

# Why Everybody Needs Jesus

1 Corinthians 15:22

*Halifax: 24 April 2011*

## **Introduction:**

I am very glad that you are about to hear this message.

- It is a message I wish I could preach to the whole world.
  - It is a message about a subject of inestimable importance.
  - I am going to tell you why you and everyone else in the whole world need Jesus Christ.
    - It is essentially the same message that has been preached all over the world ever since Jesus was raised from the dead.

I am sure you have already heard of Him.

- I don't know if you have ever thought about it, but it is really quite a remarkable thing that you have heard of Him.
  - He was born in an obscure village of Palestine over 2000 years ago in a cattle stall.
  - His parents were a very ordinary Jewish couple who lived in a time when Palestine was occupied by the Romans.
    - They lived in a place called Nazareth that none of us would probably have ever heard of if Jesus had not grown up there.
- Jesus grew up in a very ordinary way and learned his father's trade as a carpenter.
  - He had no formal education and was virtually unknown outside of His community until the day that a prophet who lived in the wilderness pointed to Him and declared,
    - "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."
    - Soon after that, this prophet baptised Him and then Jesus began preaching about the kingdom of God and working miracles.
  - His fame spread in the regions of Palestine,
    - but His ministry only lasted for three years because the Jewish authorities accused Him of blasphemy and sedition and handed Him over to the Romans.
      - They demanded that He be crucified and so He was.
      - All that remained was a small band of trembling, uneducated followers who carried little weight in the society.
      - This might well have been the end of the matter—
        - something that you would have never heard about 2000 years later on the other side of the world...

- But His little band of followers surprised everyone because they began to boldly testify that He was raised from the dead, just as the prophets had foretold.
  - Jesus' disciples themselves did not expect it, but they saw Him alive.
    - In fact, 500 of His followers saw Him alive at the same time, and those that He had chosen went out preaching and working miracles in His name...
      - Real miracles.
      - Not the cheap imitations you see today, but real miracles—
        - Like enabling people to speak in languages that they had never spoken before in such a way that foreigners could understand them!
        - Like raising the dead!
        - Like giving sight to the blind!
        - Like enabling a man who had been crippled from birth to suddenly get up and walk as if he had always been able to walk.
  - The followers of Jesus who did these miracles claimed that Jesus was the One who gave them these miracles as signs...
    - signs to prove that they were His messengers and that He was still alive.
  - The miracles were so clear and so authentic that those who opposed the message of Jesus' disciples never questioned the miracles.
    - They could not—not without looking like fools.
      - The miracles were performed in public on people that were well known in the community—like the crippled man I just told you about.
        - He had been a cripple from birth.
        - Everyone knew him. He was a familiar fixture at the temple.
        - For years, he sat outside the gate called beautiful begging.
        - He had been there for years and everybody knew him.
        - And now he was walking among them!
          - Those who opposed Jesus disciples had to admit that a notable miracle had been done.
- And the thing that makes the testimony of Jesus' followers all more sure to us, from a historical and legal perspective,
  - was the fact that they were opposed for testifying that He was raised and were imprisoned and beaten and many of them were killed.
    - But they refused to deny Him even under the threat of death.
  - It is reasonable to suppose that someone might die for a lie if they did not know it to be a lie—if they had been deceived by others...
    - But it is not reasonable to suppose that so many would die for a lie that they knew they had made up!

