

CHAPTER 9

Crossing the Chasm to God



A SEEPING PALL OF DARKNESS SURROUNDS US. Walled in on every side by sin's polluting atmosphere, we realise the deadly state of the fallen human nature, our fallen nature.

Yet thankfully we have learned the true condition of sin. We know where humans begin in the process of life, locked in a body of death, a prison cell on death row without any human way of escape.

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find." Romans 7:18

"O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" Romans 7:24

Now This Man's words lift us on the wings of hope ascending higher and higher on a flight path of deliverance.

"The only way out of the sinner's death cell is for the condemned to face up to their true condition and accept the freedom found only in God. If sin is to be pardoned and cleansed in a person's life, then sin must be recognized and named for what it really is.

Sin cannot be watered down or parlied with, God cannot save sinners *in* their sins; they must allow Him to save them *from* their sins.

And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.' Matthew 1:2

And so dear readers and listeners, if you are still caught in the snare of sin, still a transgressor of God's law, then you exist on one side of a deep chasm, while on the far side of the void are the righteous requirements of God's law.

What was that you ask? How do you reach the other side of the deep void that you might be made right with God?

...your iniquities have separated you from your God. Isaiah 59:2

To forge a spiritual relationship with God, first you must be acquitted of your sins - or in other words your sins must be pardoned. Having received a clean slate, then and only then is God's law reproduced in your life as though you had not sinned.

Now do not be fooled. You cannot cross the chasm by gaining merit points from God by keeping the letter of the law, or through good deeds. The chasm simply cannot be crossed by trying to amend the broken law yourself *...by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. Galatians 2:16*

Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified in His sight... Romans 3: 20

*For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly
righteousness would have been by the law. Galatians 3:21*

No. The law cannot cancel out your sin, or reunite you with God. The law is there to lay down the boundaries for spiritual life with God, and to sound an alarm when sin has occurred.

I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet.' Romans 7:7

...knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine... 1 Timothy 1:8-10

Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. Galatians 3:24

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. Ephesians 2:8-9

Yes, our faith reaches through the death penalty of the transgressed law and lays hold of God's grace, His gift of salvation.

But know this: God will never change the righteous principles of His law to gloss over sin and make sin appear acceptable in His sight.

Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven. Psalm 119:89

All Your commandments are truth. Concerning Your testimonies, I have known of old that You have founded them forever. Psalm 119:151-152

Clearly God makes no compromise with sin, nor does He negotiate an unrighteous deal with sinners.

Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! Romans 9:14

'For there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, no partiality, nor taking of bribes.' 2 Chronicles 19:7

If God made the slightest concession to sin, He would cast Himself in the mould of evil and become the devil himself. Impossible!

*Far be it from God to do wickedness,
And from the Almighty to commit iniquity. Job 34:10
For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness,
Nor shall evil dwell with You. Psalm 5:4*

Look into the world and you can see the results of God's downtrodden law. Look even

more carefully and you will see the instigator. For behind the carnage are Satan and his demon spirits. But people play their part too, and as each person chooses to abuse God's law, Satan claims those people as his own.

He and his demon cohorts drive condemned sinners deeper into the penalty of the transgressed law causing misery and death.

The sinner's only hope is a deliverer of purity - Someone who can stand up to Satan and dispute the claim that all people are his captives because every person has broken the law!

Yet this Someone must **never have broken the holy law**. Someone who is perfect in the law.

Then this Someone must be prepared to take upon himself the sinners' sentence of the broken law and be tried and tested by the law, yet not sin once.

Having fulfilled the perfection of the law through obedience, this Someone must die the sinners' sentence of eternal death on their behalf then rise triumphantly from the dead in righteous life.

Only then could this Someone be counted as a worthy deliverer to reclaim repentant sinners and carry them across the chasm to start a new life with God.

The description of this Someone could only be matched by the Creator of life Himself - He who is equal to the law in perfect righteousness; He who is the living example of the law in holy character; He who is the living essence of the law in Divine life.

And so once again we hear the sinners death cry from the prison cell on death row.

