

Sermon Series: Outsiders

Sermon Title: Making the Most of Every Opportunity

Sermon Text: Colossians 4:2-6 & 1 Peter 3:15

Sermon Summary: This study begins the series on outsiders. While other Scriptures are used to set the stage for the study, the main text is found in Colossians 4:2-6 and 1 Peter 3:15. There are two main things accomplished in this study. The first is an explanation of five ways to make the most of every opportunity to reach outsiders. The second accomplishment is a very practical explanation of three methods for presenting the Gospel to outsiders.

Full Sermon Notes

“Who else can whisper and darkness trembles? Only a Holy God!” People need that God to help them through the darkness of this world. And only a Holy God can whisper to our hearts and make the darkness tremble and flee. If we don’t have that God, the One and Only True and Awesome and All Powerful, All Knowing God, and the God who loves us so much He’s willing to speak against the darkness and send it running on our behalf, if we don’t have that God, then we are left without hope in a very difficult world! And would anyone disagree with me that especially now, we are living in a difficult world? Hurricanes, floods, Pandemics, cancer, and untold human tragedies! It’s rough out there, but we have a God who is bigger, better, stronger, and a God who cares about you and me. With that in mind lets pray and ask our Holy God to speak to us! Prayer!!

It’s always been a difficult world since the fall of humankind in the Garden of Eden. God had warned Adam and Eve of the consequences of their choices. But they didn’t listen and sin separated them from The Holy God, their Creator. And of course we can’t blame everything on them. We make some pretty bad choices sometimes too, right? In fact the Bible says this...

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

And in the Old Testament book of Isaiah it tells us this...

Isaiah 53:6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

And that last part of that verse is why we can have the message we’re going to have today...

Isaiah 53:6 ...and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

On whom did The Lord God lay our iniquity and our sin? Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God!

Now I want to say something before we get into our message. When you go through a difficult time, like a hurricane, flooding, sickness, or even the loss of a loved one, that doesn’t mean you’re being punished for some individual sin you committed! To be sure, all the troubles of this

world can be traced back to “big picture sin” and the fall of humankind from God’s original plan and design, but don’t let Satan make you think every bad thing that happens is your fault because you did something wrong! That’s just Satan’s way of making you feel condemned and discouraged. Let me give you a personal example. 16 years ago to the day on August 29th, Katrina got our building in the old factory outlet mall with 5 1/2 feet of water. I was kind of like, “Lord we worked so hard to get into this building and now look at it. Why?” It was a lease-purchase and the owners voided our contract and we couldn’t get back into the building to rebuild. And then the other day we get water in a different way. The roof fails and we get flooded! I’m thinking this can’t be happening again! I could have started thinking, “Lord is it something I said, or something I did, or something I didn’t do I should have done?” Notice, I said I could have said those things, but I didn’t because I know Satan’s little game and I’m not going to play that game. That’s a game that’ll hurt you! So I told some of our folks, “Hey, we’ll come back stronger and better, just like we did after Katrina!” God is just good that way and He’s not finished with Northshore Church! We’ve still got work to do! Amen? Amen!

And boy have our folks really stepped up. The people of our church have already gutted the carpets and water damaged cabinets and the contractors have already started working! After the message I’ll share with you some more exciting things that are coming our way. So stick around at the end. God makes good come out of the bad, but going through the bad is still tough, right? Of course it is. And I do need to clarify something about the topic of when bad things happen. What I just said doesn’t mean there’s no consequences for sin and bad choices, but there’s a difference between that and living in a fallen world where bad things just happen! Regardless of the source of trouble in your life, you need to know that Jesus Christ came from heaven to earth to make a way for us to be made right with God! One of my favorite verses says this...

Romans 8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,

Romans 8:2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.

Romans 8:3 For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh,

Romans 8:4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

People, that’s a message people of the world need desperately to hear! There’s hope in those verses and as we’ll see today, Paul the Apostle and the Apostle Peter, had been forever changed by the message of those verses we know as the Gospel! The Good News of Jesus Christ! For the next seven weeks we’re going to discuss how Jesus made the most of every opportunity He had to share the Good News with outsiders so they could become insiders, a part of the family of God! In fact, Jesus’ mission was this...

Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

And did you know that's exactly what we're supposed to be doing?

