

Lesson 1

Our Greatest Need

Understanding what it means to be lost

What does it mean to be lost?

In this lesson, we will explore the spiritual aspect of what it means to be lost and the consequences it entails. As human beings, we all have sinned and rebelled against God, as stated in Romans 3.10 and 23. Consequently, we find ourselves justly condemned and lost, with eternal death awaiting as an unforgiven sinner, Romans 6.23.

Sin is a direct offense against God's holiness and righteousness, and it carries devastating consequences. It's catastrophic impact effects our present existence and eternal destiny. Sin erects an impassable divide between us and God, hindering our relationship with Him. It brings brokenness, pain, and suffering into our lives and those around us.

When we consider the weight of our sin and the consequences it brings, our greatest need is for redemption. We need to be saved from the spiritual death and eternal separation that it brings. The Bible makes it clear that the soul that sins will die, Ezekiel 18.20, and that sin is of the devil, 1 John 3.8. Our redemption requires divine intervention and the destruction of the works of the devil, which Jesus accomplished through His death, Colossians 2.14-15.

Over the next few pages, we will delve deeper into the nature of sin, its consequences, and the necessity of our redemption. We will explore how sin curses and never blesses, brings guilt and chaos, points the conscience away from God, and results in God's wrath. We will also discuss how it entraps, causes separation, and leaves a person lost within the jurisdiction of Satan. Thankfully, God offers us rescue, redemption, and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

It is intended that this lesson deepen your appreciation for God's love, mercy, and wisdom, and inspire you to seek salvation and the joy that comes from being in His presence.

What Does it Mean to be Lost?

We all sin, having rebelled against God, Romans 3.10, 23. Because of this, we are justly under condemnation and lost. Eternal death awaits the unforgiven sinner, Romans 6.23.

What the Bible Says

The Bible describes being lost this way:

- **Sheep without a shepherd:** Matthew 9.36: *When he saw the crowds, he felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd.*
- **Wandering:** Isaiah 53.6: *We all went astray like sheep; we all have turned to our own way; and the Lord has punished him for the iniquity of us all.*

- **Blindness:** 1 Corinthians 4.4: *But if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case, the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*
- **Dead in Sin:** Ephesians 2.1-2: *And you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit now working in the disobedient.*
- **Separated from God:** Isaiah 59.2: *But your iniquities are separating you from your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not listen.*

The Seriousness of Sin

The gravity of sin lies in its catastrophic impact on both our present existence and our eternal destiny. It erects an impassable divide between us and God, a chasm that can only be closed through sincere repentance and divine forgiveness. Sin not only affects our relationship with God, but also damages our relationships with others. It leads to brokenness, pain, and suffering in our lives and in the lives of those around us. Sin can cause irreparable harm, perpetuating a cycle of brokenness and hurt.

Sin is a direct offense against the holiness and righteousness of God. It goes against His perfect nature and standards. God, being just, cannot tolerate sin, which is why it carries devastating consequences.

The enormity of sin is also evident in the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross. His death was necessary to atone for the sins of humanity and reconcile us with God. The fact that such a tremendous sacrifice was required highlights the weightiness of sin.

Why Do We Need Redemption?

We need redemption because we sin. We have rebelled against God and are justly under condemnation.

- **The soul that sins will die:** Ezekiel 18.20 NASB: *The person who sins will die. A son will not suffer the punishment for the father's guilt, nor will a father suffer the punishment for the son's guilt; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself.*
- **The one who practices sin is of the devil:** 1 John 3.8: *The one who commits sin is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God was revealed for this purpose: to destroy the devil's works.*

What is Sin?

Being lost in sin is, as K. C. Moserⁱⁱ described, "the natural consequence of a definite soul state." The Word of God describes it in the following ways:

- **active, not passive,** Romans 8.7; James 1.14-15. It is an active force that entices and tempts individuals. It could also be described as an active choice that leads to destructive consequences.
- **to be like Satan,** John 8.44. Satan is a murderer and liar. Sin is not only *destructive*, but it is also *deceptive*.

- **open rebellion**, Isaiah 1.2. Sin is a deliberate act of defiance and disobedience toward God. It rejects His authority and the breaking of commands. It is direct rebellion against God's rightful rule and authority over humankind.
- **hostility toward God and agreement with Satan**, or, describing it another way, rebellion against God and submission to Satan, Romans 8.7. Mankind refuses to submit to God's law and thereby has an inability to please Him.
- **ungodliness**, 1 Timothy 1.8-10. Sin is contrary to the nature and character of God. It goes against God's righteousness and holiness.
- **lawlessness**, 1 John 3.4. When someone engages in sinful behavior, they are actively disregarding and breaking God's law. By describing sin as lawlessness, it underscores the seriousness and rebellious nature of sin, highlighting that it is a direct transgression against God's commandments.

