



Healing the Soul Through the GOSPEL

SPIRITUAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID

***“The Lord heals broken hearts
and heals their sorrows.”***
Psalms 147:3

I wish I could hug and comfort all Ukrainians in this difficult time of trial and extreme anguish that has befallen our people. The wound of seeing our nation destroyed continues to bleed. The pain and separation of families is unbearable. The losses, too many to cite here, are colossal and the grief seems inconsolable. As the sufferer, Job once said in the Bible: “For the terrible thing that I was terrified of, that also overtook me, and that which I feared, that also came to me. There is no peace for me, no rest, no comfort, misfortune has befallen me.” (Job 3:25-26). Separation from loved ones breaks our hearts. Tears fall, especially those of children, and witnessing their heartache and the heartache of others cannot leave anyone indifferent. This is the reality in which the majority of Ukrainians now live. Many questions and emotions fill our minds and hearts. How do we survive in such conditions? Where do we go? Where is God and why won’t He stop this evil?

The Ukrainian people rose up and rallied to fight against the aggressor, showing incredible courage and resilience. The entire world has admired this fortitude and even those who have been enemies talk about it. But at the same time, it’s understandable that many Ukrainians, like all people, get tired and suffer from what is called mental and emotional trauma; and so they need help and healing, both physical and spiritual.

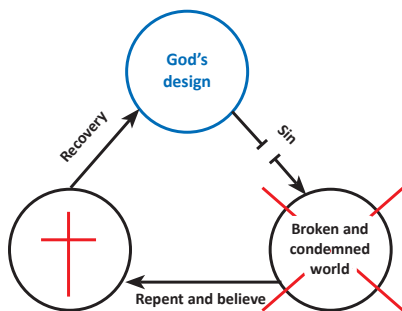
Although Ukrainians are currently struggling with immense suffering, there is some wonderful news - The gospel of Jesus Christ brings healing to wounded souls. Incomparably better hope, support, comfort, and peace comes from Him and is far better than anything else in the world. When we are in pain, we tend to focus all our attention on the problem. A larger perspective is needed. The Bible offers this. In order to understand and receive comfort from God, we need to look at the ancient scriptures to understand the Gospel, which is proclaimed from the beginning of its opening pages to its remarkable and uplifting end. The complete picture of God working in history and being sovereign over all of His creation, and even the entire universe, is described in the Bible. The Gospel, which means “Good News,” is truly good news in any circumstance, for any generation, or any nation, at any time of life, and that includes now. The centrality of the gospel is a person, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

God is a Loving Creator

After reading the first few chapters of the Bible in the book of Genesis, we can understand that this world, including all people, were created by the Almighty, All-Wise and Loving God. God’s plan from the very beginning was for us to live in a beautiful and perfect world, free from any evil. Originally, there was no grief, or pain or suffering in it, and there were no wars, violence, lies or murders. No one cried or died. But why don’t we live in that kind of an

uplifting place now? In the beginning, God, the Creator who not only created us but made us in His image, meant for us to have this kind of everlasting experience. What happened?

Three Circles Gospel



The Bible gives us the answer. People turned away from God and His will for their lives. They listened to God’s adversary, the devil. They believed the lie that God is not really that good and that it is better for people to act independently of the Creator. The devil (also, called Satan) suggested

that they should determine for themselves what is evil and good. Through this rebellion against God, sin entered the nature of mankind and into all subsequent generations. And since then, the sinful corruption has increased. More and more, people are reaping the fruit of their separation from God by sinning more, acting against his commands and his moral will, having hostility toward Him. Also, satanic deception and rage continues to escalate against humanity. There is a spiritual, unseen battle. In fact, the main goal of the devil is to “steal, kill and destroy,” affecting as many people as possible, not only in this earthly life, but also, most importantly, in our eternal life with God (John 10:10). Satan, the architect and inspirer of death, destruction and malice has waged war not only against the Ukrainian people, but also against billions of other people around the world. Though Ukrainians are on the center of the stage now, we are not alone in our suffering. Many people around the world have also endured unspeakable atrocities.