Matthew 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Matthew 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Matthew 28:20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Jesus was that Holy God we just sang about in the flesh and we are able to represent Him to people who are outsiders and separated from their Creator God because of what He promised...

Matthew 28:20... And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

What a wonderful promise!! Now let me tell you something so important! I believe the reason we are not immediately transported out of this troubled world to heaven once we ask Jesus to be our Savior is because we have a God ordained work to do in this world! Paul and Peter both speak great wisdom to God's children about this very important mission we have. We'll hear from Paul first...

Colossians 4:2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

Colossians 4:3 And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.

Colossians 4:4 Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.

Colossians 4:5 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.

Colossians 4:6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Paul gives us several important ways we can make the most of every opportunity to reach outsiders.

The first way is a... Devoted Prayer Life!

Colossians 4:2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

If you want to make the most of every opportunity you must have a devoted prayer life! Without a devotion to prayer you will not be walking in the power and presence of the Lord so you are bound to miss opportunities that arise to share the Gospel because without the Holy Spirit's prompting, it will be easy to allow the things of this world to get you distracted! Watchful praying is knowing what to pray for! When it comes to our mission in life prayer is way more than just asking for things. We need to pray for God's wisdom and the leading of The Holy Spirit as we

engage lost people in a gospel conversation. We need to pray for God's Holy Spirit to go before us and prepare the heart of the one we will be speaking to. And we need to pray with thanksgiving. In this context I would say that would be thanksgiving for our own salvation! We were once darkness but are now children of the light! Thank God for that and let that motivate you to reach outsiders!

The second way is...
Intercessory Prayer Life!

Colossians 4:3 And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.

Colossians 4:4 Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.

Sharing the good news of Jesus is a team effort so we should be praying for one another as well! And I want to point out something here. Paul says he's in chains. He's in prison and I think his prayer requests are powerful! He asked for: Open doors for the Gospel and Clarity in his presentation of the Gospel! Are you kidding me? He didn't ask for the doors of the jail to be open so he could escape or be released. Wow. He asked for doors to be opened for the Gospel! Begs these questions for you and me...

Should my prayer be:

Take me out of the storm or use me in the storm?

Take me out of the storm or calm me in the storm?

Take me out of the storm or teach me to see You working in the storm?

Take me out of the storm or make me stronger because of what I went through in the storm?

Take me out of the storm or use the storm to help me realize just how blessed I am?

Take me out of the storm or use the storm to open opportunities for the Gospel?

Paul then gives us yet another way to make the most of every opportunity to reach outsiders.

A third way is to...
Be wise in the way you act towards outsiders!

Colossians 4:5 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.

If you are condescending with a "Holier than thou" attitude, people will pick up on that! If you act like you know it all and they know nothing, you can slam shut an otherwise open door for the gospel! Paul once talked to a group of philosophers, most of whom were polytheists, people who believe in many gods. Listen to his conversation with those people...

Acts 17:22 Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious.

Acts 17:23 For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.

Acts 17:24 "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands.

Acts 17:25 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.

Acts 17:26 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.

Paul had such wisdom to let them know that the One True God wanted to be a part of their lives personally! He wants to give us guidance! He wants to have a personal relationship with us! Paul then shares with them the very purpose of creation!

Acts 17:27 God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.

Paul then gives us yet another way to make the most of every opportunity to reach outsiders.

A fourth way is to...

Be Gracious and Flavorful with your Conversation!

Colossians 4:6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Paul always wanted the Holy Spirit to guide His conversations and he wanted his life to back up his words. Listen to the way he put it to the Corinthian Church...

2 Corinthians 6:3 We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited.

2 Corinthians 6:4 Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses;

2 Corinthians 6:5 in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger;

2 Corinthians 6:6 in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love;

2 Corinthians 6:7 in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left;

2 Corinthians 6:8 through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors;

2 Corinthians 6:9 known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed;

2 Corinthians 6:10 sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

Making many rich? What does Paul mean by that? The only really rich people in this world are the ones who have the riches of God's grace, His forgiveness, His love, His promises, and most of all His presence by way of The Holy Spirit! Paul was saying, I may not have the treasures and comforts of this world, but I possess everything that really matters!

