

# How to Be Saved



## SABBATH—JULY 26

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Luke 5:27–32; Luke 13:1–5; Matthew 22:2–14; Zechariah 3:1–5; John 8:30, 31; Luke 14:25–27.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “ ‘Moses lifted up the snake in the desert. The Son of Man must be lifted up also. Then everyone who believes in him can live with God forever’ ” (John 3:14, 15, NlrV).

**THE ISRAELITES WERE BEING BITTEN BY SNAKES IN THE DESERT.** God commanded Moses to make a bronze snake and put it on a pole. Whoever was bitten could look at the snake and be saved.

Can a bronze snake really heal people? No! Healing comes only from God. But by looking at the bronze statue, the Israelites showed their faith in God as their only hope of life and salvation.

The Lord wanted to teach them a spiritual lesson. He turned a symbol of death into a symbol of life. That bronze serpent was a symbol of Christ. He became the Bearer (Carrier) of our sins in order to save us. By faith, we can all look to Christ lifted up on the cross. There we can find a cure for the deadly sting of the old serpent, Satan. If we do not, we are sure to die in our sins. The Word of God explains what should be very clear. As humans, we are sinners in need of grace. That grace has been offered to us in Christ Jesus.

This week we will study Jesus' teachings about the simple steps needed for salvation.

## RECOGNIZE YOUR NEED (Luke 5:27–32)

**Read Luke 5:27–32. How can you know which group you are in?**

Many people are physically healthy and have no need of a physician (doctor). But who is spiritually healthy? Of all humans, “No one does anything good, no one at all” (Psalm 14:3, Nlrv). Nobody is righteous (holy) by themselves (Romans 3:10). We may do some good actions. But we cannot make ourselves righteous before God. So, when Jesus said that He had “ ‘not come to get those who think they are right with God’ ” (Luke 5:32, Nlrv), Jesus was talking about the Pharisees (religious leaders), who *thought* they were righteous. But they really were not. Unfortunately, they believed that they were right with God, but they were blind spiritually (John 9:40, 41).

The first step to receive the cure for sin is to recognize our sinful condition. We also need to know that we cannot heal ourselves spiritually. But how can we see our real need if we are blind? How can we admit that we are sinners if our sins are preventing us from recognizing our true condition?

**How can our spiritual eyes be opened so that we may recognize our great need for a Savior? Read John 16:8.**

Only “eye medicine” can make us see our real spiritual condition. This medicine is the Holy Spirit. Before He can do any other work for us, Jesus has to make us aware of sin. Continuously Jesus calls to our consciences in order to make us aware of our sins and create in us a deep sense of guilt. Our consciences lead us to desire a Savior. When we hear that call, we must listen and obey it. If not, we will be so hardened against the Holy Spirit that nothing can be done for us. What a scary thought!

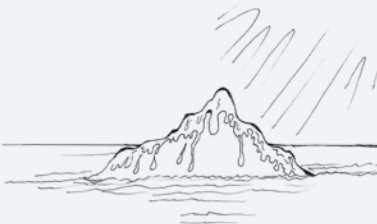
**Guilt is often a bad thing. But in what ways has the Holy Spirit been able to use guilt to your own spiritual advantage?**



**We cannot receive the cure for sin until we recognize we are sinners.**



**Only “eye medicine” (the Holy Spirit) can help us see our sinfulness.**

REPENT<sup>1</sup> (Luke 13:1–5)

**The ice of false pride  
can melt only in the  
warmth of God's love.**

Recognizing our sins is not enough. It must come with repentance (turning from sin). The Bible's meaning of repentance includes three parts: (1) admission of one's sin, (2) sorrow for having sinned, and (3) the desire not to sin anymore. If something is missing, there is no true repentance. For example, Judas admitted his sin. But he was not sad for having betrayed the Master (Matthew 27:3, 4). He felt bad, but he did not repent. Judas confessed because he was afraid of the results, not because of his love for Christ.

It is clear that repentance is important. This is because John the Baptist and Jesus began their ministry (work done for God) by preaching, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand [near]!" (Matthew 3:2; Matthew 4:17, NKJV). Later, Jesus sent the Twelve on their first missionary trip. They went out, preaching "that people should repent" (Mark 6:12, NKJV). And after Pentecost,<sup>2</sup> Peter encouraged the crowd to do the same (Acts 2:38; Acts 3:19).

