

Led to Receive the Lord Jesus as our Savior

If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your human bodies also, through his Spirit that lives in you. Romans 8:11

Goal for Church Covenant Study

To embrace and fulfill our covenant relationship with God (God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit) and each other.

Objectives

As a result of participating in this Covenant Discipleship Group learning experience, persons will be able to articulate what it means to be led by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.

Covenant Emphasis for this Session

The underlined phrase serves as the basis for this session.

Having been led as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior; and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God, angels and this assembly most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

Questions for this Session

Based on your knowledge of the Scriptures and your experience as a Christian, answer the following questions:

- What is it that Jesus saves us from?
- What is human sinfulness?
- How is human sinfulness manifested?

- What is our crisis as African American people?
- Why is Jesus God's answer and solution to our personal and social crisis?

Read the paper, "Christ for Our Crisis," that is found in the Resource Folder. Based on your knowledge of the Scriptures, experience, and your reading of the paper, "Christ for our Crisis," answer the questions again.

Summary

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, we are able to

Profess our faith. Be baptized in the name of the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Enter into covenant with one another as the body of Christ, the church.

We will pay attention to these foci in the next three sessions.

Christ for Our Crisis

Only Jesus has the power to save: His name is the only one all the world that can save anyone. (Acts. [4:12.](#))

In fact, while I was with you, I made up my mind to speak only about Jesus Christ, who had been nailed to a cross". (1 Corinthians 2:2)

I am proud of the good news! It is God's powerful way of saving all people who have faith, whether they are Jews or Gentiles. The good news tells how God accepts everyone who has faith, but only those who have faith. It is just as the Scriptures say. "the people God accepts because of their faith will live.".: (Romans [1:16-17](#))

What is our crisis?

Our personal crisis is our sinfulness.

We believe the Scriptures teach that God created humans in the image of God in a state of holiness and gave them freedom of choice.

By their freedom of choice, humans sinned against God and brought sin into the world. As a result of their actions, the entire creation is positively inclined to sin and therefore, is under just condemnation to eternal destruction.

Humans' greatest need is salvation, a right relationship with God. Only the grace of God can restore creation and humanity to a right relationship with God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created humans in God's own image, and in that Christ died for humanity, therefore every human is worthy of respect and Christian love.

The Bible is clear in its declaration that the human crisis is human sinfulness. Sin as defined in the Scripture is humanity's willful, but vain

attempt to be God for self, to other and even to God. Sin is rebellion against God's will. Sin is Adam and Eve, defying God's command not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil by eating of its fruit. They chose to do so because they believed a voice other than God's voice that told them that God was lying when God spoke of the consequences of eating it. The voice said they would not die, but rather that their eyes would be opened, and they would become like God, knowing good and evil. "When the woman saw that the fruit was good for food, a delight to the eye, and the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took its fruit and ate and also she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate." Sin is Cain murdering his brother Abel because he was jealous over the fact that God accepted Abel's offering and rejected his. Sin is humanity's positive inclination toward evil, i.e. utter refusal to acknowledge God and God's will and strong determination to live life in accordance with self-will. Sin is manifested in crookedness, violence, iniquity, wickedness, injustice, offense, and rebellion. Sin in Exodus is one people, the Egyptians, holding another people, the Hebrews, in slavery and brutally oppressing them. Sin according to the remainder of the Bible is people redeemed by God and instructed by God concerning God's will as to how they are to relate to God, each other, and others refusing to abide by God's will, but choosing to live life on their own terms. Sin is the refusal to love the Lord God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and to love your neighbor as you love yourself, and as God in Christ loves us. (Luke [10:25-28](#); John [15:12](#))

How often have we sinned and turned against you, the LORD God? We have rebelled and refused to follow you. Our hearts were deceitful, and so we lied: we planned to abuse others and turn our backs on you. (Isaiah 59:12-13)

They say . . . "We don't care what you say. We have made plans to sin, and we are going to be stubborn and do what we want! . (Jeremiah [18:12](#))

"Some people plotted to kill me. And like a lamb being led to the butcher, I knew nothing about their plans".: (Jeremiah [11:18](#))

The Scriptures are equally clear that sin is not just some people's problem but all of humanity's problem. "...all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory..." (Romans [3:23](#)).

