**God’s Plan to Save Us**

**We have a serious problem.** Here are some sobering facts that combine to indicate just what a dangerous dilemma we have created for ourselves. Each and every one of us (who are mentally accountable) have sinned against God (Romans 3:23). Sin is a transgression of His laws (1 John 3:4) and our guilt separates us from the God who created us and loves us (Isaiah 59:1-2). This separation or spiritual death is exactly what we earned when we sinned against Him, and the consequences are eternal (Romans 6:23). Because God is just by nature, He can forgive us only if the debt of sin is somehow paid and we are totally incapable of redeeming ourselves (Romans 3:24-26). I can’t think of a more terrifying prospect than the circumstances to which we have subjected ourselves in our rebellion against God. But our God loves us too much to abandon us to our own destruction.

**God’s Plan.** At the heart of His scheme to wipe away the guilt of our sin so we can be reconciled to Him is Jesus Christ. The very Son of God inhabited a body prepared for Him, lived among us, suffered with us and, finally allowed that body to be sacrificed for us (Hebrews 10:4-10). The price for sin has been paid with the precious blood of Jesus.

The Holy Spirit played a significant role in God’s plan as well. He guided the apostles and prophets of Jesus into all truth and that message was “God-breathed” as they taught and wrote. The writings of the New Testament were confirmed by the Spirit and preserved by God’s providence such that “His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence” (2 Peter 1:3).

**Salvation is not universal.** Jesus was pretty blunt when He taught that most folks will chose the wrong path in life, leading to their destruction (Matthew 7:13). Even though His sacrifice was made on behalf of all men (Hebrews 2:9), only those who demonstrate their faith and trust in Him will benefit from the provisions God has made for our redemption. What does He expect from us?

**Steps or phases of conversion.**

* Hear the word. 1 Corinthians 1:21; Romans 10:17
* Believe the message. John 3:16; Hebrews 11:6
* Repent of a life of sin. Luke 13:3; Acts 11:18
* Confess Christ as Lord of your life. Romans 10:9-10
* Be baptized for the remission of sins. Acts 2:38; Mark 16:15-16
* Remain faithful unto death. Revelation 2:10

The teaching of Scripture is pretty straightforward but, unfortunately, misinformation and confusion seem to abound about the nature of these divine requirements and, in some cases, even whether or not some are necessary to our salvation. We will devote the next several articles to investigating each requirement in more detail to clarify exactly what the New Testament teaches. In the meantime, keep studying! If I can be of any assistance in your desire to do the will of God, contact me at 270-753-3800 or westmurraychurch@gmail.com.

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