A relationship with God and souls that have been saved through the sharing of the Gospel!

I love what Jim Elliot said, a missionary who lost his life to take the gospel to a group of people in the jungles of Ecuador...

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."

A few years later Jim's wife and others were able to bring the very folks who killed Jim to faith in Christ! And this is what I believe Paul was referring to in the second part of verse 5...

2 Corinthians 1:5 For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.

We are comforted through Christ as we find the same purpose, meaning and joy that Jesus found comfort in: bringing others to know God! And for the rest of the sermon we will learn very practically how to...

Colossians 4:5 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.

Colossians 4:6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

How do we Make the Most?

1 Peter 3:15 But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

Peter then gives us yet another way to make the most of every opportunity to reach outsiders.

**A Fifth Way is to...
In Your Hearts, Revere Christ as Lord**

The Heart of Evangelism

- Evangelism Flows from a Captivated Heart
 Captivated by Our Lord
- Evangelism Flows from a Changed Heart

Changed by His Life

- Evangelism Flows from a Compelled Heart
Compelled by His Love

- Passion Produces Evangelism

- Peter displayed our motivation for evangelism as a passionate relationship with Christ rather than a dull obligation to Christ.

In other words, we don't share our faith because we have to, but because we want to! We share, not because of a mandate, or a law, but because our hearts compel us to! It's our desire! Peter noted that in our hearts we are to revere Christ. The heart was used symbolically to discuss the place where life decisions were made. The heart includes the mental, emotional, and spiritual capacities of a person. Therefore, the decision is one that involves the whole being. Note that the decision Peter was discussing was a decision to revere Christ. This is a mental/intellectual decision, but not only a mental/intellectual decision. Revering Christ is a decision that includes a deep value, appreciation, or better yet emotional relationship with Christ. He died for me, I'll live for Him! He saved me, forgave me, changed me, freed me! He can do the same for you! To revere Christ is to be so captivated by who He is that you supremely honor him as the most valuable being in all of life. A Christian who reveres Christ in their heart passionately loves Jesus for who he is.

- In 2 Cor. 5:14-15, Paul described his motivation for evangelism in this way:

2 Corinthians 5:14 For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.

2 Corinthians 5:15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

Paul noted that it was who Christ is (his loving nature) and what Christ had done (died for his sins), that produced his passion to share Jesus with others.

How do we Make the Most?

Always Be Prepared Because Eternal Life is at Stake

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Abundant Life is Available Now

John 10:7 So Jesus said to them again, "Truly, truly I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.

John 10:8 All those who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them.

John 10:9 I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came so that they would have life, and have it abundantly.

So Jesus offers abundant life to those who are willing to receive it and we must...

Always Be Prepared

Be prepared for what? To share the good news of Jesus! Why? Because people need the forgiveness, the hope, and the strength Jesus can give them. And we must be prepared because...

Opportunity is Plentiful

What opportunity? The opportunity to share with someone who is desperately in need of the abundant life Jesus offers! There are people all around us that need what we have and what Jesus offers to them. It was true in Jesus' day as well...

Matthew 9:35 Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.

Matthew 9:36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Matthew 9:37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful...

But there is a huge and a sad problem...

Workers Are Few

Matthew 9:37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.

But there's another reason we need to...

Always Be Prepared Because Christ's Return is Imminent

We don't know when, but He could come any day. Paul put it this way...

1 Thessalonians 5:1 Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you,

1 Thessalonians 5:2 for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

1 Thessalonians 5:3 While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

1 Thessalonians 5:4 But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief.

1 Thessalonians 5:5 You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.

With this in mind we again ask the question...

How do we Make the Most?

Give the Reason for the Hope You Have - Share the Gospel

I'm going to give you three tools for doing just that. I really appreciate Andrew and Zach for helping with this portion of the message today and Andrew for the graphics you will be seeing. This is so important and the notes are on the Bible app and our website, Northshorechurch.net. So you'll have what I'm about to tell you and show you. Here's three ways to share the gospel...

1. Proclaim His message from Scripture
(Romans Road)
2. Utilize an evangelism illustration
(The Chasm and the Cross)
3. Use your story
(Share your testimony)

The first tool is what is called the Romans Road to salvation because it uses verses from the book of Romans.

