact is, one will not understand the person and work of Jesus until understanding the nature of sin. Why would man seek a savior if he doesn’t believe he needs to be saved? That’s one of the missing links in much of our modern preaching. We have so glossed over and made-over sin until why would people see the need for a savior? I sometimes hear people ask, *Why be so negative? Why all this preaching about sin and talking about what’s wrong in the world? Why not just preach Jesus?* Understand that you can’t preach Jesus without preaching about sin because people will never see their need for Jesus until they understand the guilt and condemnation of their sin. Why would a man go see a doctor if he feels good and thinks he’s healthy? Once when Jesus was criticized by the Pharisees for eating with Matthew and other tax collectors and sinners, He replied thus:

**Luke 5:31-32** “Jesus answered and said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”

Sometimes people seize upon this verse to characterize Jesus as thinking that sin is not a big deal because He ate with sinners, but the very opposite is true. Jesus referred to Matthew the tax collector and others with whom He was eating as *sick and in need of a physician*. The fact is, all of the world is sick and in need of a physician—Jesus, the Great Physician. The problem was with the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders. Many of the common people at least had the honesty of heart to see their guilt and their sin and their need of a savior. They were open to receiving Jesus and believing in Him. But the Pharisees rejected Jesus and one of the reasons was that they didn’t think they needed the kind of savior that Jesus came to be. Oh, they needed and wanted a savior; just not the kind of savior that Jesus was. They wanted a political savior or redeemer, as we’ve already pointed out in this series. They wanted a messiah to deliver them from Rome and Caesar’s taxation, but they saw no need for one to save them from their sins. They had their own righteousness, you see. Their own sacrifices and religious rites in the temple and their Pharisaic traditions with which to please and honor God. But ironically, in God’s eyes they were some of the worst sinners of all. Does that mean that one kind of sinner was better or more acceptable than another? No, not at all.

**Romans 3:10 “As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one;”**

There is none righteous among the religious or the irreligious. There is NONE righteous, no, not one.

**Romans 3:23 “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”**

But here’s the question that lies at the very heart of the matter: why does sin necessitate a savior? Why do we need to be saved from sin? What is it about sin that required God to come in the flesh, live here on earth, die on a cross, and come back to life? It’s one thing to acknowledge that those things occurred; it’s another matter to understand WHY they had to occur. Frankly, that’s why so many are missing the entire point of Christianity today. I don’t think many people—especially those who profess to be Christians—deny the existence of sin. Secularists deny sin’s existence; they won’t call it sin. Many will be quick to point out that all of us as accountable human beings sin, but what they will deny or at least fail to grasp is the condemnation of sin. Why is sin a big deal? What is sin? Well, the Bible says that sin is *the transgression of the law of God*.

**I John 3:4 “Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.”**

We sin by doing things that break the law of God. James tells us that sin is also *failing to do what God tells us to do*.

**James 4:17 “Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.”**

So, we sin by doing those things that are wrong and also by failing to do those things that are right. It’s not a matter of some sins being bad and others being not so bad in the eyes of God, or that some sins are of greater consequence while others are not a big deal. It’s not measuring myself against someone else and thinking their sins are worse than mine and therefore he’s in trouble in the eyes of God but God doesn’t judge me as harshly—not at all. In the eyes of God, sin is sin. There may be sins that bring different earthly consequences in this life, but sin is sin. There is no sin that can escape the condemnation and wrath of God. It’s not because God just arbitrarily chooses to treat sin that way. It’s imperative that we understand that God views sin that way because it is who God is. It’s God’s very nature. We like to point out that God is loving, kind, benevolent, gracious, merciful, patient...all of those things. And He is. But we don’t know anything about God if we don’t first and foremost realize that He is holy.

