

Steps to Christ

Bible Study Series



Realizing Our Condition

3 - 16

(1) HOW CAN WE AS SINNERS BECOME PURIFIED FROM SIN?

Acts 2:38

Related Texts: Acts 3:19; Proverbs 28:13; Ezekiel 36:31; 20:43; 2 Corinthians 7:9-11; Psalm 38:18

It is only through Christ that we can be brought into harmony with God, with holiness; but how are we to come to Christ? Many are asking the same question as did the multitude on the Day of Pentecost, when, convicted of sin, they cried out, “What shall we do?” The first word of Peter’s answer was, “Repent.” At another time, shortly after, he said, “Repent, . . . and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.” Acts 3:19.

Repentance includes sorrow for sin and a turning away from it. We shall not renounce sin unless we see its sinfulness; until we turn away from it in heart, there will be no real change in the life.

There are many who fail to understand the true nature of repentance. Multitudes sorrow that they have sinned and even make an outward reformation because they fear that their wrongdoing will bring suffering upon themselves. But this is not repentance in the Bible sense. They lament the suffering rather than the sin. Such was the grief of Esau when he saw that the birthright was lost to him forever. Balaam, terrified by the angel standing in his pathway with drawn sword, acknowledged his guilt lest he should lose his life; but there was no genuine repentance for sin, no conversion of purpose, no abhorrence of evil. Judas Iscariot, after betraying his Lord, exclaimed, “I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. Matthew 27:4.

The confession was forced from his guilty soul by an awful sense of condemnation and a fearful looking for of judgment. The consequences that were to result to him filled him with terror, but there was no deep, heartbreaking grief in his soul, that he had betrayed the spotless Son of God and denied the Holy One of Israel. Pharaoh, when suffering under the judgments of God, acknowledged his sin in order to escape further punishment, but returned to his defiance of Heaven as soon as the plagues were stayed. These all lamented the results of sin, but did not sorrow for the sin itself.

(2) WHAT DESCRIPTION DOES THIS VERSE GIVE OF CHRIST WHO, BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, CASTS OUT DARKNESS AND REVEALS THE SECRET PLACES OF THE SOUL?

John 1:9

Related Texts: John 12:46; 8:12; 2 Corinthians 4:6; 1 John 2:8; 1 Thesalonians 5:5; Matthew 6:23

When the heart yields to the influence of the Spirit of God, the conscience will be quickened, and the sinner will discern something of the depth and sacredness of God's holy law, the foundation of His government in heaven and on earth. The "Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," illumines the secret chambers of the soul, and the hidden things of darkness are made manifest. Conviction takes hold upon the mind and heart. The sinner has a sense of the righteousness of Jehovah and feels the terror of appearing, in his own guilt and uncleanness, before the Searcher of hearts. He sees the love of God, the beauty of holiness, the joy of purity; he longs to be cleansed and to be restored to communion with Heaven.

(3) LIKE KING DAVID, WHAT WILL OUR PRAYER BE IF WE ARE TRULY SORRY FOR OUR SINS?

Psalms 51:1-4

Psalms 51:10

Related Texts: Psalm 32:5; 38:18; Ezekiel 36:31; 20:43; 1 John 1:7-9

The prayer of David after his fall, illustrates the nature of true sorrow for sin. His repentance was sincere and deep. There was no effort to palliate his guilt; no desire to escape the judgment threatened, inspired his prayer. David saw the enormity of his transgression; he saw the defilement of his soul; he loathed his sin. It was not for pardon only that he prayed, but for purity of heart. He longed for the joy of holiness—to be restored to harmony and communion with God.

A repentance such as this, is beyond the reach of our own power to accomplish; it is obtained only from Christ, who ascended up on high and has given gifts unto men.

(4) WHAT IS THE RESULT OF CONFESSION THAT FOLLOWS TRUE REPENTANCE?