**Jesus used strong words to show the great need for repentance in order to be saved. What message is He giving us here in Luke 13:1–5?**

Jesus pointed to the sinfulness of all people. So He urged His hearers: "Unless you [if you do not] turn away from your sins, you will all die too" (verse 5, NIV). Without repentance, freedom from sin is impossible. This is because when people do not repent, it means that they refuse to surrender to the Lord.

Now, we have been told, "God's kindness is meant to turn you away from your sins" (Romans 2:4, NIV). What does that mean? A block of ice can be broken into small pieces. But the broken pieces will still be ice. That same block of ice can be placed next to a heater, and it will melt away into water. The ice of our false pride can melt only if we are close to the warmth of God's goodness and love. So, it is important for us to remember all the examples of God's love for us.

"We do not repent so that God will love us. But He shows us His love so that we may repent."—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 189.

**What are the examples of God's love? What have you experienced and learned that gives you powerful reasons to trust in His goodness? Why is it important to remember those reasons during bad times?**

### DEFINITIONS

1. repent—to sorrow for one's sins and turn away from sinning with the help of the Holy Spirit.
2. Pentecost—the time when Jesus' followers received the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This was after Jesus rose from the dead and went back to heaven (Acts 2:1–4).

**BELIEVE IN JESUS (Luke 7:48, 50)**

True repentance comes with faith in Jesus as our only Savior. Jesus often talked about the need to believe in Him in order to receive His blessings. “ ‘If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes’ ” (Mark 9:23, NKJV). Faith is very important if we are to be saved. Satan knows that. This is why He makes every effort to keep us from believing (Luke 8:12).

According to Jesus, what does it mean to believe? It is more than a feeling that something will just happen. It is more than a mental exercise. Saving faith is not just nothing. Instead, faith has an important goal: Jesus Christ. Faith is believing in *Someone* (Jesus). Faith is trusting in Jesus and His death for us. Believing in Jesus means knowing Him, understanding who He is (John 6:69), and receiving Him personally (John 1:12).

God so loved the world that He gave us Jesus. All people who truly believe in Him will have eternal life. His death does not mean that everyone will be saved. We have to be covered by His righteousness. By believing in Him, we have righteousness. We also have the great promise that He will raise us up at the last day (John 6:40).

**To a woman who had lived a sinful life, Jesus gave hope: “ ‘Your sins are forgiven. . . . Your faith has saved you’ ” (Luke 7:48, 50, NKJV). What does that mean? Does our faith save us?**

The Gospels say that when Jesus healed some people, He said to them, “ ‘Your faith has made you well’ ” (Matthew 9:22; Mark 10:52; Luke 17:19, NKJV). By saying these words, Jesus was not giving any healing power to their faith. Their faith was just a complete (full) trust in Jesus’ power to heal them. The power of faith does not come from the person who believes. Instead, it comes from the God in whom that person believes.

**Why must we be very careful in how we understand the way that faith works when we pray? This is true when we pray for healing. Why is it wrong to think that if healing does not come as we pray, it is because we do not have enough faith?**

**THE WEDDING GARMENT (ROBE) (Matthew 22:2–14)**

**The wedding robe is Christ's perfect life.**

Jesus sat before the people and spoke what must have seemed like shocking words to them: “ ‘You must be more godly than the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. If you are not, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven’ ” (Matthew 5:20, NIV). Few were more strict in following the law than the Pharisees. But the Pharisees failed because they were more interested in making a “show” to men than in pleasing God. Jesus warns us not to do the same (Matthew 6:1).

Then how can we be righteous before God? The parable<sup>3</sup> of the marriage feast gives us an example of what true righteousness means.

**Read Matthew 22:2–14. Why did the king want to be sure that every guest had the wedding garment (robe) for the feast? What did that garment represent? Read Isaiah 61:10; Zechariah 3:1–5.**

The king gave the wedding robes free of charge to the guests. Those present were invited while traveling on the highways. They probably did not have the right clothes for the wedding. And they probably did not have money to buy them. Both the invitation and the garment were gifts from the king. The only requirement needed to attend the feast was to accept both gifts.