O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Romans 7:24

From the beginning God held the answer. In the fulfillment of time the Son descends into the void of eternal death and delivers believing humanity through His sinless life.

*For He looked down from the height of His sanctuary;
From heaven the LORD viewed the earth,
To hear the groaning of the prisoner,
To release those appointed to death... Psalm 102:19-20*

Just as God searched for Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, God searches for sinners in the world today.

They may be entwined in the pleasures of the world, hidden in the undergrowth of indifference. But this does not deter God from His search of mercy.

Through His Spirit of reconciliation He calls out to the lost, 'My son, my daughter where are you at this moment in time? Come to Me just as you are with all your sins...' *'You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest regions, and said to you, "You are my servant, I have chosen you and have not cast you away: Fear not for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.'* Isaiah 41:9-10

'The one who comes to Me, I will by no means cast out.' John 6:37

'Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed; Neither be disgraced, for you will not be put to shame; for you will forget the shame of your youth...' Isaiah 54:4

*'I have seen his ways, and will heal him;
I will also lead him,
And restore comforts to him...
Peace, peace to him who is far off and to him who is near,'
Says the Lord,
'And I will heal him.' Isaiah 57:18 -19*

And so like Adam and Eve our **urgent need** is to emerge from our hiding place of sin and meet our Saviour at the half way mark of reconciliation ...*that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us...* Acts 17:26-28

*Seek the LORD while He may be found,
Call upon Him while He is near. Isaiah 55:6*

Yes our loving God says to each of us: 'As surely as you were born with the imprint of sin upon your life, I have chosen you in your sin to save you from your sins - even before time began.'

God...*has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.* 2 Timothy 1:9

*The Lord is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.
He will not always strive with us,
nor will He keep His anger forever.
He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished
us according to our iniquities. Psalm 103:8-10
As a father pities His children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him.
For He knows our frame;
He remembers that we are dust. Psalm 10 3: 13-14
For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world,
but that the world through Him might be saved. John 3:17
The Lord is...longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should
perish but all should come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:9*

Seeking to save the lost, with tender love God's Holy Spirit searches a person's soul, bringing sin to the surface of their mind. *For the Spirit searches all things...* 1 Corinthians 2:10

Without God's Spirit of love wooing our souls to the Father and Son we would remain dead in our sin. Like an alarm bell ringing in our souls, God's Spirit wakes us up from our sleep of death that we might be saved from our sins and live.

*Awake, you who sleep,
Arise from the dead,
And Christ will give you light.
Ephesians 5:14*

Yes, God's enlightening spirit helps a person to see and recognise sin in their life. And through His Spirit, God speaks to the person's conscience convicting them of their sin ...*being convicted by their conscience...* John 8:9

At times this soul searching can be an agitating, absorbing, sobering experience. But in the end if a person acknowledges their sin, and repents of their wrongdoing, confessing to God, then He will forgive and eradicate sin from their lives.

*... For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He
might destroy the works of the devil. 1 John 3:8*

And so having broken the devil's spell upon a sinner's life by His Spirit, God leads the believing person to the throne of grace to receive the promised gift of salvation.

*Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain
mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:16*

*And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were
sealed for the day of redemption. Ephesians 4:30*

Yes, wherever we are right at this instant, wherever our minds are wandering, whatever condition our bodies are in, we can come before God's heavenly throne of grace and we can communicate with Him, as if talking with a dear friend. In words of our own choosing, for there is no set way, we lay before the Father our entire lives. All the good *and* the bad.

Then admitting those actions or behaviors we know in our hearts are sinful, we humbly ask His forgiveness in the saving name of His Son.

Yes, we have a part to play in God's plan of salvation for us. Confession and repentance are our parts to play in forging a spiritual relationship with the Great King and His beloved Son.

