

What the World Needs Now

Fifty years ago, teachers were asked in a survey about the greatest problems they had with their students. Their answer: talking in class and chewing gum. A recent survey revealed a very different answer: drugs, violence and rape. Every day an estimated 100,000 kids carry a gun to school. By the time he is 18, the average American has seen 25,000 killings on television alone. The news is filled with reports of horrible crimes. Divorces are becoming more common than marriages. There are thousands of lonely people without a single friend. There is very little love in this world. Yet we all need love and search for it wherever we can. For some, this involves a series of sexual relationships. Often, these relationships don't work out and we end up getting hurt. After a while, we may give up on trying to find love and instead seek after impersonal sex. Others, faced with a marriage in which there is no real love, spend more and more time at work, seeking to find satisfaction through their job and the money it brings. Still others turn to drugs and alcohol to escape their unhappiness.

All of our efforts to find real and lasting love are doomed to failure, however, until we come to the source of all love. We have all been created by God for a purpose. He loves us far more than we can imagine and He wants us to experience His great love for us. But He gave us a free will. He won't force us to love Him. And we have all chosen to disobey Him, to go our own way. We can see how much we have sinned by looking at the Ten Commandments. These commandments are part of God's law, and by looking at them we can see some of the ways in which we have sinned. Here are some of them:

- 1) You shall worship the one true God alone, with all your strength.
- 3) Do not take God's name in vain (use it casually or profanely).
- 5) Honor your father and mother.
- 7) Do not commit adultery. (Jesus added, 'Do not look at woman or man with lust in your heart.')
- 8) Do not steal.
- 9) Do not lie or make false statements.
- 10) Do not covet after material things.



Have you ever broken any of these laws? How many times? None of us have totally kept God's law. I suppose that all of us have sometimes failed to honor God, failed to honor our parents, been guilty of sexual sin, stolen things, told lies, and coveted after material things. If you only sinned three times in a day (and surely we all sin much more than that) by the time you were 20 you would have committed over 20,000 sins. If you were convicted of that many crimes, how long would you spend in prison? We humans tend to make excuses for our sins. (For example: "It's OK to steal from this person because he is rich and I am poor.") However, God views every sin as an extremely serious violation of His law. In His justice, He has required that a penalty be paid for our sins. Just as a human judge will punish us when we disobey man's law, God has declared that He will punish all those who disobey His law.

"When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven...He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord" 2 Thess. 1:7, 9. This is the Bad News, which we must understand before we can appreciate the Good News.

The Good News is that God loves us and has provided one means through which we could be forgiven for our sins and reconciled to Him. He sent His Son Jesus Christ into the world to die in our place. Today, we are so accustomed to seeing pictures of Jesus hanging on the cross that we don't think much about what crucifixion is really like. Basically it is a slow form of death by strangulation, and it is possibly the most painful form of death ever devised by man. Yet Jesus, while He was on that cross, wasn't cursing God or the people who accused Him wrongly. He forgave them.



Today, our lives, our families, our nation and our world are falling apart because of our stubborn refusal to follow God's ways. How it hurts God to see us reject His love and insist on going our own way! Yet He is still reaching out to us in love. Jesus is still crying out, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." How will you respond to God's love? Will you ignore Him and continue going your own way? Or will you surrender your life to Jesus Christ and make Him your Lord? Right now you can get your life in right

relationship with God. Here is what you must do:

1. Admit that you have sinned against God.
2. Believe that Jesus Christ paid for your sins and rose from the dead.
3. Decide to let Jesus Christ be Lord of your life and to allow Him to guide and direct you.
4. Ask Jesus Christ to forgive your sins and come into your life and make you the kind of person He wants you to be. God wants to put His Spirit inside you so that you will have the ability to live for Him.

"Jesus I know that I have sinned against you. I believe that you died for my sins and rose from the dead. Now I ask you to be Lord of my life. Come into my life and make me the kind of person you want me to be. Show me each day what you want me to do. Thank you for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life with you."