

God Judges: Sin
God Promises: Covenant
God Incarnates: Jesus
God Saves: Salvation

Big Question: What has God done to fix the problem?

1 John 4:10

Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Jerome Luai knew he had a big problem. The Blues 5/8 was with his teammates at Urban Surf when suddenly he felt himself being dragged into deep water. Luai, a weak swimmer, knew he was in trouble. He raised his hand for help and a lifeguard saved him. Luai reflected, "I almost died out there, so grateful to be alive." At the centre of every Christian's story is the realisation that we need to be saved. That we were in a desperate situation, unable to save ourselves, but on raising our hand for help, God saved us.

This week in our winter devotions we are exploring the theme of salvation. We start with one the summary statements of Christianity. 1 John 4:10. Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. The Bible, from start to end, helps us see that we all need saving. Like A+E, we are estranged from God on account of our sin. We all reject God and his Word, and seek to live our own way. Our sin separates from the Holy God and under his wrath. God's wrath is not volatile, not a nasty, hasty outburst. His wrath is the inevitability of his holiness. His wrath is his just judgement. He hates sin and must deal with it. As people who know we are guilty of sin, this leaves us in a desperate situation. The Bible, from start to end, records how God saves people. God never sweeps sin under the carpet. God never says trust in yourself or be a better person. That's like swimming against a rip. The great news of the Bible is that God saves sinners. How? How can a holy God save sinners? The answer is in our key verse.

God loves us. This love is not like human love, where we set our affections on someone because they are lovable. God's love has no such attraction. God loves the unlovable, sinners. He loves us so much that he takes the initiative to cross the vast chasm to save us. He did that in coming to earth in Jesus Christ. God the son did more than visit us. He offered himself as the atoning sacrifice for our sins. He became the focal point of God's wrath. He took our punishment upon himself. This is God's love. The Father did not injure his reluctant son. Jesus willingly gave his life for us "the righteous for the unrighteous," to bring us to God (1 Peter 3:16). Through the death of the Jesus Christ on the cross, he forgave sin, averted God's wrath, and reconciled estranged sinners with a holy God forever. No more gap. No fear of judgement. Saved forever by Jesus. When Luai was helpless in the surf he had a choice. Recognise his need for help or ignore reality. It's the same with us. Until we have recognised God's displeasure with us in our sin, there is no real reason for us to turn to him for salvation. If we think that we're rather outstanding individuals and God is our life coach—then there will be no repentance or faith. At the centre of every Christian's story is the realisation that we need to be saved. That we were in a desperate situation, unable to save ourselves, but on raising our hand for help, God saved us through the love of Jesus at the cross.

How deep the Father's love for us, how vast beyond all measure. That He should give His only Son, to make a wretch His treasure. How great the pain of searing loss, the Father turns His face away. As wounds which mar the Chosen One, bring many sons to glory.

Living and Active Prayer

Gracious Father,
You have saved us with a wonderful and powerful salvation.
Your Word is living and active. Today, we have heard you speak,
So help us to not harden our hearts but to live it out.
Forgive our failures, renew our wills, awaken our joy, and transform our lives.
Make our faith living and active.
In the name of your Son and by your Spirit, Amen

Reflection questions

How does the understanding that God loved us first shape my view of God's character and love?
In what ways can I reflect this sacrificial love in my relationships with others, especially those who are difficult to love?
How does God's love affect my sense of worth, how can I live out this truth in my daily walk with God?

Resources

This week, seek to sacrifice time and energy in order to serve someone else in your household.

Things All Children Should Know – Part 5d

The-Ology Chapters 36-38

PTC Course: Doctrine 2

Tuesday

Leviticus 17:11

How does the concept that 'the life of a creature is in the blood' and that it was given for atonement influence my understanding of the seriousness of sin and the cost of forgiveness?

Wednesday

Hebrews 10:10-12

Consider the sins you have done in the past, present, and will do in the future. How does Jesus' 'once for all time' sacrifice give you assurance of salvation?

Thursday

2 Corinthians 5:21

How does Christ's substitution, and gift of righteousness affect your sense of identity and purpose as a follower of Christ?

Friday

Romans 6:6-7

In what ways have you experienced the 'old self' being crucified with Christ, and how does this understanding of being freed from sin's power influence my daily life and choices?