



**Notes accompanying sermon 01.11.2015 on Sin.**

What did God ever do for us?

What has God done for you?

Hopefully we can all answer that soon. But before we get to that, the bible says, “nothing is impossible with God” (<http://biblehub.com/matthew/19-26.htm>).

That is of course true but I still I want to ask everyone, if there is anything God can't do?

He is perfect, and you can take it from me, being perfect has its restrictions!

God cannot Lie.....He doesn't need to.

God cannot be Wrong.....He exists outside time, He knows the future, how could He be wrong?

God cannot be unjust,.....This is an important one, I'll explain more later.

And finally God cannot sin. Why can't God sin? In fact, what is sin?

A dictionary definition would be:

The deliberate disobedience to the known will of God.

So I supposed God couldn't do that could He?

The Oxford English Dictionary describes it as being “an offence against God”. I think that’s a good definition.

You might think, as many people do, “so what, if I go against the known will of God. I have a mind. He has His will, I have mine, why should he punish me for choosing my will instead of His?”

That’s a fair point,..... until you remember the previous slide, where I put it to you, that God cannot be wrong. So going against his will must therefore..... be wrong.

Whether we think it’s wrong or not. From God’s perspective, being able to see the big picture as only He can, we should trust that his advice to mankind is good advice.

God yearns for us to follow His advice, not because he’s bossy and authoritarian. But because He loves us.

I am sure all the parents here will understand that, because we are made in Gods image, we are a little like Him. We too love our children and want to help them benefit from our knowledge and experience. How do we feel when a child ignores our advice and does what they think is right?

They think they know best, they want us to butt out. We say sometimes kids have to learn by their own mistakes. It’s sad when it has to be like that- so much unnecessary suffering.

You see God wants to avoid this. He knows his advice is **SO** good for us that he arranged for it, with real life examples compiled over thousands of years, of those that heeded His advice and those that didn’t, to be made available to us all. Here it is, (The bible). It’s all here for

us to accept or ignore. He has left that responsibility to us, to choose to follow His advice, or not. He holds us in a position of respect, We are made in His image. He values us. We are not minions. We are His children.

It's like we are royalty because our heavenly Father is the King. Unfortunately most of us don't know it or act like it, but we should. That's why our church logo looks a bit like a crown. It's made of one continuous line, symbolizing us as one with Christ our King in the middle with His crown of thorns and us with our crowns, joyfully gathering to Him.

He is also gracious with us. He knows that we are believing who and what He is by faith. He knows that's hard. He could easily show up, perform a few miracles and everyone would believe he exists. But He wants more than that. He wants us to really know Him, He wants us to Love Him even when others around us tell us, ...**"THERE IS NO GOD!"**

He wants us to Love Him because we want to and not because we think we ought to. Most Importantly, He wants to have a relationship with us.

Do we have a relationship with God, or do we just believe in Him?

No, knowing he exists is not enough. Satan knew God existed. Didn't do him much good. Before He was thrown out of heaven, he was a great angel. In the book of Isaiah he is called the Morning star, son of the dawn, that's a star that outshines the others. A star so bright it is the last to disappear in the morning sun.

Satan, was probably the most beautiful and powerful creation of God, the greatest of all the angels. Don't be fooled, he's not red with horns and a pitchfork. He is attractive and his ways are inviting, and he uses this to draw us to him. He knew God, in all His power, existed and yet he fell.

Adam and Eve knew God.

They would walk and talk with Him in Eden, yet they so easily fell too. What God wants is, for us to know that we can be His children and that we can rely on Him. He wants a relationship such that we call Him dad and not Father. That's what Jesus called Him

(<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+14%3A36%2CRomans+8%3A15%2CGalatians+4%3A6&version=NIV>).

And that's what he said we should call Him. That says a lot about how God sees us.

We can go to Him for help, and we can expect and enjoy His plentiful provision, because He is a good God and He loves us.

He wants us to live long, healthy and happy lives.

The lives he designed for us in Eden, without sickness, pain and suffering. These things are the result of a fallen humanity, a humanity which has mostly rejected God. So much of the suffering in this world is because people have been tricked, duped into thinking that the only way to live abundantly and be happy is to trample on others.