- What possible motive could they have to suffer and die for a lie?
- And if it was a lie, how could it be that none of them backed out when the pressure came?
  - Or just because his conscience finally got the best of him...
  - Surely there would have been at least one of them that would have blown the whistle.
- And what is even more remarkable is the fact that the prophets who wrote the Old Testament centuries before had testified that the Christ would come.
  - They had declared that He would come at the time He came.
  - They had foretold of His sufferings of His resurrection from the dead.
  - They had foretold that He would be called the Son of God, yet that He would suffer and be rejected.
  - They had told that He would be believed on among the nations.
    - This is one of the most amazing of all the prophecies!
      - In the very first century, the nations began to come to Him and the news of Him has spread all over the world and is still spreading...
      - Every day, there are thousands of people who come to believe.
- The reason you have heard of Jesus Christ in a totally different culture 2000 years later is because the prophecy continues to be filled!
  - I myself am not a Jew, but here I am, a preacher, sent out by God to proclaim this message to you today!
    - The message I proclaim to you is not my own message, but the message that God has given to His church from the beginning.
    - Those first followers who saw Him alive have given us a record about Him—a record that is a prophetic oracle from God.
      - This oracle is preserved for us in the sacred writings which we call the Bible.
      - It is God’s message to us through His prophets and apostles.
- And contained in these oracles of God are these very simple words that tell you why you need Jesus:
  - **“As in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.”**
    - These words are found in Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians—the 22<sup>nd</sup> verse of the 15<sup>th</sup> chapter.
  - Today I want to unpack the words of this oracle for you.
    - I want to show you what this oracle says about you and me and everyone else.
      - God has sent me to proclaim and explain His oracles.

## Overview

You can see that this oracle is an expression of a certainty...

- That just as surely as in Adam, all die, even so in Christ, all shall be made alive.
  - The intent of this oracle is to make it perfectly clear that life for those who are in Christ is just as certain as death is for those who are in Adam.
  - You need to see where you fit in to all this...
    - Are you in Adam, with the certainty of death?
    - Are you in Christ, with the certainty of life?

### I. First, let's look at Adam in whom death is certain.

- The simple assertion is made here that in Adam all die.
    - The divine oracle makes no exceptions here.
    - If you are in Adam you will die.
- A. So the great question here is this: Are **you** in Adam?
1. The answer is a resounding “yes.”
    - You are in Adam because *every human being is in Adam*.
    - We are all in Adam because Adam is our the progenitor of us all—
      - Adam is our father and Eve is our mother.
  2. We have this connection with Adam—this solidarity with him—because our Creator made us to be race...
    - I say a *race* because a race is a people who come from a common ancestor.
      - The angels are not a race.
        - They are individual creations.
        - But we humans are a race because we all come from the same parents—Adam and Eve.
    - God made us in such a way that we are all related!
      - We all come from the same parents and have inherited what we are from them.
      - It has only been in recent times that advances have been made in genetics so that we see how it is that we all come from the same parents.
        - All the variety that is found in the human race,
          - (barring that which has come about as a result of harmful mutations—copying mistakes),
            - was built into our first parents when God made them.
        - We were truly in Adam—potentially—before we were born.

- We understand that now better than ever before, thanks to modern science.
  - Just think, if something had happened to Adam or Eve before conceiving a child, not one of us would be here today—not one!
    - That helps you to understand how truly you and me and everyone else is in Adam.
    - We are intimately tied to him and have our life from him, such as it is.
3. There is a solidarity that we have with Adam.
- Because he is a human being, so are we.
  - Because he has arms and legs and hair and eyes and ears, so do we—we come from him.
  - Because he was made in God’s image, we too are in God’s image.
  - Because he was put on this planet, this is also our home.
  - We have a common life with our Adam our father.

TRANS> But the oracle we are looking at today tells us that we also share in a common death with Him.

- Our Creator declares to us that death comes through Adam to us all.
  - This is also part of the solidarity we have with Adam.

B. The death that we share with Adam is a most wretched death.

- It has three aspects or perhaps we could them phases.
1. First, there is what we might call *spiritual death*.
- a. This death came upon the entire human race in the person of Adam.
    - As our first father, he was our representative and we were all in him.
    - It was a legal arrangement very much like we have in nations today...
      - in which each nation has representatives that speak for them and that made treaties and declare war in behalf of us all.
      - Whatever Adam did would have implications for all who came after him.
        - We are familiar with this—if you parents or grandparents came to Canada as refugees, it had huge implications for you.
  - b. God gave Adam a test—right from the beginning.
    - And in Adam, the whole human race which was yet to come from him was tested.
- 1) In His kindness, the LORD had planted a beautiful garden for Adam and Eve to live in.

