

615 Where Can I Go?

Phil Sanders

God's Answers to Life's Questions

Life can hand us some real challenges and sometimes pull the rug right from under our feet. When your life tumbles in, where do you go? Stay with us and we'll see what the Bible has to say!

Perhaps you've sang that old hymn, "Where could I go but to the Lord?": "Living below in this old sinful world, Hardly a comfort can afford; Striving alone to face temptations sore, Where could I go but to the Lord? Where could I go, O where could I go, Seeking a refuge for my soul? Needing a friend to save me in the end, Where could I go but to the Lord?" There are times in life when going to the Lord is the only real option we have. Whether we know it or not, we all need God. We need His love, His peace, His joy, His hope, and His salvation. I don't know where you are in this life, but I know that you need the Lord in your life.

Jesus is real and genuine. He has proven Himself time and again to be everything He claims. You can trust His teaching and His promises. You can depend upon Him to help you through the toughest of times. I am amazed at times that people think of Jesus as one among many, but Jesus is quite unique in so many realms. Who else was born of a virgin? Who else fulfilled so many Old Testament prophecies? Who else arose from the dead? Who else could raise the dead, heal the sick, or walk upon water? Now, before someone says that these miracles are just myths, I ask, "Are you sure?" If these are just myths, how do you account for so many disciples holding to them with their last breath?

How do you account for the prophecies fulfilled in Jesus—born in Bethlehem, born of woman, to have his hands and feet pierced, to be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver, die with the wicked, and be buried with the rich? There are more than 300 prophecies in the Old Testament about the life of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Jesus fulfilled every one of them. No other person in all of history has done that or could do that. To fulfill so many specific prophecies shows that only God could know and could make it happen. Centuries before he was born and centuries after, men still look to Jesus as the central person of all history. For me, this is still 'AD 2006,' "in the year of our Lord, 2006."

Unfortunately, many people have forgotten the Lord Jesus. I was shocked not long ago when I learned that the fast growing religious group in America described themselves as having no religion. They didn't think of themselves as followers of Christ or any religion. Many of these people came from Christian homes, and for whatever reason have deserted their faith in Him. They are the "un-churched," people who have no allegiance to anything spiritual. Perhaps, my friend, you are a person "without God and without hope in this present world." When you abandon God, you abandon all the help and hope, all the peace and joy, and all the love and grace He gives.

Where will you go, my friend, to find what only the Lord Jesus can give? No one else has what He has. No one can give you what He can give you. No one will ever love you the way that the Lord loves you. You might have a thousand friends in your lifetime, but which of your friends has ever died for you? Which one ever felt the repeated blows of a cruel whip on his back? Which one ever took nails through his hands and feet? Which one ever hung suspended between heaven and earth until he could breathe no more for you? Which of your friends ever took your sins upon himself and died for them? You can search the world over and never find anyone who will love you like Jesus did.

Paul said in Romans 5:6-8, "For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in

that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." The Lord Jesus died for us, not because we had befriended Him, but because He had come to love us. We were helpless, ungodly, and sinners; but Jesus died for us anyway. You can't measure that kind of love; it is deeper than any casual friendship. It's the kind of love that we all long for, the kind of love that we cannot ignore or forget.

It has always been hard for me to understand what happens in the heart of a person who forgets what Jesus did for him. The Hebrew writer tells us that sin can deceive our hearts and harden them (Hebrews 3:12-13). It seems sad to me that people sometimes get so caught up in some favorite sin that they will desert the church and the Lord to continue in that sin. I knew a minister who had a beautiful wife but began seeing another woman. It wasn't long until he not only left his wife but left the church altogether. He knew what he had done, but this man shut all his friends out and would not talk about spiritual matters. There he was, risking his soul to remain in his sin.

You may not be caught up in the sin that this former minister was, but your sin can separate you, just like it did him. If you say no to Jesus, who then will love you like He did? Who will you find to pay for your sins? No one will, and no one can. You must face the consequences of your sin on your own. Paul said in 1 Timothy 2:3-6, "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, *and* one mediator also between God and men, *the* man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony *given* at the proper time." Jesus is the only one who could ransom you from sin.

If you reject Him, there is no other Savior who can rescue you from the consequences of sin. Peter said there is none other name under heaven, whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12). There is only one Savior, and that is Jesus Christ. If you choose sin over Him, you need to know what Paul said in Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." The wages of sin have not changed in all these years—it is still death. I would hate to see you say "no" to God so many times in this life, that God will say no to you for the life hereafter. My friend, once this life is over, you can't turn back the clock. You can't wish your choices away. You will face the Lord.