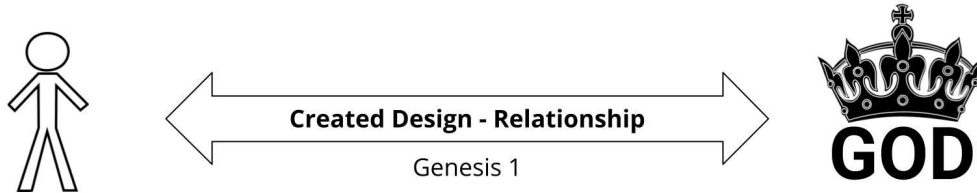
Share the Gospel (Romans Road)

Romans		
3:23	We Are All Sinners	For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
6:23	Consequence of Sin	For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord
5:8	God Loves Sinners	But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
10:9	You Can Be Saved	If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved
10:13	God's Promise	Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

That's such a powerful tool! You can even put little book marks in your Bible so you could turn right to those passages in order, or write those down in the inside cover of your Bible.

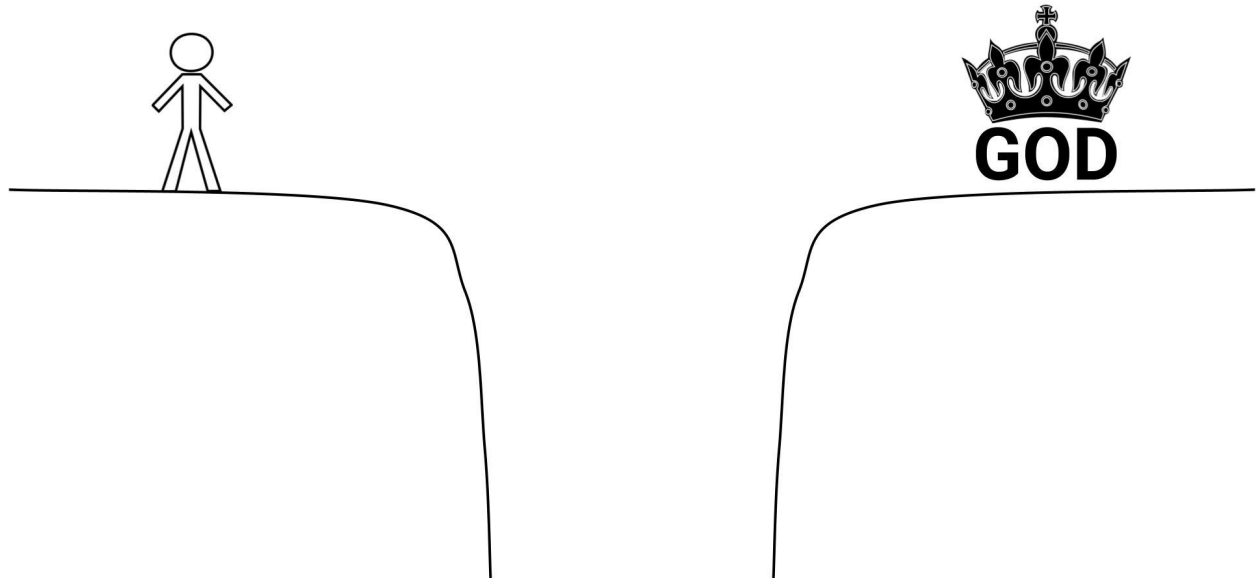
A second tool for sharing the Good News of Jesus is with an evangelism illustration. Evangelism is the act of proclaiming a message, and for us it's the good news of Jesus. Here's the illustration...

