

God's Plan For Saving Mankind

Text : **Matthew 10: 23-39**

INTRODUCTION :

- A. Before He created the world God planned to redeem man from their sins.**
- B. Some of us have reduced God's plan to a five step formula. By doing this we do a disservice to God.**
 - 1. We've all preached "Five Steps to Heaven" :
 - a. Hear, believe, Repent, confess, and be baptized
 - b. Some add : Don't sin any more, attend church and don't go to other churches.
 - 2. This formula is easy to remember and to repeat.
 - 3. It fits nicely on printed material.
 - 4. It makes a nice chart sermon.
- C. However, the fact that it's widely accepted and often repeated, does not make it true. This formula is NOT the gospel !!**
 - 1. None of the individual elements are incorrect within themselves, they're just not it.
 - 2. There are two problems with this formula :
 - a. One, it is NOT the way the Apostles defined the gospel.
 - b. Two, it puts the onus in the wrong place ; on the lost person.
 - 3. God places the responsibility for lost people squarely on the shoulders of His servants.

TRANSITION :

Let us observe some of the responsibilities which God has assigned to the Christian with regards to His plan to save mankind from the consequences of Sin.

I. The Christian must warn sinners of their condition and of it's consequences.

- A. Read ... Ezekiel 3: 16-21**
- B. God has given ALL faithful God-followers the responsibility to "warn" sinners.**
 - 1. Notice the onus is on the followers of God, NOT on the sinner.
 - a. Sinners don't know they are condemned to eternal destruction.
 - b. Often, everyone who influences them is in the same condition as them.

2. Those who know God :

- a. Must inform the sinners about the desire of God for them to return to Him.
- b. Must warn sinners about the judgment to come.

Acts 24: 24-25 Some days later Felix arrived with Drusilla, his wife who was a Jewess, and sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus.
25 But as he was discussing righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix became frightened and said,
"Go away for the present, and when I find time I will summon you."

3. Every follower of God must choose :

- a. Will he obey God and warn sinners. (**refer to text**)
- b. OR ... will he face the consequences of his rebellion against God.
- c. If he fails to warn sinners, he becomes one of them and shares their fate.

C. Once the God-followers communicates God's warning to the sinners, the onus shifts to the sinner.

1. The choice then becomes the sinner's.

Will he :

- a. Repent and seek the salvation God is offering ?
 - b. Continue in sin, stay lost, and accept the consequences of his choice.
2. Once the warning is given, the God-follower has fulfilled his responsibility.
- a. He is not held responsible for the sinner's choice.
 - b. He is approved of by God because he has been a faithful servant.
3. Both the God-followers and the sinner are account only for their own choices.

II. Those who follow Christ must seek out lost people to warn.

A. Jesus was totally committed to saving sinners.

- 1. **Luke 5: 30-32** The Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?" **31** And Jesus answered and said to them, "It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick. **32** "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."
- 2. **Luke 19: 8-10** Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much." **9** And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. **10** For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

3. By definition, a Christian is a follower of Christ, but no one can walk in the footsteps of the seeker of sinners and not himself seek to save sinners.

***It is said that the term “Christian” originated as a term of derision. It meant “Little Christ.”**

B. The early Christians followed the example of Jesus :

1. **Acts 8: 1-4** When forced out of Jerusalem by persecution all the members told the gospel to those they met along the way.
2. The Apostles also proclaimed the gospel as they journeyed from place to place.
Acts 8: 25- **So, when they had solemnly testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they started back to Jerusalem, and were preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.**

Note : *The Christian's relationship with Christ (and thus with God) depends upon his willingness to tell lost people about redemption in Him.*

Read ... Matt. 10: 23-39 (text)

- a. Notice this is in reference to speaking up for Jesus even in the face of persecution.
- b. This is NOT in reference to saying “yes” to a question asked at baptism.

C. ALL Christians are commanded to develop the ability to share the gospel message.

1. **I Pet. 3: 15-** **but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;**
2. **II Pet. 1: 5-11 ...** The purpose for adding the Christian virtues is to prevent one from being useless and unfruitful. (*faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, love*)

D. Christians are instructed to view contact with unbelievers as opportunities and to make the most of every opportunity .. i.e., .. of every contact.

1. **Col. 4: 5-6** **Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. 6 Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.**
2. The Apostle Paul gave us a good example in this :
 - a. **Acts 16** ... He converted his Jailor.
 - b. **Acts 24** ... He preached to the governor while being judged.
 - c. **Phil. 1: 12-14** ... He taught the gospel to the whole praetorian guard during his imprisonment in Roman. (**4:22** Caesar's household)

III. Christians must tell people the gospel.

A. Notice the scriptures :

1. **Mark. 16: 15-** And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.
2. **Rom. 1: 15-16** So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. **16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

B. What is the gospel message ?

1. It is NOT : Hear, believe, repent, be baptized, and live right.
2. The Apostle Paul defined what he preached.
Read ... I Cor. 15: 1-8
 - a. This is the message that Paul received from God.
 - b. This is the message which Paul preached as being of first importance.
 - c. This is the message that saves, that keeps saved, and to which one must stay faithful.
3. All through the book of Acts people taught this same message.
 - a. Peter : **Acts 2, 3, 4, 5**
 - b. Steven : **Acts 6 & 7**
 - c. Philip : **Acts 8 , ... etc.**

C. The faith that saves is in Jesus Christ.

1. The responsibility of EVERY Christian is to lead others to faith in Jesus as the Christ.
2. This is the only message that will save people.
 - a. Not conversion to a 5 step plan.
 - b. Not conversion to a set of doctrines.
 - c. Not conversion to a church.

D. For a Christian NOT to teach this message is to reject Jesus and rebel against God.

1. **Luke 6: 46** ... Only those who obey Jesus have the right to call Him “**Lord.**”
2. **I John 2: 3-4** ... Only those who obey Jesus Christ have “**come to know Him.**”

IV. Christian must try to persuade people to accept and to obey the gospel of Christ.

A. The Apostles demonstrated this to Christians.

1. **II Cor. 5:11**- Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; ...
2. **Acts 18: 4**- And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. (**persistence, not one shot**)
3. **Acts 26: 28**- Agrippa replied to Paul, "In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian."
4. **Acts 28: 23**- When they had set a day for Paul, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening.

B. In order to be persuasive, Christians must :

1. Be knowledgeable enough to make a persuasive presentation.
 - a. Requires study
 - b. Requires practice
2. Must live a life that demonstrates their message.
 - a. **Titus 2: 3-8** ... The messenger's conduct affects how people receive the message.
 - b. Compare ... **I Pet. 2: 12 , 3: 2**

- C. Even a perfect example can not persuade or teach the gospel without words.**
Acts 11: 13b-14 ... 'Send to Joppa and have Simon, who is also called Peter, brought here; **14** and he will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household.'

CONCLUSION :

- A. God foresaw the entire history of the world BEFORE He created it.**
1. Thus, He planned for man's salvation BEFORE He created the world.
I Pet. 1: 20
 2. He created Christians for the purpose of implementing His plan to save mankind.
Eph. 2: 10
- B. Christian, you exist for a reason ... to shine the light of the gospel to the world.**
Matt. 5: 14
- C. Our relationship with God depends upon our willingness to obey His commands :** Warn sinners, seek sinners, tell them the gospel, persuade them
- D. The worst punishment is for God to remove our light. Rev. 2:5 ... Ephesian Ch**