Whether you face the Lord on that day with joy and peace or with dread and panic is up to you. You are actually choosing life or death by your choice of whether to serve the Lord or not. If you reject the Lord in this life, you will not find any promise for the hereafter. You might find great success, become rich and famous, have great power and influence, and have pleasures at every turn; but if you do not have the Lord Jesus in your life, you are living a spiritually dangerous life. Paul said in 1 Tim. 5:6, "she who gives herself to wanton pleasure is dead even while she lives." I can only imagine there are many people physically alive and spiritually dead in their trespasses and sins.

There are some other needs we all have, and the only answer to those needs is Jesus Christ. We live in such a world of confusion, so many competing voices each crying out different messages. How can we know what is true? We are often like Pontius Pilate, who asked Jesus, "What is truth?" If Pilate had been listening more closely to Jesus, he would not have needed to ask that question. Jesus said to Pilate in John 18:37, "For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." The way to the truth is Jesus Christ. When you place your trust in Him, you know that you will not be deceived or fooled.

Jesus' actions speak out that He is real and genuine. His empty tomb cries out that He did indeed rise from the dead. If Jesus arose from the dead, then He truly is Lord and Divine. That means we can trust what He says is true. We can believe Him. Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." He could further promise in John 8:31-32, "If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." In a confused world with so many competing voices, it is reassuring to know the One who is the Truth and to His Word whereby we can know right and wrong.

Another thing that we need that only Jesus can give is peace. In a world divided by war, by mindsets, by nations, and by religions, we need the Lord and His peace. In Isaiah 9:6, Isaiah said, "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace." Jesus is the path to peace with God, peace with others, and peace within ourselves. He is indeed the Prince of Peace. In Jesus we can find the assurance and promise that no matter what happens to us, we have a relationship with Him. His blood forgives us, His ear listens to us. In Him we have peace.

Jesus promises us in Matthew 11:28-30, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." My friend, I know you have heavy burdens at times; we all do. But I also know there is Jesus who cares about your burdens and wants to help you through every struggle and trial. Yes, He has a yoke for you; but that yoke is a bearable yoke. His burden is a bearable burden—light, not heavy. Christianity is a livable faith. God is not wanting to afflict us but to bless us with a life that is filled with peace, joy, and love.

John 16 tells how Jesus told his disciples about his upcoming death, and they expressed faith in him. In John 16:31-33 Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe? Behold, an hour is coming, and has *already* come, for you to be scattered, each to his own *home*, and to leave Me alone; and *yet* I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." It is because Jesus has overcome the world that we can place our trust in Him to take care of us and to help us through struggles. There is never anything bigger than what you with Jesus can handle.

Paul said in Phil. 4:4-7, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." The Lord is the God of peace, who brings us reassurance even in the most trying times. You don't have to spend your life worrying; you can pray, and God will set a guard around your hearts and minds. He will protect and help you. You don't have to face life alone. Jesus will always be there.

It is in Jesus that we find what real life is like. Jesus promised, "I came that they may have life, and have *it* abundantly" (John 10:10). Real life is filled with the things that are good, that feed the spirit, and genuinely satisfy. Paul described the effects of the Lord Jesus this way in Galatians 5:22-23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." This is a lifestyle you can be proud of. This is a lifestyle that blesses everyone who lives it and sees it in others. There is no law against these matters. That is why life in Christ is so full of good. You are missing much if you are not "in Christ."

The way to have this life is to come to Christ, to take up His yoke and follow Him. Jesus said, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it" (Luke 9:23-24). Real life is found in a relationship with the Lord who created you and provides for you everyday of your life. Real life is when your life of service with Christ counts for something. Real life is when you can live for an eternity with the Lord in heaven. Nothing else is as important. Nothing else will compare to the life of love, service, joy, peace, and goodness found in Christ.

This is why week to week, I'm encouraging you not only to become a Christian but to live out your Christian life faithfully. Believe with all your heart that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Love Him enough to turn away from every sin and to serve Him in everything. Confess His name before others to let them know of your faith and be baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. That's what the Lord asks of you to be born again in a life with Him. Won't you do that? And won't you be faithful to Him all your life?

There is one last thing that Jesus can give you that no one else can give. That is life beyond this life. Because Jesus arose from the dead, He can give you assurance. In John 11:23-26 Jesus said to Martha, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" My friend, do you believe this? When you go to the funeral of a loved one, do you have the hope of life beyond? Jesus is the resurrection and the life. Belief in Him is what gives hope.

I have been conducting funerals for nearly 35 years. I have attended to the good and the bad, the Christian and the non-Christian. There is a hope and a confidence for those who believe not like the rest. The Scriptures are full of promises for those who love the Lord, but for those who live their lives without God there is little promise. You can't live your life in rebellion to God here and expect to find blessing from that same God in the hereafter. My friend, don't ever put off getting right with God, because you do not know what your life will be like on the morrow. We appear for a little while and then vanish away. Why not start taking your soul seriously and live with eternity in view.

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Concord Road Church of Christ
8221 Concord Rd., Brentwood, TN 37027
1-877-226-5747

phil@God-answers.org

www.tv.God-answers.org