Psalms 32:1

Related Texts: Isaiah 1:18; Psalm 128:1; Deuteronomy 5:33; 11:13-15; Matthew 5:8; Micah 7:18, 19

(5) WHAT STEPS LOGICALLY PRECEDE CONFESSION?

Matthew 11:28, 29

Related Texts: Isaiah 55:1-3; 45:22-25; John 6:37; Revelation 22:17; 1 Peter 5:7

Just here is a point on which many may err, and hence they fail of receiving the help that Christ desires to give them. They think that they cannot come to Christ unless they first repent, and that repentance prepares for the forgiveness of their sins. It is true that repentance does precede the forgiveness of sins; for it is only the broken and contrite heart that will feel the need of a Saviour. But must the sinner wait till he has repented before he can come to Jesus? Is repentance to be made an obstacle between the sinner and the Saviour?

The Bible does not teach that the sinner must repent before he can heed the invitation of Christ, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

(6) FROM WHAT SOURCE DOES SORROW FOR SIN COME?

Acts 5:30, 31

Related Texts: Acts 3:26; 11:18; Jeremiah 31:31-33; Ezekiel 36:25-31; Zechariah 12:10; Romans 11:26, 27; 2 Timothy 2:25, 26

It is the virtue that goes forth from Christ, that leads to genuine repentance. Peter made the matter clear in his statement to the Israelites

when he said, “Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” We can no more repent without the Spirit of Christ to awaken the conscience than we can be pardoned without Christ.

Christ is the source of every right impulse. He is the only one that can implant in the heart enmity against sin. Every desire for truth and purity, every conviction of our own sinfulness, is an evidence that His Spirit is moving upon our hearts.

(7) WHOM DOES THE LORD DRAW TO HIMSELF WITH THE GIFT OF REPENTANCE AND OFFER OF SALVATION?

John 12:32

Related Texts: Isaiah 49:6; Romans 5:17-19; 1 Timothy 2:6; Hebrews 2:9; 1 John 2:2; Revelation 5:9; Luke 15

Christ must be revealed to the sinner as the Saviour dying for the sins of the world; and as we behold the Lamb of God upon the cross of Calvary, the mystery of redemption begins to unfold to our minds and the goodness of God leads us to repentance. In dying for sinners, Christ manifested a love that is incomprehensible; and as the sinner beholds this love, it softens the heart, impresses the mind, and inspires contrition in the soul.

It is true that men sometimes become ashamed of their sinful ways, and give up some of their evil habits, before they are conscious that they are being drawn to Christ. But whenever they make an effort to reform, from a sincere desire to do right, it is the power of Christ that is drawing them. An influence of which they are unconscious works upon the soul, and the conscience is quickened, and the outward life is amended. And as Christ draws them to look upon His cross, to behold Him whom their sins have pierced, the commandment comes home to the conscience. The wickedness of their life, the deep-seated sin of the soul, is revealed to them. They begin to comprehend something of the righteousness of Christ, and exclaim, “What is sin, that it should require such a sacrifice for the redemption of its victim? Was all this love, all this suffering, all this humiliation, demanded, that we might not perish, but have everlasting life?”

The sinner may resist this love, may refuse to be drawn to Christ; but if he does not resist he will be drawn to Jesus; a knowledge of the plan of salvation will lead him to the foot of the cross in repentance for his sins, which have caused the sufferings of God's dear Son.

(8) WHAT WONDERFUL INVITATION DOES THE LORD OFFER TO THOSE WHO THIRST FOR MORE THAN THIS WORLD CAN GIVE?

Revelation 22:17

Related Texts: John 7:37, 38; 4:10; Isaiah 55:1-3; 12:3

The same divine mind that is working upon the things of nature is speaking to the hearts of men and creating an inexpressible craving for something they have not. The things of the world cannot satisfy their longing. The Spirit of God is pleading with them to seek for those things that alone can give peace and rest—the grace of Christ, the joy of holiness. Through influences seen and unseen, our Saviour is constantly at work to attract the minds of men from the unsatisfying pleasures of sin to the infinite blessings that may be theirs in Him. To all these souls, who are vainly seeking to drink from the broken cisterns of this world, the divine message is addressed, “Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

You who in heart long for something better than this world can give, recognize this longing as the voice of God to your soul. Ask Him to give you repentance, to reveal Christ to you in His infinite love, in His perfect purity.