Understanding Sin's Consequences

Sin:

- **and the sinner cannot be divorced**, Colossians 1.21.
- **curses and never blesses**, Galatians 6.7-8.
- **brings guilt and chaos**, Psalm 38.4; James 3.16.
- **points the conscience away from God** and as a result, the sinner is never "at rest," Isaiah 48.22. *The sinner can never be truly happy apart from God.*
- **results in God's wrath**, Romans 1.18; Colossians 3.6.
- **brings separation**, Isaiah 59.2. Sin ultimately leads to eternal separation, 2 Thessalonians 1.9.
- **entraps**, Proverbs 5.22; 2 Timothy 2.26; Galatians 6.1.
- **causes a person to be lost inside the state or jurisdiction of Satan**, Colossians 1.13. When Satan snatches us away, there is no way to be released without divine intervention. Thankfully, Jesus provides us with the rescue, redemption, and forgiveness we so desperately need, Colossians 1.14. Jesus came to earth to set us free.

Our Greatest Need

The description you have just read provides a comprehensive understanding of sin and its profound consequences both in this life and in eternity. Its level of detail has been intentionally provided to emphasize the urgency of our greatest need. We are in desperate need of salvation from spiritual death and the eternal separation it brings. Without it, we remain trapped in the grip of sin and face the eternal consequences of our rebellion against God.

The redemption of a person's soul is the result of God's unparalleled wisdom, immeasurable love, and unrivaled power. There is no greater example of love, mercy, or wisdom than what was demonstrated in the sacrifice made to bring salvation to humanity. Likewise, there is no greater display of power than what the Holy Spirit accomplishes in resurrecting a dead soul to life. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, individuals who were once spiritually dead can experience new life and transformation. This

divine intervention serves as indisputable evidence of our utmost need for salvation. It is only through the divine wisdom, love, and power that we can find true redemption and restoration. The fact that our rescue required the supreme effort of divinity serves as indisputable evidence of our utmost need for salvation.

The Purpose of Christianity

The whole purpose of Christianity is our redemption. Therefore, its mission is ultimately positive. *For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him*, John 3.17. Isaiah 35 says:

The wilderness and the dry land will be glad; the desert will rejoice and blossom like a wildflower. It will blossom abundantly and will also rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon. They will see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, steady the shaking knees! Say to the cowardly: "Be strong; do not fear! Here is your God; vengeance is coming. God's retribution is coming; he will save you." Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute will sing for joy, for water will gush in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the parched ground will become a pool, and the thirsty land, springs. In the haunt of jackals, in their lairs, there will be grass, reeds, and papyrus. A road will be there and a way; it will be called the Holy Way. The unclean will not travel on it, but it will be for the one who walks the path. Fools will not wander on it. There will be no lion there, and no vicious beast will go up on it; they will not be found there. But the redeemed will walk on it, and the ransomed of the Lord will return and come to Zion with singing, crowned with unending joy. Joy and gladness will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee.

Christianity is centered on the good news of salvation and offers the message of hope and deliverance from the bondage of sin. In carrying out the mission, God calls upon us to trumpet the greatest blessing, which is freedom from the enslavement of sin, leading to true, unadulterated joy.

Sharing the Message

We are commissioned to proclaim the greatest blessing of all: freedom from the enslavement of sin and the experience of true, unadulterated joy. Christianity is not about imposing condemnation or judgment upon others, but rather extending the invitation to experience the amazing power of God's love and forgiveness.

The message of Christianity is that God is working all things together for the good of those who love Him, Romans 8.28. He is working so that one day we may fully be conformed to the image of His Son, Romans 8.29, whereby we are *holy and blameless in love before Him*, Ephesians 1.4. Set free from sin, victors over death, one day we will be eternally in His presence:

Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God, Revelation 21.3.

Living According to the Message

In fulfilling the purpose of Christianity, we are called to live out our faith and exemplify the freedom and joy that come from our redemption. Through our good works, Ephesians 2.10; Galatians 6.9-10, we reflect the love, mercy, and grace that God has shown us, and thereby share the good news of salvation with others. Each of us has a wonderful opportunity to impact the broken world of another person.