The Chasm & The Cross

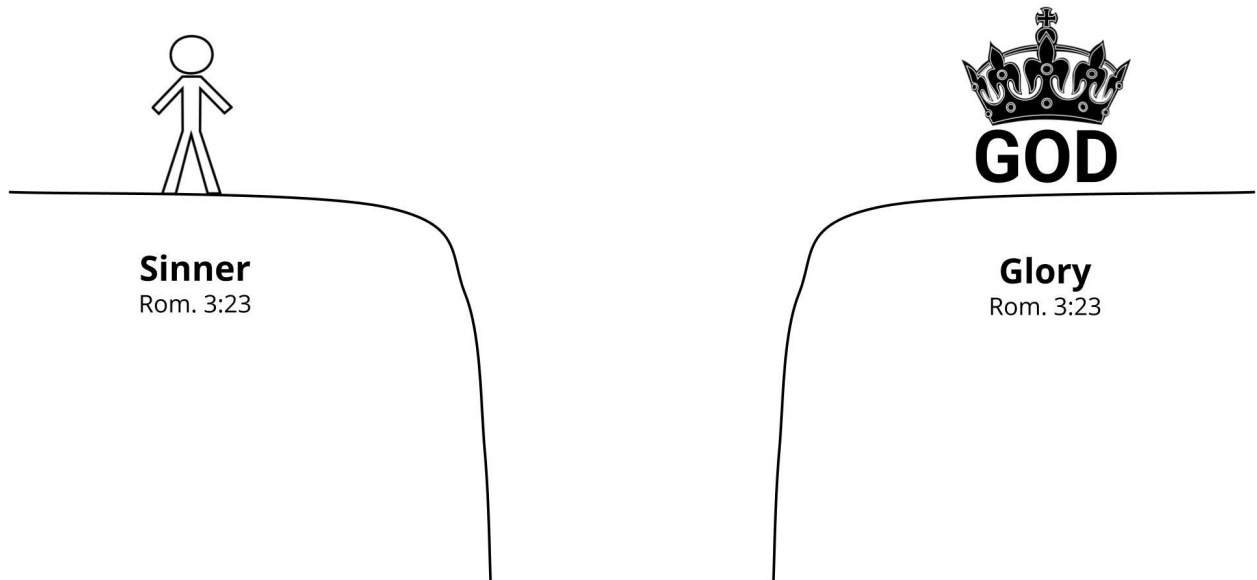


The book of Genesis clearly shows that we were designed to have a relationship with God. But when Adam and Eve sinned, their sin created a chasm between them and God. God was holy and they were now covered in sin and shame.

The Chasm & The Cross



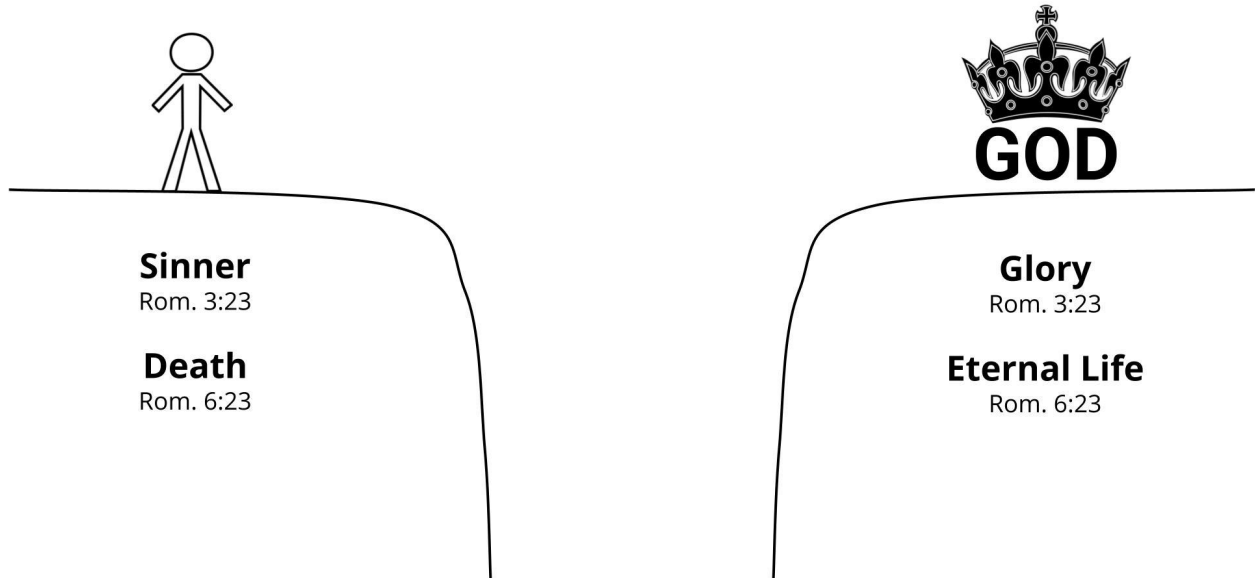
The Chasm & The Cross



This situation is explained in Romans 3:23...