- It was a garden of perfection—of paradise and pleasures.
    - God gave them dominion over the earth so that the earth obeyed them—
      - They were in perfect harmony with the weather, with the animals...
      - They were given excellent food and many precious and beautiful things—and they had communion with God.
- 2) God told them that they could enjoy everything in the garden except for the fruit of one tree which He called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- He told them that they were not to eat of it!
    - And that if they did, they would surely die in the very same day they ate of it.
    - By eating this tree, they would declare their independence from God.
      - To eat would be like signing a declaration that they were no longer God’s servants, but wished to be autonomous.
- 3) You have probably heard the story before...
- Satan entered the garden to test them—he came to Eve in the form of a serpent.
    - He told her that if she ate of the fruit, she would not die, but would become like God—knowing good and evil.
      - In other words, rather than being subject to God’s moral law of good and evil,
        - she could decide for herself what was good and what was evil—she could be in God’s place!
    - She was overcome by the temptation and then she gave the fruit to Adam and he also ate of it.
      - And immediately they died.
- c. But how did they die?
- 1) Obviously, they did not die physically that day.
    - If they had, we would not be here to talk about it.
    - No, they lived on in the world for another 900 years or so and had many sons and daughters.
  - 2) Their death was rather a spiritual death.
    - a) Spiritual death is separation from the living God.
      - It is described in Ephesians 2 as being...
        - **“dead in trespasses and sins.”**

b) To best understand what sin is, it is helpful to understand that Adam and Eve had been created in the image of God.

(i) This is one of the things that we share with them that I mentioned before...

- We are all created in the image of God because we were in Adam when he was created.
- An image, of course, is a representation or a picture of something...
- We were created to be picture of God—a representation of His beauty and glory in our finite human nature.

(ii) And this is truly a wonderful thing!

- It is not the physical image because God is a Spirit and does not have a body like we do.
- So it is not that we look like Him physically...
- We are rather His spiritual image or His ethical image...
  - We were created to be miniature copies of God who love each other and serve each other the way God has always done...
    - Yes, God has always lived in perfect love—long before He made us.
- You see, God is a triune being—a social being of three persons...
  - three persons in perfect unity.
    - There is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
  - And from all eternity, the Father has loved the Son and given all things to Him—
    - And the Son has loved the Father and sought to please Him...
    - And the Father and the Son have loved the Spirit and the Spirit has always sought to please them.
  - It is a marvellous society of perfect, eternal love...
    - of giving and receiving in beautiful ways that surpass our understanding!

(iii) And we were all created in God's image to reflect His glory.

- Again, we are made to be miniature copies of God who love each other and serve each other the same way the three persons in the Godhead do!
- That is why we have this moral nature and this conscience!
  - That is why it is so wrong for us to murder each other or to steal or to give ourselves over to degrading passions.
  - That is why it is so wrong for us to be envious and greedy so that we don't even rejoice when it goes better for our neighbour than it does for ourselves!
    - If we were like God, we would be going out of our way to see that it goes better for our neighbour!
    - It would be a very different world if we were living as a true reflection of Him!

3) And that is the point.

a) As soon as Adam and Eve ate from that tree, they died spiritually.

- They ceased to be a true reflection of the God they were created to image.
  - Now, as God's image bearers, we **misrepresent** Him!
  - Now we are a mangled, distorted, twisted image of Him.
- It would be far better for us if we did not represent Him at all, but we do! In a very degrading way.

b) Immediately, Adam and Eve became ashamed of what they had become.