**Isaiah 6:3 “And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!”**

Everything we see about God has to be seen through the lens of His holiness. The word *holy* means *set apart*. God is set apart. He doesn’t choose to be holy; He IS holy. He is perfect. He is truth. He is light as opposed to the darkness of sin. He is the perfect standard of right. Righteousness and truth flow forth from God Himself, from His nature, His character, His very being or He wouldn’t be God. Listen, my friend. Morality is not an evolutionary construct as some allege. Whether a person acknowledges it or not, morality comes from God. For example, it’s wrong to lie because God is truth. Sin violates the holiness and the very nature of God Himself.

**Habakkuk 1:13 “You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours A person more righteous than he?”**

So, God is holy. His holiness will never be compromised. Don't ever think that God forgiving sin is the same as God overlooking sin. God forgives sin, but He does not overlook sin. God never turns the other way or sweeps sin under the rug. NEVER. It is not only the violation of His perfect standard, but an affront to the holiness of the One who created us for His purpose and His glory. He cannot overlook sin. If we cannot understand that, we cannot even begin to understand—much less appreciate—the gospel and the mission of Christ.

When man sinned in the beginning of time in the Garden of Eden, it introduced corruption. It introduced all kinds of consequences into this otherwise wonderful and perfect world that God had created. Since the time of Adam, every man and every woman has sinned against and offended the God of heaven. *There is none righteous; no, not one.* That includes you and that includes me. With sin's entrance into the world came death. Death in every form.

**Genesis 2:17** “but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

God said to Adam the day that he broke God's commandment that he would die. There are two kinds of death that resulted in Adam's case and consequently in the case of every person who has sinned since. First of all, everyone dies physically as a consequence of Adam's sin. Paul made that plain.

**Romans 5:12** “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—”

Our earthly path without exception—young, old, rich, poor, religious, irreligious, it doesn't matter—slopes toward the grave because Adam brought sin and death into this world.

**Romans 6:23** “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

There is also spiritual death that is the result of sin. When a person reaches the age that he/she becomes accountable to God and we sin, we are declared spiritually dead. Like Adam was driven from the Garden of Eden, out of God's presence and cut off from His fellowship. Like Adam, we become cut off from God, the source of life, and we spiritually die. That's what death is: a separation. In physical death, it's the separation of spirit and body. In spiritual death, it's when God's creation is separated from Him. That is spiritual death.

**James 2:26** “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”  
**Ephesians 2:1** “And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,”

So, Christ Jesus saves the sinner first from spiritual death, and ultimately from physical death by the resurrection at His second coming. Let's first talk about spiritual death. I want to repeat: every unconverted sinner is spiritually dead and there is not a single exception to that. You may say, *What's the big deal about that? Why should I be concerned about that?* It's a pretty big deal to have no relationship with God, the Creator of the universe, your Creator. The God of glory, of light, of love, of life. To have no fellowship with the God who loves you, who created you, who wants to bless you and give you eternal life, but sin has interrupted that relationship and that union.

**Ephesians 2:12 “that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.”**

To be without God is to have no hope in this world. Sin leaves us separated from God and without God. That describes the sinner’s condition whether he/she realizes it or not. If you are in your sins today, it describes you. Listen to what John beheld in the revelation shown to him.

**Revelation 20:14-15 “Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”**

My friend, it is terrible enough to be spiritually dead while you go through this short earthly life, and it is a grim fact we all face that at some point we will have to cross through that shadowy vale of physical death. But the worst fate of all awaits the one who dies in sin. That is the second death. To be cast into a devil’s hell for eternity. To be banished from the presence and the glory of God and His power forever. I want you to understand today that there IS a hell. This book teaches that there is an eternal hell. It brings me no joy to preach and warn of that, but the Bible teaches it. And it is the just and deserved penalty of sin. If we don’t understand that, how can we ever understand the good news of the gospel? The good news that Jesus saves!

