

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

The Story:
Companionship
with God – The
Purpose for
Your Creation

Matthew 7:13-14

1 You were created in the image and likeness of God. That means you were made enough like Him for Him to enjoy your companionship. He wants to have you and enjoy you in heaven forever! The Bible is the story of divine companionship with mankind and to what degree God will go to have you. 2

I would like to use the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 7, verses 13 and 14 to illustrate what I mean by that.

“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life and only a few find it.

God’s plan for salvation in the Bible involves four concepts which are progressive. One leads to the other. The first concept is . . . 3

I. **Companionship Lost Because of Sin**

Companionship is lost because of sin. ⁴ The Bible starts out with the story of Creation. ¹ God created the universe and everything in it! You were created as a rational being; free to make choices. ⁵

Man and woman were created to have intimate fellowship with God. ⁶ They walked with God in the cool of the day. ² Everyone seemed to enjoy that arrangement. Especially God because when Adam and Eve didn't show up one day God called out, "Where are you?" ⁷

Then came the temptation. Genesis, chapter 3, verses 1 through 7, says, **Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said**

¹ Genesis 1:1-2:9.

² Genesis 3:8-9 - Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’ ” 8

This brings up the question, “Why create the tree and the serpent? I believe it was to put choice into the free will! 9

What was Adam’s and Eve’s sin? “Let’s do our own thing!” You and I, and our humanistic culture, have been saying that ever since. Then we wonder why God seems to be so far away. Why do we feel so alone? Why does a benevolent God allow bad things to happen to us and to others? It isn’t because God has moved away from you! 10

Then came the fall. Genesis, chapter 3, verses 22 through 24, record, **And the LORD God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.”** So the LORD God banished him from the

Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

Sin separates. ¹¹ It separated mankind from God. ³ Because of their rebellion against Him, God had to throw them out of the beautiful garden where He walked with them in the cool of the day. He had to separate them from His presence. ¹²

Then, sin separated man from woman. ⁴ God asks Adam what happened. He passes the buck to his wife. “This woman You gave me made me do it!” Imagine what she thought about him from then on! From then on husbands dominate the family relationships. Marriages have never been the same since. ¹³

³ Genesis 3:23-24 - So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. ²⁴ After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

⁴ Genesis, chapter 3, verse 12, The man said, “The woman you put here with me — she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

Sin separated mankind from his society.⁵ Languages were confused at the Tower of Babel. We have had cultural and racial tensions in our world ever since! ¹⁴

Sin even separates us from animals! Noah's ark had landed on Mount Ararat. The animals were released and Noah built an altar to God. Then in Genesis, chapter 9, verses 2 and 3 we read, The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands. Everything that lives

⁵ Genesis 11:1-9 - Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. As men moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there. They said to each other, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth." But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower that the men were building. The LORD said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other." So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called Babel — because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.

Up to this time mankind had, apparently, been vegetarians. It also appears mankind and animals had a master-pet relationship like I have with my cat. Could Seth pet the local adult lion? Would it purr when he did? Did people and animals communicate with one another like the serpent did with Eve?

After the fall everything changed! It took awhile but sin, rebellion against God's will, made everything different. ¹⁵

The Old Testament section of our Bible, the first three quarters of it, was man's attempts to try. God set up laws but man did not keep them. James 2, verse 10, For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. Perfect obedience was demanded to succeed at the "Do-It-Yourself" method; and the result was failure!

Man and woman broke their relationship with God. The relationship became a one way street. No matter how good people tried to be to earn God's favor the relationship could not be repaired!

So our first Bible concept is that companionship with God was lost because of sin. But the second concept is . . . 16

II. Companionship was Made Possible Because of the Cross

Companionship was made possible because of the cross! Since people, on their own, didn't succeed, God stepped in to solve this problem.