- They tried to hide when they sensed God's presence.
- And well they should have!
  - They fell from beautiful holiness that loves and cares for each other into selfishness and defilement and greed—absorbed with self-interest... such a shameful condition!

c) And in this we have solidarity with them, do we not?

- Don't worry about all the people have wronged you—just look at yourself for a minute...
  - You know all the ugly thoughts and sinful desires that teem within.
  - You know that you are not what you ought to be—
    - You know that you would be ashamed and terrified to come before God and be judged by Him!
- Oh yes you can pretend and you can make up idols that are more like you are...that are not holy like God...



- But you know better in your conscience.
  - You know that you are wretched and defiled—just look at the way you speak to the people you claim to love!
  - I already had to repent of unkind speech today.

TRANS> When Adam ate the fruit, he passed from life into this spiritual death...

- And this death has been passed on to all of us his children.
    - It is a simple fact even though you may want to deny it.
    - And this spiritual death brought about the second kind of death—
2. Physical death.
- a. I mentioned before that Adam and Eve were in a garden that God had planted for them...
    - and that they had dominion over the earth so that the earth obeyed them.
      - There was no sickness, no famine, no injuries, no storms, no weeds, no disharmony with animals, and no physical death.
  - b. But as a punishment to them for their rebellion,
    - The LORD sentenced them to physical death as well!
      - He told them that the earth would take dominion over them—so that they would return to dust!
      - He told them that they would have to wrestle to produce food.
      - He told them that there would be pain and sorrow in bearing children.
  - c. It is quite obvious that all of these things have been passed along to us.
    - We see the wrath of God revealed from heaven against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.
    - We do not know if we will get cancer or if we will starve to death or if someone will kill us or what...
      - But we know that we will die...
        - And the reason for it is that we are in Adam—and in Adam all die.
        - We die because we have forsaken our Creator—in Adam!
3. But there is yet another kind of death that comes after physical death—spiritual death.
- a. God has told us in His holy oracles that He has appointed a day when He will judge the world in righteousness.
    - And He has told us that on that day, everyone will be called forth from the graves to stand before Him...
      - Some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting contempt.

- b. It will be horrible day for those who have lived their whole life denying their sin—denying their spiritual death...
  - Because in that day, before the glory of God’s majesty, everything about us will be clearly exposed...
    - All the things we have denied about ourselves and about God.
      - All the ugliness will be exposed and we will be terribly ashamed and horrified at what we really are...
- c. And in that day, it will matter very much if you are in Christ or not.
  - As it is now, being in Christ is just seen as a religious preference—
    - But in that day, those who are not in Christ—who have not been made alive in Him—will die the second death.
      - They will have to bear the full penalty of their own sin which will then, as I say, be fully exposed!
      - They will be cast into the place of outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth...
        - and there they will spend eternity...
          - This is the second death...
          - This is eternal death.
          - This is where those who die in Adam go unless they are made alive in Christ.

TRANS> And so now I want to turn that wonderful subject!

- Remember that 1 Cor 15:22 tells you that just as surely as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive!
  - We have seen that in Adam, death is certain...

## **II. Now let’s look at Christ in whom life is certain!**

- First I want to show you how Christ gives life to all who are in Him.
  - Then I will show you how you can be sure that you are in Him.
- A. Christ gives life to His people by voluntarily associating Himself with them.
  - We saw before that our solidarity with Adam is built into the creation...
    - We are united with him because he is our progenitor—our first father—the one from whom we all come.
      - When he rebelled, we all rebelled in him...
        - When he died, we all died with him.
  - But there is no natural built in connection like that with Jesus Christ.
    - He is the Son of God.