What's In This for Us?

We must recognize the reality of sin

Sin is not just a concept of the past, but a present reality in our lives. Acknowledge the areas of your life where sin may be present and seek God's forgiveness and guidance to overcome it.

Seek restoration in relationships

Just as sin can damage your relationship with God, it can also harm your relationships with others. Take steps to mend broken relationships, seek forgiveness, and extend forgiveness to those who have wronged you. Strive to cultivate a spirit of love, reconciliation, and unity.

Embrace spiritual guidance

Recognize that you need guidance in your spiritual journey. Seek out mentors, shepherds in your local congregation, or trusted individuals who can provide wise counsel and accountability. Surround yourself with your fellow brothers and sisters who can support and encourage you in your walk with God.

Pursue spiritual growth

Cultivate a hunger for God's Word and make time for regular study and meditation on Scripture. Engage in prayer, worship, and fellowship with spiritual brothers and sisters in order to deepen your relationship with God. Seek opportunities for spiritual growth by participating in small groups, Bible classes, and other spiritually minded events.

Walk in obedience

Strive to live a life that is pleasing to God by obeying His commandments and following the teachings of Jesus. Allow the Spirit to guide and empower you in making choices that align with God's will and bring honor to His name.

Conclusion

In this lesson we have explored a comprehensive explanation of sin and its consequences. We have learned about the nature of being lost and the spiritual ramifications it entails. Sin erects a barrier between us and God, bringing brokenness, suffering, and eternal separation. It is a direct offense against God's holiness and righteousness. Sin brings spiritual death.

However, amidst the gravity of sin, we have discovered our greatest need – redemption. This is made possible through God's unparalleled wisdom, immeasurable love, and unrivaled power. The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross demonstrates the depth of God's love, mercy, and wisdom, and the work of the Holy Spirit brings new life and transformation.

Understanding the seriousness of sin and our need for redemption serves as a call to action. The purpose of Christianity is rooted in our redemption, and its mission is ultimately positive. We proclaim the good news of salvation, freedom from sin's enslavement, and the experience of true joy. Christianity is about extending the invitation to others to encounter God's amazing power of love and forgiveness.

Christians have been commissioned to live out their faith, exemplifying the freedom and joy that comes from redemption. They reflect God's love, mercy, and grace to the world, sharing the good news of salvation with others. As we fulfill the purpose of Christianity, we participate in God's mission of bringing redemption to a broken world.

Let us embrace the freedom and joy that come from being in God's presence, and may our lives be a testament to the transformative power of redemption.

For Class Interaction and Discussion

Lesson Outline

1. Introduction - Our Greatest Need
2. What Does it Mean to be Lost?
3. The Seriousness of Sin
4. Why Do We Need Redemption?
5. What is Sin?
6. Understanding Sin's Consequences
7. The Purpose of Christianity

Thought and Discussion Questions:

1. Can you recall a time when you felt spiritually lost? How did it impact your life and your relationship with God?
2. Reflecting on the descriptions of being lost in the Bible (sheep without a shepherd, wandering, blindness, dead in sin, separated from God), which one resonates with you the most? Why?
3. Explain why sin is considered a serious matter. How does it affect our relationship with God and others?
4. Share an example from your own life or the lives of others where sin brought about guilt and chaos. How did it manifest and what were the consequences?
5. Discuss the concept of redemption. Why is it necessary for us? How does God's love, mercy, and power play a role in our redemption?

6. Reflect on the description of sin as an active force, rebellion against God, and ungodliness. How does this change your perspective on sin and its ramifications?

7. What are some practical ways we can avoid being entrapped by sin and its consequences?

8. Share personal experiences or stories of individuals who have been redeemed from a state of being lost. How did their lives transform after encountering God's grace and salvation?

Group Activities:

Scripture Exploration: Divide into groups and assign each group a specific Bible passage that speaks about being lost and ask them to discuss the significance and implications of the passage within their group. Afterwards, each group can present their findings to the rest of the class.

Final Encouraging Word:

Remember, no matter how lost or trapped in sin we may feel, there is always hope for redemption. God's love, mercy, and power are greater than any sin we could commit. Through Jesus Christ, we can be saved and experience the joy and freedom that comes from being in a restored relationship with God. Embrace this truth and share the good news of salvation with others, that they too may find their way back to God.

ⁱⁱ Moser, K. C. *The Way of Salvation*. Delight, Arkansas: Gospel Light Publishing Company, p. 16.