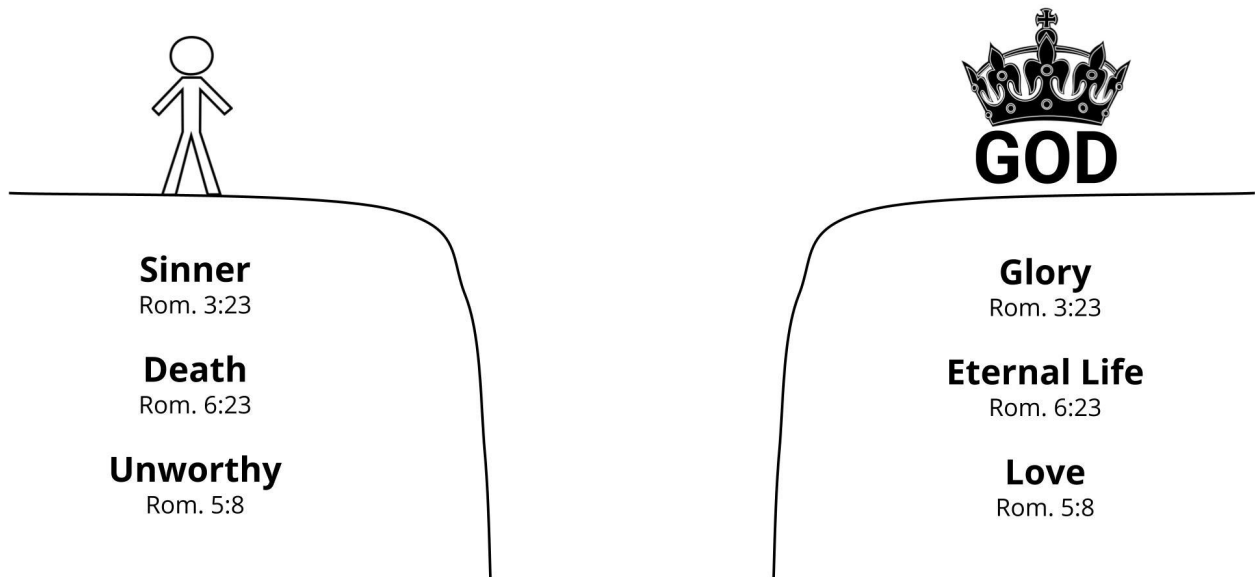
Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

The Chasm & The Cross



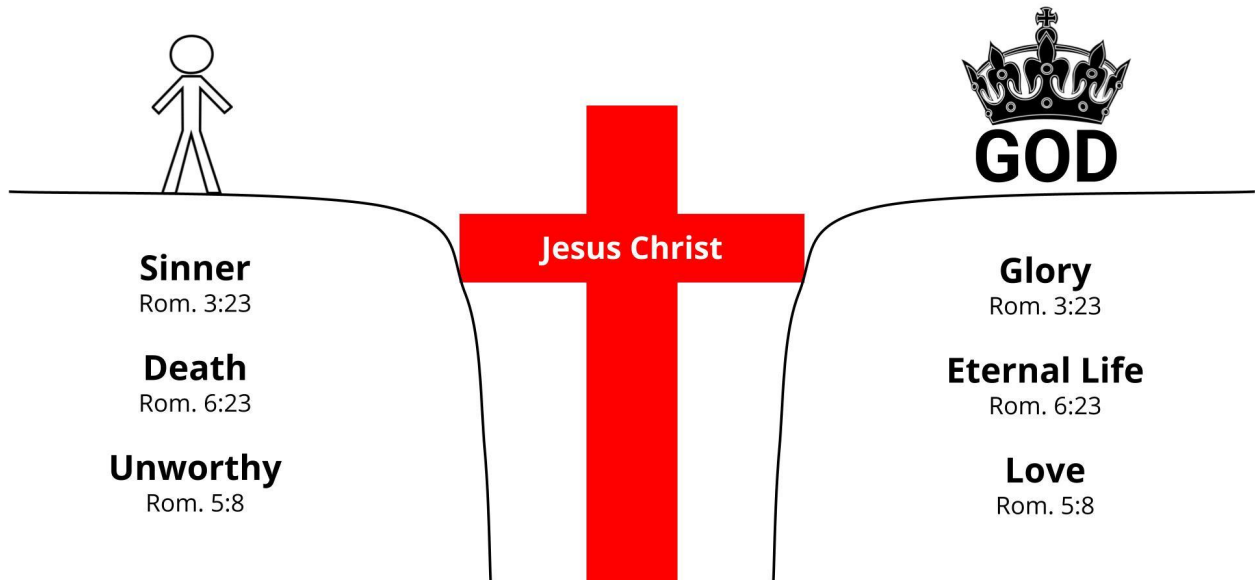
Sin brought about death, but God wanted us to have eternal life. But we were now unworthy to be in God's presence because of our sin. But God still loved us!