- And in His mercy, He left the glories of heaven to come to us, just as the prophets had foretold,
    - and to take human flesh to Himself so that He might be our near relative, made like us.
    - He came into this sinful world to be our go-el—our kinsman redeemer who comes to do everything that is needed to rescue us from our plight!
      - In this we see a marvellous display of that self-giving love I spoke about that characterises the whole Trinity!
        - For Him who is High and Holy to come and make Himself a son of His sinful creatures,
          - all for the purpose of rescuing them from the condition that they brought upon themselves by their malice against Him,
            - is an instance of love that—I have no words to describe!
  - Let me describe to you what He did—in solidarity with His people!
1. In solidarity with His people, Christ went to the cross.
    - a. He went there, not because men finally caught Him...
      - not as a mere example of one who gives himself for a cause (though He is that)
        - but primarily to bear the sin of His people!
        - He went there to bear the penalty of their sin for them!
- 1) We just saw what that dreadful penalty entails—
    - All the shame of their sin has to be exposed—
      - and then they are cast into the place of outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth...
        - And they must remain there forever for justice to be done.
        - That is the penalty that Jesus came to bear for His people!
  - 2) And I tell you, that is the penalty that He did bear for His people-- fully!
    - He so identified Himself with them that He took their sin as if it were His own...
      - all the shame of it, all the guilt of it, all the penalty of it...
        - He was cut off and stricken by the Father!
        - He made His soul an offering for sin!
    - And his was the biggest grandest soul of all!
      - He was the Son of God in human flesh!

- The one who loathes sin with loathing that we know nothing about—nothing I say—
    - And He took it as His own for His people.
    - “All we like sheep have gone astray, but the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all!”
  - He was such a grand soul, that in those hours on the cross when He cried out, “My God, My God, Why have you forsaken Me,”
    - He bore the equivalent of an eternity—an eternity I say! in Hell!
      - It is amazing that He would do such a thing!
      - But that is exactly what He did!
- b. And what was the outcome of all this for His people?
- Nothing less than the full remission of their sins!
    - Complete forgiveness—as if they had never committed any sin!
    - He is the Lamb of God who was sacrificed to take away all their sins!
      - What freedom!
      - What emancipation!
      - What liberty!
    - No more guilt because Jesus paid it all.
      - He who knew no sin became sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him!
      - As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us!

TRANS> Voluntary solidarity with His sinful people, all that He might release them from their sin by taking it all upon Himself!

2. In solidarity with His people, Jesus also rose again from the dead.

- a. Think of the resurrection like this...
- Jesus comes, as have just seen, and joins Himself to His people who are loaded down with sins...
    - They are dead in trespasses and sins and there is no way of escape for them.
    - But He comes and joins Himself to them and transfers all their sins to Himself...
      - And those sins weigh down upon Him and bring Him to the cross and the grave—in solidarity with His people.
      - It is as if the whole church is on the cross and then in the grave with Him—because He is representing the whole church...

- But then after He has made a complete offering for those sins—
    - an offering that totally satisfies justice...
      - God raises Him up to show that His offering has been accepted in behalf of His people—and to declare that Jesus is Lord and Christ.
    - It is as if the whole church is then raised up out of the grave with Him to live—freed from sin—as His people!
      - He breaks forth from that grave with new life for all of His people!
- b. And do you know what He did after He was raised up from the dead?
- He poured out His Spirit on His people as a pledge and guarantee of the new life that He had just obtained for them!
    - And do you know the Holy Spirit does?
      - The Holy Spirit turns their hearts to Him so that they want the new life that He gives...
        - They don't want to go on as they were—dead in Adam.
    - They are done with all the excuses and the denials and the self-justification!
      - Christ has forgiveness and new life and they want it!
        - They want to be renewed in the image of God in knowledge and in true righteousness and holiness!
        - They want to be that miniature copy of God—with all the beauty that characterises the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
        - They want to live in the community of God's people with those who are yearning to be filled with all the fullness of God!
          - That is the new life that Jesus gives to them.
- c. This new life begins with them turning from what they were to Jesus to have all this fullness...
- And then it grows in them so that they do in fact become more and more like Jesus Christ.
    - Even though the Spirit is only given to them as a deposit, their life is transformed by Him...
      - yet, they know that there is so much more to come and that at the last day, that dreadful day of judgement,
      - He will openly acknowledge them as those for whom He died and rose again,
        - and He will impart to them the fullness of life!