The godless philosophy of survival of the fittest is the way much of the world operates. From the cut and thrust of the business world, to wars, to slave labour, to theft, to even gossip.

People feel they can elevate themselves and achieve happiness by crushing whoever gets in their way and doing whatever it takes, regardless of the hardship it causes others.

What God wants, is for us to realize that we don't have to create our own fortune in this way. We don't have to kill ourselves working or scheming, to try to get what He has already prepared for us as a free gift.

As I said earlier, God is the King and all of humanity are His children and we have been created to reign with Him.

As Andrew said last week, His Kingdom is not only in Heaven when we die. It's here, and it's now.

Royalty do not have to earn their status. It is their birthright. Their status is not from their own doing or achievements, but it's handed down to them by someone who achieved it before them, their status is purely because of their parentage.

Likewise it is the achievement of another that gives us our status. That enables us to inherit our birthright, our rightful place as sons and daughters of God, creator of the universe and all that is in it. That's our parentage.

It is the achievements of Jesus that re-enables us to receive the abundant life that God wanted us to have in Eden. An abundant life, which was lost because of Satan deceiving Adam and Eve around 6,000 years ago.

In fact Jesus has enabled us to have a life more abundant than in Eden. Adam and Eves salvation depended on how they behaved and they could lose it. Our salvation depends on how Jesus behaved so we can never lose it.

Our inheritance is waiting behind an impenetrable door and Jesus is the key to that door. His crucified hand is open with the key in it, yet we persist in bashing our heads against that door of life trying to get in by our own efforts.

2,000 years ago He paid the full price to reinstate our position with God and there is nothing we can do to add to it. He did not pay 80% and leave the rest to us to cover by doing good things or going to church.

We cannot get close to God, by trying to do good.  
We try to do good because we are close with God.

People think, thinking of others before themselves is all God wants and he'll reward us for making the sacrifice. It's a good thing to do, but they're wrong.

Again it is in Isaiah, the bible tells us that 'to God, our Good works are like filthy rags'

(<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+64%3A6&version=NIV>). God doesn't want us to try to earn our place to live with him in heaven. We can never earn it.

The price is too high for us to ever pay ourselves. It is a price so high only God can pay it, and it was paid in full when Jesus died on that cross.

His death made right what Adam and Eve and the rest of humanity made wrong. He suffered, and was punished to pay the price that had to be paid, when humanity rebelled against God. We owed God much and Jesus paid it for us, in full and a bit extra.

So, what does God want? He wants that eureka moment we realize that we have run up a huge bill we could never pay, and Jesus paid it for us because He loves us.

That my dear friends, is what God wants.

It is the magnitude of gratefulness we feel that gives us the selflessness to try to help others. We choose to do it, because we appreciate what he has done for us. We choose to do it, because we are humbled and feel guilty for what He **chose** to do for us. We choose to do it, because we owe it all to Him and we love Him (<http://biblehub.com/luke/7-47.htm>).

Other faiths tell us we have to do good to **earn** our place in Heaven. One teaches that on judgment day our good works are weighed against our bad, on God's heavenly scales, and it teaches which ever side the balance tips, determines where we end up for eternity so the stakes are high.

But the bible teaches, on Judgment day for those that love Him, it is not **your** works that are measured but those of Jesus will be measured on your behalf instead.

Heaven is like getting into a top A list celebrity party. There is a special guest list and it is called the book of life (<http://biblehub.com/revelation/3-5.htm>). No matter how rich or famous you are, if your name's not on the list..... you're not getting in.

But whoever you are, and no matter what ever you've done. If you acknowledge Jesus and what he has done for you, He writes your name on that guest list in permanent ink, His blood. And when your time comes, you can enter the greatest party there has ever been, where God, is your host and **this** party will go on, forever.

So why come to church? You Love God, Your name's in the book, you've made it. There is nothing more you can add. True, but don't think only of yourself, along with the benefit comes a responsibility. Not an obligation, but a powerful God given desire to help others around us. Others whose names are not yet written in that book.

We need to go to a Church because that's where we share what we've learnt. You are now really in a kind of school, where some come to teach, some come to encourage and where **all** come to learn.

Christians should behave like a family, after all we have the same heavenly dad (<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+12:10>). So we should regularly meet together and eat together. That's what we do here because we think that's how you get a functional family.