The Chasm & The Cross

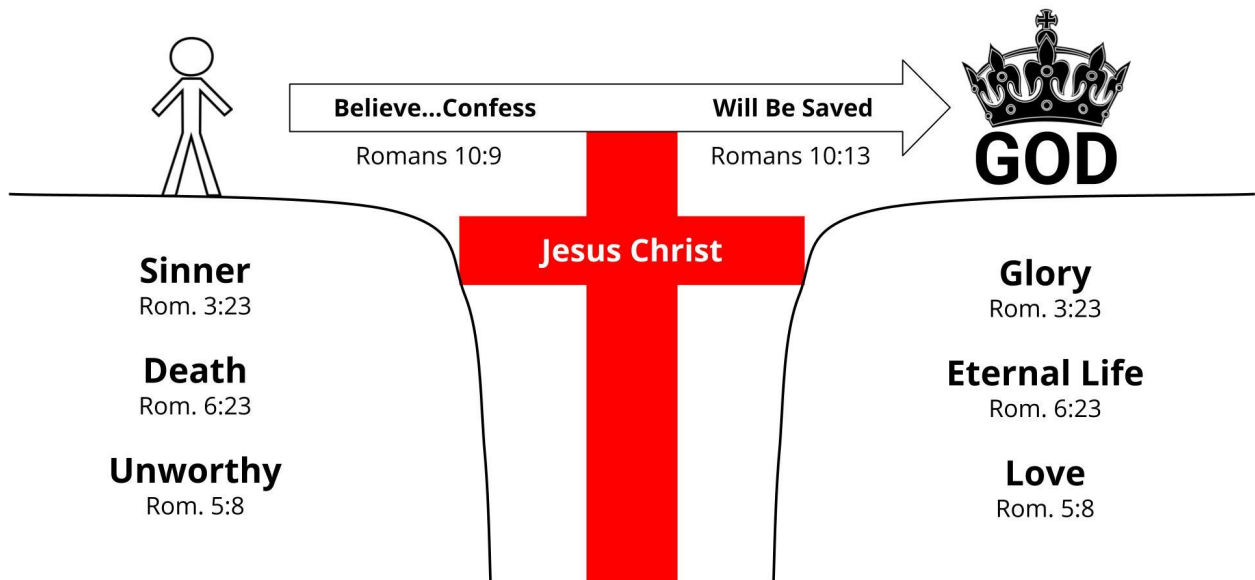


Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners (unworthy), Christ died for us. And this is where the bridge comes in, and that bridge was Jesus on the Cross.

The Chasm & The Cross



The Chasm & The Cross



Romans 10:9 says we are to believe and confess

Romans 10:9 If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Romans 10:13 says...

Romans 10:13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

So you will need to take a little time, if you're like me and are not an artist, and practice how to draw this on even just a scrap piece of paper. It doesn't have to be artist level, just get the message across. Now there's one other amazing way to make the most of every opportunity you have to share the Good News of Jesus and that's when you...

*Give the Reason for the
Hope You Have!*

Share Your Testimony, Your Story

This is really simple. Tell them about...

Your Life Before Christ
How You Accepted Christ
Your Life With Christ

Knowing the Roman Road verses and having the Gospel illustration ready to role can be good backup if they ask you questions or ask you to show them in the Bible. Whatever method you choose to use or combination, remember to share...