(9) WHEN WE SEE THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST, WHAT DO WE AS SINNERS REALIZE?

Isaiah 64:6

Related Texts: Isaiah 53:6; Job 14:4; 15:14-16; 25:4; Psalm 51:5; Romans 7:18, 24; Ephesians 2:1, 2; Ezekiel 36:31

In the Saviour's life the principles of God's law—love to God and man—were perfectly exemplified. Benevolence, unselfish love, was the life of His soul. It is as we behold Him, as the light from our Saviour falls upon us, that we see the sinfulness of our own hearts.

We may have flattered ourselves, as did Nicodemus, that our life has been upright, that our moral character is correct, and think that we need not humble the heart before God, like the common sinner: but when the light from Christ shines into our souls, we shall see how impure we are; we shall discern the selfishness of motive, the enmity against God, that has defiled every act of life. Then we shall know that our own righteousness is indeed as filthy rags, and that the blood of Christ alone can cleanse us from the defilement of sin, and renew our hearts in His own likeness.

One ray of the glory of God, one gleam of the purity of Christ, penetrating the soul, makes every spot of defilement painfully distinct, and lays bare the deformity and defects of the human character. It makes apparent the unhallowed desires, the infidelity of the heart, the impurity of the lips. The sinner's acts of disloyalty in making void the law of God, are exposed to his sight, and his spirit is stricken and afflicted under the searching influence of the Spirit of God. He loathes himself as he views the pure, spotless character of Christ.

(10) WHAT EFFECT DID IT HAVE ON DANIEL WHEN HE REALIZED THE FLAWS IN HIS CHARACTER?

Daniel 10:8

Related Texts: Daniel 8:17, 18; Revelation 1:17; Mark 9:6; Luke 1:12

When the prophet Daniel beheld the glory surrounding the heavenly messenger that was sent unto him, he was overwhelmed with a sense of his own weakness and imperfection. The soul thus touched will hate its selfishness, abhor its self-love, and will seek, through Christ's righteousness, for the purity of heart that is in harmony with the law of God and the character of Christ.

(11) LIKE PAUL, WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO US WHEN WE SEE THE PURITY OF CHRIST AND REALIZE THE TRUE MEANING OF THE HOLY PRINCIPLES OF GOD'S LAW?

Romans 7:9

Related Texts: Romans 7:7; 3:20; 8:3-7; 1 John 3:4; Luke 10:25-28; Galatians 3:10; 2:19-21

Paul says that as “touching the righteousness which is in the law”—as far as outward acts were concerned—he was “blameless” (Philippians 3:6); but when the spiritual character of the law was discerned, he saw himself a sinner. Judged by the letter of the law as men apply it to the outward life, he had abstained from sin; but when he looked into the depths of its holy precepts, and saw himself as God saw him, he bowed in humiliation and confessed his guilt. When he saw the spiritual nature of the law, sin appeared in its true hideousness, and his self-esteem was gone.

I am thankful I have accepted Jesus' invitation to come and learn of Him that I may find rest to my soul.

Please circle: **Yes** **Undecided**

As He has drawn me, and I have been spending more time with Him in His Word, I see His righteousness and realize that my life and character are impure and unholy.

Please circle: **Yes** **Undecided**

He is now putting within my heart the desire to be more like Him but I realize I am powerless to change on my own.

Please circle: **Yes** **Undecided**

I am thankful I can come to Him as I am—sinful, helpless, and dependant—and claim His promise to make the changes in my life that will bring Him glory.

Please circle: **Yes** **Undecided**

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