Since the Fall in the Garden of Eden, every person is spiritually naked. Adam and Eve felt naked after disobeying God. And they tried to cover themselves by sewing fig leaves together (Genesis 3:7). The homemade clothing was not comfortable and did not work well. Our best righteousness is no better than “filthy [dirty] rags” (Isaiah 64:6, NKJV).

God gives the garment we need. He made garments for Adam and Eve and clothed them (Genesis 3:21). This is a symbol of His righteousness covering the sinner. The Lord also gives the garment of Christ's righteousness to His church. This robe “is the righteousness of Christ, which means His own perfect character [thoughts, feelings, actions]. Through faith, Christ's character is given to all who receive Him as their personal Savior.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 310.

**Above everything we believe, why must we understand that our salvation comes only from the covering that Christ gives us as a gift? Why must we always remember this?**

**DEFINITIONS**

3. parable—a very brief (short) story that teaches a lesson or a truth.

**FOLLOW JESUS (John 8:30, 31)**

In faith we recognize our need, repent, confess our sins, and accept Christ's righteousness for ourselves. Then we become His disciples. During His ministry, Jesus called different people, such as Peter and James and John, to be His disciples. This call showed that believers must leave everything in order to follow Him (Matthew 4:20, 22; Mark 10:28; Luke 5:28). In fact, in the Gospels the verb *to follow* has almost the same meaning as "disciple."

**What two things are important for you to do when you become a disciple of Jesus? Read John 8:30, 31.**

Some people try to separate faith in Jesus from obeying Jesus' teachings. But Jesus did not make such a separation. For Him, both faith and obedience are closely joined together for true discipleship. As disciples of Jesus, we must not get so caught up in His teachings that we lose sight of Jesus Himself. We must be devoted to a personal relationship with Jesus as well as be devoted to His teachings.

**What is the high cost of being a disciple of Jesus? Read Luke 14:25–27.**

Jesus used the verb *to hate* as an example meaning "to love less." Another verse in Matthew makes the meaning of Jesus' words clearer: " 'Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. Anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me' " (Matthew 10:37, NIV). Jesus must have the first place in our lives if we want to be His disciples.

**What has following Christ, being His disciple, cost you? What does your answer say about your walk with the Lord?**

**ADDITIONAL STUDY:** Ellen G. White, “Repentance,” pages 23–32, in *Steps to Christ*.

“We need the Spirit of Christ to awaken the conscience and to be pardoned by Christ. Both are very important.”  
—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, page 26.

“We need to watch the Lamb of God upon the cross of Calvary. When we do, we better understand the mystery of God, willing to pay the price for our sins. Then His goodness leads us to repentance. In dying for sinners, Christ shows a love that is beyond our ability to understand. As the sinner watches this love, it softens the heart, impresses [touches] the mind, and inspires [causes] the soul to want to repent.”—Adapted from *Steps to Christ*, pages 26, 27.

“The humble and broken heart leads to true repentance. Then the believer will appreciate something of the love of God and the cost of the Cross. As a son confesses to a loving father, the repentant sinner will bring all his sins before God. And it is written, ‘If we admit that we have sinned, he [God] will forgive our sins. He will forgive every wrong thing we have done. He will make us pure.’ 1 John 1:9, NIV.”  
—Adapted from *Steps to Christ*, page 41.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1 Many try to “drown” their sense of guilt with alcohol, drugs, or worldly pleasures, or by keeping their lives busy with crazy activities. Why do none of these methods really work? How would you help someone who is in this condition to find the true answer for guilt?
- 2 It is possible to recognize our sins without having “fruits worthy of repentance.” Why is that not true repentance? What is the value of these fruits? Are they good works done to gain God’s favor? Explain your answer.
- 3 Discuss the fact that Christ’s righteousness is free, but not cheap. We do not have to pay for it. But the Lord had to pay a very high price at the cross. Think about how sinful we are, and how serious sin must be. Think about how it took something as terrible as the death of the Son of God Himself in order to save us from the results of sin.