Jesus stepped from eternity into time and space and dwelt here for 33 short years. He lived a perfect, sinless life. He spoke the wonderful words of life. He laid out and walked the pathway of life. But we’re not saved by Jesus’ philosophy. We’re not even saved by following His example. He did not come merely to give us a better philosophy to live by, and if we do so perhaps we’ll be good enough for God—no, no. Don’t misunderstand—He set an example that Christians are to follow. But we’re not saved because we live like Jesus lived; we’re saved because we die like Jesus died. Jesus died to deal with our death in sin and He arose again to bring us forth from sin’s death to new life. In that new life, we live like Jesus lived, but we’re saved because Jesus died. Believer or unbeliever understands that Jesus’ life ended on a Roman cross. That’s not just a fact of history, but that was God’s determinate purpose. He ultimately came here to die. Why? Because sin requires payment. If the wages of sin is death and if the consequence of sin is separation from God because He is holy, and sin rightly and justly incurs His wrath, then for me, the sinner, to be reconciled to holy God requires that my sin be punished according to God’s word and atoned for. And man cannot do that for himself. Man cannot bear the punishment that sin merits and that must be meted out and yet live. That’s what it means to say that sin brings condemnation. Every sin that you or I commit must be punished or God is not holy. If you are living in your sins, that’s where you stand in the sight of God. You’re condemned in your sins. God does not overlook sin; He punishes sin.

**John 3:18 ““He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.**

But here’s the good news of the gospel. We have a savior. We have a Moses to lead us out of sin’s slavery. We have a David to step in and defeat our Goliath of sin and death. His name is Jesus, the same name as *Joshua* in the Old Testament, derived from the Hebrew name *Yehoshua*, meaning *Yahweh saves!* When Joseph was told by the angel of God that Mary would bear the Christ child, the angel said this:

**Matthew 1:21 "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."**

Jesus met God's perfect standard by living a sinless life—something none of us can ever do though we may (and should) try. But we will always fall short of the mark. Jesus met the righteous standard of God. He was subjected to every temptation common to man, and He did so without sin.

**Hebrews 4:15 "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin."**

Thus, when He died upon the cross, He was an unblemished, perfect sacrifice. He was dying as the sacrificial offering for our sin. His death was substitutionary. His death was vicarious. Only He met the qualification to do that so the debt could be paid. Because He paid the debt that we had not the ability to pay, because he was the perfect, unblemished sacrifice that could never otherwise be found to lay on the altar before God, He atoned for sin.

**II Corinthians 5:21 "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."**

That can be translated that God made the sinless One the sin offering. In other words, the simple gospel is by giving Himself in our place upon the cross that we deserve, He atoned for our sin before a holy God. He met the requirement of God. He propitiated or appeased God's wrath, and as the Christ, the Anointed of God, He was anointed our great High Priest, who then went behind the heavenly veil that we had no right to enter. He offered His own blood before God as an atonement and payment for the sins of those who put their obedient faith in Him. When He died, satisfying the divine requirement for the redemption of sinful man, He arose again three days later, triumphing over death. He removed its sting and its curse so that we now have the hope of eternal life.

Those words may sound simple, basic, and rudimentary, but they're not. They are the most wonderful and profound words ever spoken in this world. It's why Jesus is the only way to heaven. Mohammed didn't die for you. Mohammed can't take your sins or pay the debt you owe to God. Buddha can't do one thing about your sins before God. The wisdom and philosophy of Confucius will leave you in your sins. But Jesus is Savior. As God's Son, He stepped from the portals of glory into this world to reveal God to us. As the Christ, He came to minister to this world. As Lord, He rules this world. As King, He triumphs over this world, reigns in the hearts of His people, and rules over this universe. And as Savior, He came to bear your sins away. But you must place your faith and your trust in Him, obeying His gospel for Him to be your Savior.

**©2020 BibleWay Media. All rights reserved.**

BibleWay Media grants permission to copy this material for personal use. Permission is also granted to distribute this transcript as long as it is reproduced in its entirety, used solely for its original purpose of spreading the gospel, and attribution is given to the author and Let the Bible Speak.