*For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be
regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. 2 Corinthians 7:10*

...I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin. Psalm 38:18

...the goodness of God leads you to repentance... Romans 2:4

*'Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels
of God over one sinner who repents.'* Luke 15:10

'Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out...' Acts 3:19

*He who covers his sins will not prosper,
But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy. Proverbs 28:13*

*Have mercy upon me, O God,
According to Your lovingkindness;
According to the multitude of Your tender mercies,
Blot out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin. Psalm 51:1-2*

*Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
Make me hear joy and gladness,
That the bones You have broken may rejoice.
Hide Your face from my sins,
And blot out all my iniquities. Psalm 51:7-9*

IS HAPPINESS A GOAL OF LIFE? Are we to feel happy all the days of our lives?

On the other hand, if we occasionally feel sadness, or guilt, or we experience moodiness, tension, or anxiety, or any number of emotions which are deemed “negative” do we throw up our hands and seek medical help?

Feeling or sensing different emotions is part of our God-given makeup. Just as we feel a physical sensation if we touch something hot, feeling an emotional reaction to something happening in our lives is quite normal - and healthy. An emotion alerts us to a change and can help us work through a process of change. Having a faith, or support from people is often very helpful too. Let's take a look at a few examples:

Grief: Nearing death can bring intensely felt emotions. They can feel awful, but actually be healthy and helpful. Most of us have heard of Elizabeth Kubler Ross and her discussion on death and dying. Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and Acceptance were some of the emotions expressed by people nearing death, and their loved ones. There is no correct length of time for the grief process and no right or wrong way to grieve.

Guilt: Sometimes called “a wasted emotion”, guilt can be a first step in a process to healthy change. For instance, the label “Food Police” followed me as a healthy lifestyle co-ordinator. Then a mentor noted: “If someone is hiding the contents of their shopping trolley from another, then this can indicate a conscience being awakened.” However, unhealthy guilt can be lodged in our minds from experiences of the past, and it is these leftovers from the past which we have the privilege to ask Jesus Christ to take away from us, leaving us free!

Emotional Crying: Tears are interesting. Biochemist, William Frey devoted 15 years of research to tears. Did you know that tears shed while cutting an onion, are completely different to emotional tears? Tears shed during an emotional experience contain hormones and even toxins from the body. Could emotional tears be a feature inbuilt by God to help excrete extra hormones and/or toxins? Thus tears are a healthy part of dealing with emotion.

Moodiness and aggression: A lack of nutrients, or the wrong foods for each individual’s unique body causes all kinds of mood changes. Depression, anxiety, aggression, mood swings can all be caused by eating a diet of low nutrient, poor quality food. Or the wrong food for YOU! How do we eat in the 21st century?

It is our personal experience that God can and will guide you in all aspects of health. He may not answer immediately, but He will when He knows the time is right. Food grown with chemical pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, fertilisers and then processed into products which resemble food, but lack nutrition, is probably the first part of your food to pray about. Science is firm: chemical laden, processed food leads to disease of body and mind. Yes, even a diet of plant foods grown in depleted soils and sprayed with chemicals may lead to poor health, (see Chapter 7).

The safest way to eat for a balanced mind and body is to eat simply most of the time. Eat as wide a variety of vegetables as you enjoy at every meal!

Preparing for Christ’s Second Coming: At this time in the world, when change is dramatic, prophecy is fulfilling, and we are living in the end times, each us preparing for the second coming of Christ has a grave responsibility.

Each of us is required to examine all areas of life and lifestyle with an open heart and mind to discover anything which is interfering with our relationship with Christ. This can bring a stirring range of emotions too. For example, in our family we have decided to experiment with eliminating all grains. We have found this to have brought many health benefits - and accompanying grief!

Through choosing Jesus Christ first, He can prepare us to complete the work required on earth in these last days.

*“Better to go to the house of mourning
Than to go to the house of feasting,
For that is the end of all men;
And the living will take it to heart.
Sorrow is better than laughter,
For by a sad countenance the heart is made better.
The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning,
But the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.” Ecclesiastes 7:2-4*

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We can be assured that confession and repentance for our sins is the very thing God has longingly waited for. And without any delay or hesitation, He showers His forgiveness upon us. And believing in God’s promise to forgive sin, in spite of our unworthiness we receive His forgiveness into our lives.