Satan seems to be using Kremlin propaganda as a tool in the hands of his demonic forces. And this explains the mass belief in outright lies and groundless hatred of so many people who allowed propaganda to simply take over their lives.

HEALING TRUTHS:

- A kind, loving and almighty God, who is above everything (including cruelty and deceptive propaganda), gives us endurance, sustains us and strengthens hope. A theologian once said that when we do not see God's saving hand, we can trust His loving heart. God has repeatedly proved His love and faithfulness to people in history. As a night vision device helps to navigate in the dark, so faith helps us to go through the dark periods of life. Trusting in God's providence (His ability to make sure there will be an outcome that brings Him glory and our greatest good) is the best thing we can do in life.
- God is not the cause of suffering. He should not be blamed for the suffering of mankind. People who have succumbed to the temptation of the devil act out evil and cause the suffering. We should not direct our anger at God, but at our enemy and at the enemy of God, that is Satan, and his

demons. We also feel anger toward people who do evil. But we should see them as prisoners of Satan, enslaved by his deception, being used to do his will.

- God, the Creator, is worthy of our recognition, admiration, and worship. Whenever we praise God for His majesty and love with a grateful heart, He strengthens and comforts us in a special way.

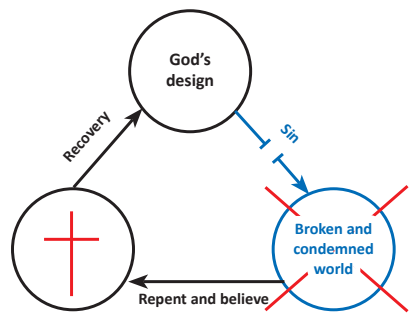
God is a just Judge


We all want justice, so that the evil will be dealt with and so those who do it will receive their due punishment. It's good that there is a God, a just Judge. Without Him, how many atrocities and those who have committed them would remain unpunished? If that were the case, things would be really be hopeless. But that isn't the case.

We all want today's warmonger, who is committing war crimes and the genocide against the Ukrainian people in Ukraine, to be defeated, brought to justice and to compensate our countrymen for all the damage. Let's hope that this will be the case. But, in reality, no amount of prison sentences, executions and reparations would be enough to cover all of the pain and suffering. The loss of loved ones, devastated cities, torture and orphaned children can't be quantified. Any earthly punishment would be insufficient. Only a just God can truly assess the guilt of a person and then determine a worthy punishment, for now and in eternity. God Himself says in Romans 12:19, "...let the wrath of God have room. For it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord."

Psalms 10:5 says, "The Lord tries the righteous, but the wicked and the violent are hated by His soul." God Himself hates evil and does not want us to be indifferent toward evil and violence. "Those who love the Lord, hate evil," He says to His people. (Psalm 96:10). On the other hand, our anger

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should not become like a bitter poison in us. A life of constant anger and a desire for vengeance can ruin our lives and destroy us. Ultimately, we need to come to the point where we let go of our anger and place the judgment of our enemies in the hands of God.

It is essential when facing physical and spiritual battles, to be completely on God's side. According to His standard of holiness, all people are sinners and we all need God's forgiveness. The scripture says we all sin a lot. (James 3:2) It also says that there is no righteous man on earth who does good and does not sin. (Ecclesiastes 7:20). The first and greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart and yet, none of us love Him properly. We all suffer from unbelief, selfishness, impure thoughts, dirty words, hypocrisy, adultery, lustful deeds, and many other sins. Yes, God will perform His just judgment toward all people, so we each personally need to trust in the Lord with all our heart. Once we do this, we will not be condemned for our sins. The Bible says that there is a spiritual war going on in the world between God and Satan, between good and evil, between the realm of light and the realm of darkness. We need to make sure that we are on God's side. How do we do that? Believe in the true and living God and accept and trust Him on His terms, and not on our own.

HEALING TRUTHS:

- There will be a fair judgment of God. Every person will receive a fair retribution for their sins, even if someone manages to escape the earthly judgment.
- We are all sinners, but we have the opportunity to receive the forgiveness for our sins. We each need to be on God's side which is in the kingdom of light so that we will not be condemned with the world who follows the devil.
- Understanding the origins about what is wrong with our world helps to navigate it. We can then make decisions that help us go in the right direction. The correct diagnosis allows a doctor to prescribe the right treatment. In the spiritual world, this principle works the same way.