This is what He did. ¹⁷ God invaded planet earth to become one of us! Christians call this the Incarnation. Matthew, chapter 1, verses 22 and 23, tells us, **All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"—which means, "God with us." ¹⁸**

This is why we celebrate Christmas. It's not about Santa Claus, or reindeer, or decorated fir trees with presents under them. It's about a little baby born in a manger in a stable in Bethlehem. ¹⁹

This is one of the reasons we eat the unleavened bread during the communion service. Lord Jesus demonstrated who God is in human terms that we could understand. By successfully becoming human He could teach us how to live God's life and then demonstrate it by living it Himself. ²⁰

Then, He went to the cross to pay the price to redeem you! Colossians, chapter 2, verses 13 and 14, explains, **When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.**

Most religions believe that a relationship with God consists of obeying rules, observing ceremonies and

practicing the right rituals. The cross makes possible God's forgiveness of your sins; everything that you have done in rebellion against His will. The method of trying to work your way to heaven by law, rules, regulations and ceremonies was nailed to the cross when Lord Jesus died on it! ²¹

But, why the cross? ²² I believe it was to show you how horrible sin is. Most of us, when we do something wrong, normally don't think it's such a big deal. Well, God thinks it is! He thinks your acts of rebellion against His will are horrible enough that it took the cross to pay for it! ²³

How does the cross affect the Lord's Supper? ²⁴ You drink the cup to remember it.

Because of the cross you have been given your choice back! ²⁵ Because of the cross, the one way street created by your sin has become a two way street!

Companionship with God was lost when you sinned against Him. You created a one way street because your efforts to be good enough by obedience to God's standards was not good enough. You had to do it perfectly! So God stepped in, became a man and died on the cross to pay the price for your sin. God created a two way street.

So, what are you going to do about it? That's the third Bible concept . . . 26

III. Companionship Restored Because of Your Response

Companionship restored because of your response to the cross. Think of life now as a double lane highway with a divider medium in the center. What Lord Jesus did on the cross provides a break in the divider where you can stop, cross the divider, and get in the lane to go back to a relationship with God. You decide to switch lanes! ²⁷ Your response is choosing Jesus as your Lord and Savior. ²⁸

Choosing God's camp instead of Satan's is called faith! ²⁹ From First Peter, chapter 1, verses 3 through 9, Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade — kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ³⁰ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith — of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire — may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Faith is trusting the Lord with the rest of your earthly life and your eternal one. ³¹

Next, you make a decision to change your life. That's called repentance. Acts, chapter 3, verse 19, Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.

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Then, you express your loyalty to the Lord; your pledge of allegiance to Him. That's called the Good Confession. Romans, chapter 10, verses 9 and 10 puts it this way, That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

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Again, in First Timothy, chapter 6, verses 12 and 13, Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many

witnesses. In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession.³⁴

Finally, the formal ceremony that celebrates that choice is called baptism. First Peter, chapter 3, verse 21, . . . this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also — not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. Baptism is like what a wedding is to a marriage. It's like the break in the divider on the highway where you can switch lanes. It's like a ceremonial gateway to a new life!³⁵

Now you can walk with God again in the cool of the day!³⁶ The promise of God is in Acts, chapter 2, verse 38, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.³⁷

Your part in receiving this promise is responding with repentance and baptism.³⁸ God's part in fulfilling this promise is the promise of forgiveness and indwelling

you with His Holy Spirit. How much more intimate can you get than that!

So companionship with God was lost because of your sin. A one way street was created. Companionship with God was made possible because of the cross. A two way street was made possible. Companionship with God was restored because of your response to the cross.

Now, a fourth Bible concept became necessary. ³⁹

IV. Companionship Enhanced Because of the Church

Companionship with God is enhanced because of the church. After you have surrendered your life to the lordship of Jesus the church becomes important to you. ⁴⁰ This is because a genuine conversion to the Lord will make you weird! The world will see you differently. ⁴¹ This is because you will look at life from a different perspective. ⁴² Your new lifestyle may begin

separating you from your former companions. You could get pretty lonely. ⁴³

So, God supplies you with a support group; the church! It's made up of fellow weirdoes just like you. These fellow weird people encourage one another, build up one another's faith, support and teach one another. ⁴⁴ First Thessalonians, chapter 5, verse 11, Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Again in Hebrews, chapter 10, verses 23 through 25, Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

These weird people worship and serve God together.

You have just been told the story! You must do something about it. You have to either be part of the story or not be part of the story. You can't be both!

If you decide to be part of the story you have an obligation to pass the story on; to tell others that they can be part of the story.

The choice is yours!

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