There are not many good things in life that are free. Satan's telling everyone that this free gift is a lie, it's too good to be true, and he's saying "you don't need it anyway, just don't kill anyone, don't burgle anyone and recycle and you're a good person, you'll be fine". That's the lie.

So how is it, this wonderful gift of great value is free? It is free, for us, but we must remember it has cost someone we love dearly, a great deal. To give up his majesty in Heaven and lower himself to become a man in a sinful world was bad enough, but also to suffer like He did was the greatest display of Love to others that man will ever see. And we shouldn't underestimate its value simply because it has cost us nothing.

That is what being a Christian is.

It is not what **you** do, but realizing what **He** has done for you that makes you a Christian.

Pride and feelings of self-righteousness naturally go right out of the window when we remember the insignificance of our lifetime contribution to our salvation.

Satan's pride was the first sin, the second was Adam and Eve's disobedience. We have all sinned, some more than others,

This big sin, small sin idea is very important to us.

But it is not important for God because to Him, exactly **what**, we have done is not the issue. To Him, sin is sin.



It is the fact that you thought you knew better, the fact that He has been ignored, It is **that**, that is the offence to Him. That is the sin. The type of sin, or size of sin, is a man made idea important only to mankind. That we chose to do what **we** want, rather than what **He** wants..... That is the crime.

If I poke someone in the eye, it is not what I have done to that person that makes it a sin. It is that I have disregarded Gods advice. So it is not my one-eyed friend from whom I need to ask forgiveness. They should certainly get a big apology and a box of Belgian chocolates.

We can forgive people but only God can forgive sin, My friend can, and should forgive me for what I did, that is made clear in the Lords prayer, but that is for their benefit, it does not help me as I am still guilty before God. God is the one from whom I should ask forgiveness for it to do me any good.

Not forgiving, or burning in anger against someone is daily punishment for the unforgiver. The unforgiven doesn't suffer or care. They don't pay any extra penalty if they haven't been forgiven.

You only punish yourself, if you don't forgive.  
That's why God tells us to do it. Don't think of it as a Christian duty, think of it as good advice.

Also, who are we to demand others be punished for what they have done when we are just as guilty. Maybe we haven't done that same thing, but we are guilty of other things just as bad.

We often think we are punishing people by not forgiving them. We actually only punish ourselves. Scheming of how we can right the wrong is destructive and keeps us up at night.

God knows who's done wrong. Lets leave it to Him and sleep peacefully. That's His advice.

Much of the bible is God showing us that sin is serious. The people of God were taught that the spilling of innocent blood was required to pay for their wrongs. Many thousands of animals would be killed at many festivals throughout the year, every year, and the priests in the temple would be literally ankle deep in blood while butchering those animals.

In an age where many died of starvation, it was as wasteful, barbaric and disgusting for them then, as it is for us now, but that was exactly the point. God wanted us to know the seriousness of sin. He wants us to see the terrible things that have to happen because of it. And He wanted us to experience the payment that is required.

You may well ask, why does God require this payment? Why does something have to die to pay for our sins? Why can't God just forgive? Well, that's the one of the few things we thought of earlier that God can't do. God cannot be unjust.

Because to forgive us, when we have done wrong is unjust. It may be very kind, but it is not justice.

Allow me to explain. If someone kills your child and ends up being arrested and in Court, what if the judge then lets them go? Would you be happy? It would be a very kind act by the judge to just let them go. Wow, how gracious, it reduces prison overcrowding, government expense, hardship for the villain and their family, everyone's a winner. But justice would **not** have been done.

It would be unjust to just forget about it. And God cannot be unjust, but He can be exceedingly gracious.

Remember when I discussed if you sin, you are grieving God, not the person you have wronged.

So God therefore, being the victim, is like the judge that has had **his** car stolen and he is judging the thief that has stolen **his** car.

He feels compassion for the thief but he cannot let him off. He has to be just and that demands that a penalty must be paid, but the judge is kind, generous and gracious. He knows the thief cannot pay the fine and will be condemned. The judge out of love, chooses to pay the fine himself so the thief doesn't have to.

God demands a very high standard for us to achieve and then does all the hard work for us to achieve it.

That's what God has done for us.