God saves

Sins always bring pain and suffering not only to ourselves, but also to others. God knew that we were unable to save ourselves. So, in His love, He offered us His plan and the way of salvation through Jesus Christ.

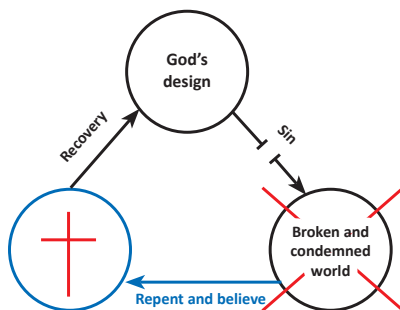
“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16)

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23)

As we can see, God’s love for us is revealed not only at Creation, but also by His plan of Salvation for eternity. God proved His love by acting sacrificially, by giving up His life for all of us. God paid a high and incalculable price to save us. He gives us salvation by His grace (unmerited favor) through our faith (belief and trust in Him), and it is available to everyone. Jesus Himself said that for this we only need to repent and believe in the gospel (Mark 1:15). Repent of your unbelief, for not loving God and accepting Him for who He is. This can be done by turning to God in a simple prayer, sincerely, from the heart, in your own words. This prayer might be expressed something like this:

“Great God, forgive me for my unbelief, for neglecting You and Your commandments and forgive me for all my sins. Change my heart and help me to love You in return for Your love. I want you to be the Savior of my life and I want to fulfill Your will and Your purpose for my life. Thank you for your Son Jesus Christ and for His death for my sins. I believe that You alone have saved me and will forgive me according to Your Word. Amen”.

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By repenting before God and accepting Jesus Christ by faith, you will personally gain a very important and decisive victory in the spiritual battle. "Thanks be to God who gave us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" (1 Corinthians 15:57)

For the salvation of the soul, only faith (heartfelt trust) in Christ is needed. Once we've trusted Christ as our Savior, we can then begin to experience and produce the works of a righteous life. "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that in Him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21). With Christ it is possible.

For further spiritual growth and support, it is important that you join the spiritual family of believers in Christ (churches) where you live.

HEALING TRUTHS:

- By accepting the true God on His terms, you can be sure that your eternal future will be secure. With God, it is much easier to endure sorrows. He also restores our souls, heals us, and gives us new perspectives. Even more inspiring is that we're assured of an everlasting life with God in His eternal Kingdom, the way it was originally meant to be. When we have hope for a wonderful future with Him knowing that we will be rewarded for our faith and good works done for Him, we can endure temporary difficulties more easily since we know they each have purpose. Hope fills us.
- Believing will lead you to a personal and intimate relationship with God Himself, and His Spirit will comfort and support you in a special way. "But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of everything that I have told you. Peace, I leave you, My peace I give you; not as the world gives, I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:26-27). Fear will not completely go away; it is normal to have a fear of danger for yourself and also for relatives and friends. However, when you go through life with God, the fear will not be paralyzing and long-term.

God heals the wounds of the soul

“He himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree, so that we, having been delivered from sins, would live in righteousness: by his stripes you were healed” (1 Peter 2:24).

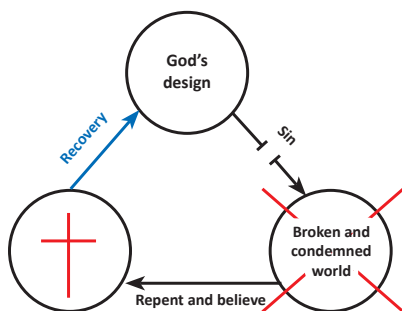
After we accept Jesus Christ into our lives as Savior, God puts us on the path to being restored to His original purpose. We begin to truly live with Him, to walk with Him, and to learn how wonderful He is.