Our Social Crisis as African American People

What is the situation in the African American Community? (Judges [2:11-15](#))

The African American community locally, state-wide, and nationally is plagued by social pathology (sickness and disease that tends toward death). This is evident in the many news reports and studies that chronicle, rising crime and homicide, the large number of African American males who are incarcerated, the increasing number of children born to teenage mothers and women who are not married, the high incidence of infant mortality, shorter life expectancy, and a host of other social and physical ills that plague our communities.

Why is there so much pathology in the African American community?

A major contributing factor to the increasing pathology in the African American community, from the perspective of the Christian faith, as informed by the Scriptures is to be found in the fact that there has risen up a generation of African Americans who do not know and believe in God as God is revealed in the scriptures, supremely in Jesus Christ, and as God has been active in our history as African American people. The result is that we as a people have done evil in the sight of God. Many of our people have abandoned the Lord, the God of our ancestors who saved us from sin to righteousness, from death to life, from slavery to freedom, and from oppression to liberation. Instead of finding joy in being God's people through whom God can glorify God's self, we have sought to be like the people of the majority culture in this nation who are our oppressors. So the anger of the Lord our God is kindled against us and God has given us up into the hands of those whom we serve and desire to be like. (Judges [2:11-15](#))

African American churches have to accept some responsibility for the pathology that exists in the African American community. In many instances, our churches have become enculturated and are held captive by the values and perspective of the dominant culture. Some of us have lost touch with our roots. We have become poor stewards of the gift of our heritage. We have failed in our preaching, teaching, caring, and serving ministries to bear witness to God as God is revealed in the Scriptures, supremely in Jesus and especially as God has been active in our uhistory. Many of our churches have allowed themselves to be primarily informed by European American perspectives and methods of interpreting Scriptures and doing theology. We have neglected to identify and study the works of African American people, theologians, and communities who profess the Christian faith. We have neglected to bear witness to God in Jesus as he has saved and delivered us.

This negligence on the part of African American churches and pastors has resulted in the situation in the African American community in which many of our people have renounced their faith because they have come to believe that African American churches are witnesses to white people's God. Many of this number have embraced other religions that claim to speak uniquely to the plight of African American people. Others have given up and renounced all religious perspectives. It is imperative that African American churches and Christians seek to preserve the gift of our heritage by embracing and articulating the particularity of the Christian faith from the African American perspective.

What is God's answer and solution to our Crisis?

Jesus is God's answer and solution to our Crisis?

We believe the Scriptures teach that the salvation of sinners is wholly by the grace of God, accomplished through the birth, life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus took upon himself our nature, being born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus obeyed God to the fullest and showed us the way to live in complete harmony with God through his ministry of preaching, teaching, healing, expelling evil forces, faith, prayer, and compassion.

For our sins, Jesus Christ was crucified, dead, and buried. For our justification, Jesus Christ rose from the dead. Jesus is now reigning in heaven at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. Jesus is in every way a perfect, compassionate, and all sufficient Savior. (New Hampshire Confession)

This is why we believe "Only Jesus has the power to save! His name is the only one in all the world that can save anyone." (Acts [4:12](#))

This is why we say "I made up my mind to speak only about Jesus Christ, who had been nailed to a cross." (1 Corinthians 2:2)

This is why we are "proud of the good news! It is God's powerful way of saving all people who have faith, whether they are Jews or Gentiles." (Romans [1:16](#))

Jesus is God's answer and solution to our personal and social Crisis!

Jesus Christ is the one through whom God:

- Makes salvation available to humanity. (Matthew [1:21](#); John [3:16](#)-17; Romans 5:1-11)
- Shares God's self with humanity. (Matthew [1:23](#))
- Glorifies God's self. (Matthew [3:16](#); John 17:1-4)
- Reveals God's will for humanity to humanity. (Matthew 5-7)
- Reveals God's self most fully. (Matthew 17:1-9; Romans [5:12](#)-19)
- Shares God's self with believers through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:8; [2:38](#))

- Makes it possible for believers to claim eternal life in heaven. (John 17:3)

SALVATION IS:

Justification — Credited with righteousness

Regeneration — made to desire righteousness

Sanctification— helped/empowered to be righteous

Glorification— made fully righteous

Righteousness is a right relationship with:

God

Creation

Humanity