Now receiving God’s forgiveness is not based on feelings, whether we feel forgiven or not. Oh no. God’s forgiveness is His promised pledge *...in which it is impossible for God to lie...* Hebrews 6:18

Yet we need not become discouraged if we feel unworthy. For in reality those feelings just might be the welling of love and appreciation in our souls and a sign of our humility before God.

'There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?' Simon answered and said, 'I suppose the one whom he forgave more.' And He said to him, 'You have rightly judged.' Luke 7:41-43

*But I am poor and sorrowful;
Let Your salvation, O God, set me up on high.
I will praise the name of God with a song,
And will magnify Him with thanksgiving. Psalm 69:29-30
I acknowledged my sin to You,
And my iniquity I have not hidden.
I said, 'I will confess my transgressions
to the LORD,'
And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.
Psalm 32:5*

*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins
and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9*

Yes God is faithful to forgive sin. In other words there is no confessed sin He will not or cannot forgive.

*To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though
we have rebelled against Him. Daniel 9:9*

*Who is a God like You,
Pardoning iniquity
And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage?
He does not retain His anger forever,
Because He delights in mercy.
He will again have compassion on us,
And will subdue our iniquities.
You will cast all our sins
Into the depths of the sea. Micah 7:18-19*

*For You, Lord, are good,
and ready to forgive,
And abundant in mercy*

*to all those who call upon You.
But You, O Lord,
are a God full of compassion, and gracious,
Longsuffering and abundant
in mercy and truth. Micah 7:18-19*

...For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more. Jeremiah 31:34

*For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those
who fear Him;
As far as the east is from the west,
so far has He removed His transgressions from us. Psalm 103:11-12*

*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of
sins, according to the riches of His grace... Ephesians 1:7*

And thus as we receive God's forgiveness into our hearts, at the very same time we receive His merciful gift of salvation into our lives. Now we are free from our past sins, no matter how bad they may be. Hallelujah! Looking to our Saviour God and appreciating all He has done for us, He becomes the focus of our entire lives.

We love Him because He first loved us. 1 John 4:19

And as we continue to recognise sin in our lives and confess them to God, our misdeeds drop away from our lives.

Praise God, through His amazing grace the guilt and burden of sin is lifted from our lives.

With loving compassion, the Son clothes us with his robe of perfect righteousness, His garment of salvation.

*I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
My soul shall be joyful in my God;
For He has clothed me
with the garments of salvation,
He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, Isaiah 61:10*

...not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us... Titus 3:5

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God... Ephesians 2:8

Having received this priceless gift of salvation, the Son carries us across the chasm of eternal death. And there we stand before God our heavenly Father, justified, pardoned and forgiven through His Son's death and righteous risen life.

'Justified' or 'justification' is a biblical term which means this: Jesus paid the death penalty for our sins that we might stand before our heavenly Father free of guilt.

For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. Romans 5:6-10

*He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied.
By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, (made right with God) For He shall bear their iniquities. Isaiah 53:11*

...being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, Romans 3:24

...who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification. Romans 4:25

Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. Romans 5:18

And so as our faith lays hold of God's saving gift, receiving His forgiveness, we receive His justification into our lives.

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Romans 5:1-2

*Put me in remembrance;
Let us contend together;
State your case, that you may be acquitted.
Isaiah 43:26*

Yes, rejoicing in God's love, being justified, acquitted of our sins - our life slate is wiped clean and now Jesus is Lord over our lives. Not only this, for in a wonderful way we become sons

and daughters of God. And in this family relationship, the Spirit of the Great King and His Son abides in our lives.

*Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us,
that we should be called the children of God! 1John 3:1
And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son
into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!' Galatians 4:6*

*Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that
the Spirit of God dwells in you? 1 Corinthians 3: 16*

...he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. 1 Corinthians 6: 17

Yes, amazingly we are joined to God in spirit and living in His Spirit we begin new born lives.

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have
passed away; behold, all things have become new. 2 Corinthians 5: 17*

...be transformed by the renewing of your mind...Romans 12: 2

*...be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was
created according to God in true righteousness and holiness. Ephesians 4:23-24*