Jesus said of Himself, “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” (John 10:11). The fact that the Lord loves us so much that He gave His life for us shows that He, of course, has not forgotten us and He is not indifferent toward our pains and sufferings. Jesus loved us so much that He shed His blood in agony on the cross so that we could be healed spiritually. By His wounds and death we now have the way to a beautiful life to come, in His kingdom.

Jesus wept when he spoke of the impending destruction of the city of Jerusalem and that the enemies would kill its inhabitants, including small children. He feels the infirmities of our suffering and is with us in our pain and He sympathizes with us. Jesus knows what fear is. Before dying on the cross, He told His disciples, “My soul is grieving to death.” (Matthew 26:38). Jesus Christ understands the betrayal of friends and the pain that comes from misunderstanding, even from those in his family. Jesus knows what it’s like to live under occupation, to be betrayed by a close friend and to be brutally tortured and killed. He also knows us intimately and understands our fears and suffering.

Consider what the Apostle Paul says about comfort from God: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of mercy and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we too may comfort those in all affliction with the comfort with which God consoles ourselves!” (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

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Almighty Creator God is also gentle and caring. The prophet Isaiah once wrote to his suffering people: “As his mother consoles someone, so I will console you ...” (Isaiah 66:13) When we’re experiencing trials, we often remember our mothers gentle hands and their kind words. But God, who gave us mothers, knows us better and provides even more intimate comfort than they could, in any sorrow.

In times of sorrow and suffering, we want understanding and personal help from someone who knows us and can sympathize with us. God can pinpoint exactly what we need. His compassion reaches for us in the right way because He knows us perfectly. This is well said in Psalm 139: 4, 13 - “before there is a word on my tongue, - You, Lord, know it perfectly ... for You formed my insides, weaved me in my mother’s womb.”

HEALING TRUTHS:

- God is not only a loving Creator and the Savior of the soul for eternity, but also the Lord who is not indifferent to our sufferings. He is the One who experientially comforts us, which means that He is continually with us, and He acts with tenderness and good intentions toward us. He never leaves us or forsakes us.
- God can sympathize and comfort far better than others, because He is our Creator and knows and understands us like no one else. Not only did He create every cell of our body and every atom in the universe, He also created our immortal soul. He knows about and understands all of our fears, pains, thoughts and experiences. We are each unique and react differently to the same circumstances. Christ can also sympathize with us because He too went through rejection, suffering, and even death while here on earth. (Hebrews 4:15).

Hope for a great future

We can have hope that God will eventually help Ukraine survive. Our hope rests in Him who is able to defeat our cruel and insidious enemy. We can already see how the Lord has miraculously helped Ukraine in an unequal struggle. The entire world marvels at this, although a high price has already been paid. If God's mercy falls on Ukraine and His will intends its survival, we will stand, win and restore hope in Ukraine and rebuild our cities so that they flourish again. And the words of the beloved Ukrainian folk poet Taras Grigoryevich Shevchenko will come true: And on renewed land / There will be no enemy, no adversary, / And will be son, and will be mother, / And there will be people on our earth.

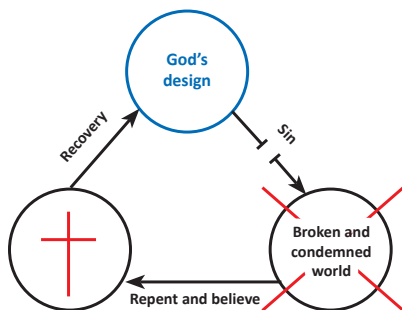
Eternal Healing

May a wonderful future with God in His eternal kingdom inspire us even more and give us hope. Only in that promise for what's to come with Him, seeing Him face to face, and being with Him forever, will we truly be free from the sinful curse and all the bad things that haunt us in this earthly life.

We started with the fact that God created a beautiful and ideal world for our enjoyment, which we, unfortunately, have lost. But the good news is that the time will come when this ideal world will be restored again. The Apostle John writes about this in Revelation 21:4: "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death, no more mourning, no outcry, no more pain, for the former things are past."

What heals us physically? A correct diagnosis and a correct treatment. It is the same way in the spiritual life. Truth and love will heal our lives. God has both. He is the source of everything beautiful, pure, and holy.

