

## Repairing a Broken Relationship

What does it mean that Jesus came to “...seek and to save the lost...”? (Luke 19:10) Why did He come “...to give His life as a ransom...”? (Mark 10:45) What part does He play in enabling a person to have eternal life? (John 3:16)

These Bible verses explain Jesus’ purpose on Earth in a more general way.

*For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,* Colossians 1:19-22 ESV

*For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.* Romans 5:10 ESV

*that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them,* 2 Corinthians 5:19a-b ESV

In broad terms, Jesus’ purpose on Earth was to bring about our reconciliation with God.

But why was that necessary? How, you might say, has our relationship with God become broken?

Many people may not realize that, due to our own failures, humanity’s (individually and collectively) relationship with God has been broken. The word we use to describe those failures (and that many want to avoid) is “sin”.

What is sin? Sin is doing things that we shouldn’t do or failing to do things we should do.

Things we shouldn’t do include anything that is contrary to God’s law. That would include murder, theft, adultery, lying, cheating, and the like. Most people understand that even from a human perspective these things are wrong. Things we should do might include helping when we can, giving aid to the poor, and the like.

*So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.* James 4:17 ESV

Another way to define sin is to consider the two great commandments: love God and love others. Sin would be any failure to show love for God or love for others.

*And he [Jesus] said to him, "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. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."* Matthew 22:37-40 ESV

In God's eyes you are no worse than anyone else; all have sinned and fall short.

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

*If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.* 1 John 1:8 ESV

However you look at it, at one time or another, all have sinned. We have either done wrong or failed to do right. Or we have failed to love God and love others. And the result is a broken relationship with God. But, due to the work of Jesus, it is a relationship that can be repaired.

"Wait a second," you may say. "I'm a good person. I'm sure I haven't committed very many sins and any sins I committed would have all been small ones."

Well, let's explore this.

How many sins are too many?

Over a person's adult life, say from the ages of 18 to 68 (50 years), if a person committed just ONE small sin a day, doing something morally wrong or failing to do something right, then that person at the age of 68 would have committed over 18,250 sins.

To me, that seems like too many.

Well, let's suppose in your entire life you did just ONE of the following things: you "borrowed" a box of paperclips from work to use at home, or you were late for work and told your boss that the power went off at your house (knowing that wasn't true), or you allowed a store clerk to give you an extra \$1.00 in change for something you bought.

Words to describe these actions are thief, liar, and cheater. If you did just ONE of those things, then you have broken God's (and/or man's) law; you are a law-breaker; a sinner.

God has high standards. Jesus said:

*"You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."* Matthew 5:48 ESV

"Wait a second," you might say. "These are just small sins. How can they be that important?"

Think about how tiny flaws affect these objects:  
a balloon that has a tiny pinhole,  
a drinking glass with a crack,  
a double-paned window with a broken seal,  
a car radiator with a leak, or  
a glass of water that has in it a drop of sulfuric acid.

The balloon with the pinhole can't hold air. The glass with the crack can't hold water. The window with the broken seal can't keep out the cold. The leaking radiator can't keep the car engine cool. And the contaminated water is not good to drink. Tiny flaws have damaged each of the objects.

Just as tiny flaws can damage these objects, even one small sin damages our relationship with God.

Again, God has high standards. Jesus said:

*"You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."* Matthew 5:48 ESV

You can't minimize your sin. And it is our failures/sins that separate us from God, a separation that would last for eternity.

*Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?*  
1 Corinthians 6:9 ESV

You cannot live up to God's standards; no one can.

But there is hope. The good news is that, in spite of our failures, our broken relationship with God can be repaired. We can be reconciled to God and have an eternal relationship with Him and a place in heaven.

In general terms, Jesus' mission on Earth was to enable that reconciliation.

But how does that happen?

Keep reading.

© 2020 Steven Hall  
All Rights Reserved

Bible quotations are from the  
English Standard Version  
© 2001 by Crossway