

Two Questions:

1. Is there any reason why you wouldn't turn from your sin and trust in Jesus as your only hope for salvation right now?
2. Is there any sin in your life that you love so much you are willing to die and spend an eternity in Hell just so you can enjoy that sin in this life?

Don't put it off:

- ⇒ "Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts." (*Hebrews 4:7c*)
- ⇒ "Behold, now is the day of salvation" (*2 Corinthians 6:2c*).
- ⇒ "It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment" (*Hebrews 9:27*).
- ⇒ He offers mercy today but He is coming again to judge the living and the dead: "And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire" (*Revelation 20:15*).



Bad News, Good News

First, the bad news:

God, the Creator of all things, is holy and just and perfect (*Genesis 1:1; Leviticus 11:44; Revelation 4:8; Psalm 11:7; Isaiah 5:16; Psalm 7:11*). And He demands holiness and moral perfection from us (*Galatians 3:10*). But we have all broken His Law. We are lawbreakers by nature, rebels against God, and subject to His wrath (*Romans 1:18; 3:23; Isaiah 59:2; Psalm 51:5; Ephesians 2:1-3; James 2:10; Isaiah 64:6*). And the consequences of our sin are death, judgment and eternal punishment in hell (*Romans 6:23; Matthew 25:41,46; Revelation 20:15*).



The great question:

It's important then to ask, "If God is holy and just, then what does He do with us?" The Bible says, "He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the righteous, both of them alike are an abomination to the Lord" (*Proverbs 17:15*). But the Bible also says that God "justifies the ungodly" (*Romans 4:5*). And when God "justifies" us, or declares us not guilty, He knows we are sinners who are lawbreakers. What did God do so that it's right for Him to forgive our sin and declare us not guilty?

If a holy God calls the wicked to have a loving relationship with Him, He's not holy. If a just God simply pardons the wicked, He is no longer just. What did God do so it's right for Him to forgive our sins and declare us not guilty (*Genesis 18:25*)?

Now the good news:

Here's the answer: While declaring that God is holy and just, the Bible also says that God is love (*1 John 4:8*), and that in love He has provided a solution to our problem. In love, He sent His one and only Son, God in the flesh (*John 1:1, 14*), who lived a perfect life as a man (*Hebrews 4:15*) and then went to the cross. On the cross, the sins of his people were cast upon him and all the justice and wrath of God that we deserved was placed on Jesus.



After suffering, Jesus said, "It is finished." That meant that he did what was required to fully satisfy God's wrath against our sin. He paid the price in full and then He died. Our sins were paid for because on the cross He bore our sin (*1 Peter 2:24*). The wrath of God that should have fallen upon us fell upon Him (*1 John 2:2; 4:10*).

This is good news because Jesus' death paid for our sin; and God's demand for us to be holy and perfect was met by God counting Jesus' perfect law-keeping as ours. We have failed to keep God's law and so we deserve to die. Jesus alone kept God's law and did all the good things God required; and so He should not have died. God provided a substitute in Jesus by which He took our place before God (*Romans 3:23-26*). He offered His perfect law-keeping where we could not and He offered His own life in place of ours.

But He not only died, God also raised Him from the dead. And by raising Jesus from the dead, the Father declared two things: that He accepted Jesus' work as a substitute on our behalf and that His anger against us was appeased.

The resurrection also showed that God has the power to raise us from the dead and that those who believe in Jesus will not remain dead, but will be resurrected to eternal life with Him (*1 Peter 1:3; 1 Corinthians 15; 1 Corinthians 6:14; 2 Corinthians 4:14*).

How should we respond to this good news?

In order to be saved, the Bible calls all men to **repent** of their sins and to **believe** the gospel, or the good news (*Mark 1:15*).

What does it mean to repent?

To repent means to have a change of mind about who Jesus is and what He has done. You once thought nothing of Him. Now you embrace Him as your only hope of salvation (*John 14:6; Acts 4:12*). This change of mind will always result in a change of behavior (*Luke 3:8*) such as turning from your sin and living differently (*2 Corinthians 5:17*). The sin you once loved, you begin to hate (*Romans 7:15, 24*).

What does it mean to believe?

To believe is to recognize that there is absolutely nothing in you that can save you. You know you are a sinner in rebellion against God. It is acknowledging that you have one hope found only in the person and work of Jesus. You know you can't save yourself. To believe means you are trusting in His death as the full payment for your sin (*1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 2:2*). And you are trusting in His resurrection from the dead as the guarantee that you will be raised to eternal life.

How a person is saved:

Jesus' perfect law-keeping satisfied the demands of God's Law that we could never keep and His blood appeased God's anger against our sin. That means we can do absolutely nothing to earn our salvation. Jesus has already done it all. He paid our debt in full.

This great salvation is a gift that is received by faith alone (*Eph 2:8-9; Gal 3:22; Romans 3:28*). It is through simple faith in Jesus that God counts Jesus' perfect law-keeping as yours. And if you will trust by faith in what Jesus did on the cross on your behalf, you will receive the forgiveness of your sins and you will be saved. You will be at peace with God and eternal life will be yours (*Romans 5:9; 8:1; John 3:16*).