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Here is a biblical text that summarizes all of the above very well:

“But our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope in grace, comfort your hearts and confirm you in every good word and deed.” (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17).

We cannot embrace all Ukrainians now, but in our prayers we ask Him who can, to do this. With His invisible, strong and gentle hands, we hope all will be embraced, consoled and lead through all the dark days of these turbulent, storm-like trials. We pray that you too, will believe in the God who answers prayer and that you will trust in His holy will. You can pray with the words of the Scriptures, and we have included some examples of those prayers for you below. But in any case, do not forget to also pray in your own words, from your heart.



Prayer

Prayer is an opportunity to open your heart to God.

“People! trust in Him at all times, pour out your heart before Him, God is our refuge.” (Psalm 62:9)

Psalm 23 – A Psalm of David.

- ¹ The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
- ² He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.
- ³ He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness[b] for his name’s sake.
- ⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

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- ⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
- ⁶ Surely[d] goodness and mercy[e] shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell[f] in the house of the Lord forever.



Psalm 42



- ¹ As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God.
- ² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?[b]
- ³ My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all the day long, “Where is your God?”
- ⁴ These things I remember, as I pour out my soul: how I would go with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God with glad shouts and songs of praise, a multitude keeping festival.
- ⁵ Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation[c]
- ⁶ and my God. My soul is cast down within me; therefore I remember you from the land of Jordan and of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.
- ⁷ Deep calls to deep at the roar of your waterfalls; all your breakers and your waves have gone over me.
- ⁸ By day the Lord commands his steadfast love, and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life.
- ⁹ I say to God, my rock: “Why have you forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?”
- ¹⁰ As with a deadly wound in my bones, my adversaries taunt me, while they say to me all the day long, “Where is your God?”
- ¹¹ Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.

Psalm 62

- ¹ For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation.
- ² He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken.
- ³ How long will all of you attack a man to batter him, like a leaning wall, a tottering fence?
- ⁴ They only plan to thrust him down from his high position. They take pleasure in falsehood. They bless with their mouths, but inwardly they curse. Selah
- ⁵ For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him.
- ⁶ He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken.
- ⁷ On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God.
- ⁸ Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. Selah
- ⁹ Those of low estate are but a breath; those of high estate are a delusion; in the balances they go up; they are together lighter than a breath.
- ¹⁰ Put no trust in extortion; set no vain hopes on robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart on them.
- ¹¹ Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God,
- ¹² and that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love. For you will render to a man according to his work.

Psalm 70

- ¹ Make haste, O God, to deliver me! O Lord, make haste to help me!
- ² Let them be put to shame and confusion who seek my life! Let them be turned back and brought to dishonor who delight in my hurt!
- ³ Let them turn back because of their shame who say, "Aha, Aha!"

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- ⁴ May all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you! May those who love your salvation say evermore, “God is great!”
 - ⁵ But I am poor and needy; hasten to me, O God! You are my help and my deliverer; O Lord, do not delay!



Psalm 121

- ¹ I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come?
- ² My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.
- ³ He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.
- ⁴ Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.
- ⁵ The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade on your right hand.
- ⁶ The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.
- ⁷ The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.
- ⁸ The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.