With Gentleness and Respect

Now I know you may be tired of hearing me share this, but I never tire of sharing! The night I received Jesus as my Savior and my life was changed forever, was when my Dad knocked on my bedroom door one evening and said, come on son, we're going to church, there's a revival meeting. I told my Dad, "Dad, I'm almost 15 and I've been thinking about the God thing and it's really not for me, I'm not going!" Now my Dad was old fashioned and would usually respond to something like that with, "As long as you put your feet under my table, eat my food and live under my roof you'll follow my rules, get in the car!" But that's not what he said. He very wisely, but with a broken heart, said, "Well son, there's one thing I can't make you do, I can't make you love the Lord!" We'll see you later!" He and my mom and my little sister got in the car and drove to church. I went and sat down on the couch and thought, "well that went pretty good!" But then I just couldn't get the sad and troubled look my dad had on his face out of my mind.

The Holy Spirit used that to convict my heart and I walked to the church. We only lived about a mile away. That night a young preacher preached a message on the brutality of the Cross and I remember thinking...If that's a true story I'd be a fool to walk away from that kind of love! But I've cursed God's name and done so much wrong, I probably couldn't be saved even if I wanted to. It was at that very moment the preacher said..."And Jesus looked down from the Cross at the very people who had mocked Him, spit on Him, and nailed Him to the tree and said...'Father, forgive them, they don't understand what they are doing!'"

Chill bumps covered my arms and I decided that was no coincidence. I cried out to the Lord and said if you're willing to forgive me and change me I sure need you because my life is a mess! Let me tell you, I'm not a perfect man, but I've never been the same since that night! That's my story and there may be someone listening today and you think you're too far gone for Jesus. I'm here to tell you that's a lie from Satan. Don't buy the lie. Just do this...

Admit you have sinned and need a Savior!

Believe Jesus died on the cross to be your Savior!

Call upon Jesus to be your Savior!

In fact you could pray right now with me. I'll pray this pray slow enough for you to repeat it with me.

Dear Jesus, I admit that I'm a sinner! I'm so sorry for the wrong I have done in my life! I'm amazed You would love me so much that you would sacrifice Your life on the old rugged cross in order to save me! I ask You to forgive me of my sins and to be my Savior! I need You! I want to begin living a new life, a life that is not just focused on me, but a life that is focused on You and others. I call upon Your name Jesus and want to commit my life to live for You! Thank You for loving me so much and for being willing to be my Savior and my Friend! In Jesus Name I pray, amen!

If you've made that decision today please let us know so we can celebrate with you and help you grow in your faith and your relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus! And tell a friend or family member! You now have a testimony! Now let me share with you a few things before you go. Andrew Ogea has been coordinating and working with our superstar volunteers and as a result, our building has been gutted and is getting close to being able to be put back together. We may be online for another week or two or maybe at an alternative site. Several of our sister churches in town have graciously offered for us to use their facilities on Sunday afternoon or evenings. Please make sure we have your email address and phone number so we can contact you keep you up to date. Of course you can always check out the latest information on our website, Northshorechurch.net, our Facebook Page and Instagram.

Northshorechurch.net

[Northshore Church - Facebook](#)

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Also, if you need help with storm related issues, we have a team that can assess whether or not we have the skills or resources to help, and if we can't we'll try to guide you to the resources you need. Email our admin assistant Julie @...

Julie@northshorechurch.net

And if you are willing to help us cut trees, remove debris, tarp houses and gut houses, please sign up. We've got church members and people in our community that desperately need help!

Let's make the most of every opportunity that comes our way to share the gospel and to be the light and love of Jesus to our neighbors! Send those emails and get on the list to help! You'll be blessed! And speaking of blessings, the next two weeks we will have some very special guest speakers coming to be a part of our Outsiders series. Dr. Jake Reoukovski, one of our professors from The New Orleans Baptist Seminary will be preaching to us next week. This was planned way before the storm and he is still able to do this! You will be so blessed by this amazing man of God. And then the next week Dr. Don Pucik our local Mission Strategist will be bringing a powerful gospel message to us. I'll be back in the saddle the next week! We appreciate your faithfulness in giving during this time and we know God is going to meet all the needs we're facing as a church and as individuals. He is so faithful! I'm praying for you all and am so honored to pastor such an amazing church! Love you!