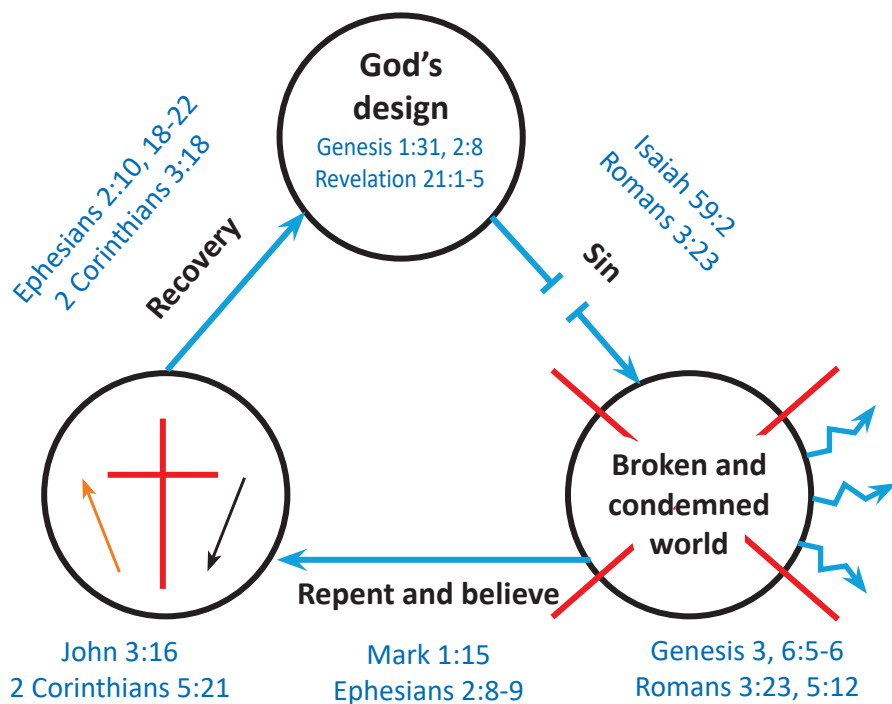
Matthew 6:9-13 (The Lord's Prayer)

- ⁹ Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
- ¹⁰ Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
- ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread,
- ¹² and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
- ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

What is the Gospel?

The Greek word *evangelion* means “good news”. When Jesus Christ went into public ministry, the first words in His sermon were “repent and believe in the gospel.” For greater clarity and memorization, we have depicted the Gospel with a diagram - with supporting texts of Scripture. Below is a description of this image.

Three Circles Gospel






Description of Gospel - Three Circles

When we read the first lines of the Bible, we understand that the Almighty and good God created a perfect world where we could live and work and enjoy Him in an intimate relationship, free from anything bad happening. God created man in His image and likeness to govern this world and enjoy life in it and also being in communion with the Creator Himself. But people have lost this paradise and a close relationship with God. They were deceived and obeyed Satan who tempted them to question the goodness of God and the importance of living according to His good will. People turned away from God and chose to live independently from Him, believing their own understanding about good and evil. This sin perpetuated corruption and ruined the world that was created by God. It was cursed with sin. In one day, a perfect paradise and world was destroyed and condemned. An eternal separation from the perfect and holy God followed. People became slaves of sin, and were unable to free themselves from it and save themselves. (Notice the crooked arrows on the right side of the diagram. These represent unsuccessful efforts of people to solve the problem of their sinfulness without God.)

God, because of His love for mankind, offered His plan of salvation through His son Jesus Christ. Jesus came (black arrow down) into this world from Heaven, was born of a virgin and became a man. Though He was still God, He was willing to suffer and die for the sins of people, taking our place of punishment, which satisfied God's just judgment. And on the third day, Jesus was resurrected (orange arrow up) to secure our legal justification (being declared free from punishment and being made righteous for those who believe). Jesus was triumphant over death, hell, and all the plans of Satan. God gives salvation to man through the merits of Christ, but man needs to repent of his unbelief and believe in the Savior, Jesus Christ. At the same time, a person receives the forgiveness of sins and a new life in Christ. This is what the Bible calls regeneration or a new spiritual birth from God. God restores man to His original purpose. A process of change and transformation follows when a new believer yields to the Holy Spirit who helps them to learn and grow in their relationship with Christ. Becoming more Christ-like begins at the moment we trust Him and continues throughout our earthly life. And the final culmination



of the Gospel, or good news, is the restoration of this world, which we read about in the last book of the Bible, Revelation. The world will again become completely beautiful, where there will be no evil, death, suffering and tears. The best news for wounded souls is the “gospel” - the good news that Jesus came into this world, gave His life on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins, and then rose to life, so that we can have eternal life. And this is truly the “Good News” for all of us!

About the author



KONSTANTIN GONCHAROV

was born and grew up in Kherson in the south of Ukraine.

He earned a Master of Theology degree from Dallas Theological Seminary.

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Contact Information



On iCareUkraine.pl you can find contacts of people who will provide you with spiritual and psychological help.