- Yes, He will abolish physical death and completely remove the curse that was put on the earth...
  - There will be a new heaven and a new earth—perfected restored!
    - They will once again have dominion over the whole creation—such harmony, such beauty—
      - no more tears, no more sickness, no more death!
- Jesus is risen and He will reign until all of His people are gathered in and until all things are restored!
  - And this time, there will no more possibility of falling away because all these blessings will be theirs through solidarity with Jesus.
  - New life in Christ will be certain...as certain as death in Adam.
    - **As in Adam, all die, even so in Christ, all shall be made alive!**

TRANS> What a difference it makes to be in Christ!

- You are already in Adam—
  - Everybody is in Adam.
    - If you are a human being you are in Adam...
      - And in Adam all die!
- But not everyone is in Christ.
  - Some are in Him and some are not in Him.
    - If you are in Him, you will be made alive...
    - If you are not in Him, you will not be made alive.
- So you need to make sure that you are in Him!
  - Surely you can see how much you need Him, can't you?
  - You can see the death and guilt in you apart from Him, can't you?
  - Surely you want to be found in Him, don't you?

B. So how *can* you be in Christ?

- I am happy to tell you that it is not complicated.
  - You do not have to spend weeks in fasting or go on pilgrimage.
  - You don't have to sit in the lotus position and try to be one with the universal consciousness.
  - You don't have to offer some great sacrifice or transport yourself into another realm...
- You don't have to do any of these things because it's not about you and what you do—it's about Him and what He has done.

- You don't have to go somewhere to find Him because He comes to you through the Word—the message preached.
    - The Word is near you, in your heart and in your mouth.
    - All you have to do is receive Him...
      - Outwardly, to confess Him with your mouth...
      - Inwardly, to believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead.
1. Sometimes the call to come to Him is summarised by the words “repent and believe”
    - It is very simple.
      - Repentance is simply turning from what you are...your sinful self...
        - You come to the conclusion that you are dead without Christ and that you don't want to go on in your death.
      - And believing on the LORD Jesus Christ is simply entrusting yourself to Him for pardon and new life...
        - You simply rest in the sacrifice that He has made and look to Him to fill you with new life as His image.
        - You come fully trust Him because God has already accepted His sacrifice for sin and proven that by raising Him from the dead.
          - He is reigning and He will give you life if you will come to Him.
  2. And when you come inwardly, you will also come outwardly.
    - When Peter first preached the gospel, he commanded those who believed to repent and be baptised.
      - Those who received the message came to be baptised, confessing outwardly that they were coming to Christ for life.
      - Entering new life meant that they became His disciples, ready to join with His people who are called out of the world to follow Him.
    - Baptism is something like the opposite of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil.
      - By eating from the tree, Adam officially and outwardly declared that he was on his own.
      - By baptism, you officially declare that you are no longer on your own but that you are joined to Jesus.
        - But don't misunderstand—you can be outwardly baptised, but if you do not also believe in your heart...
          - If you have turned from death to receive life from Christ,
            - Your baptism is an empty sign and you are not yet alive in Christ.

- You do not yet have the Holy Spirit who brings you into the New life because you are not yet in Christ.
- You do not need to be baptised again—you have already done that.
- But you need to complete your baptism by turning from your own way and coming to Christ to obtain life.

### **Conclusion...**

And I tell you, if you will repent and come to Him, He promises that He will not cast you out.

- He will receive you and you will be in Him.
  - And if you are in Him, you know what His oracle declares...
    - **“As in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.”**
  - Life in Him, if you will come to Him for it, is absolutely certain...
    - And words cannot describe how much better it is than life without Him.
      - Won't you come?
      - Really, what is keeping you?
      - Millions have come and none have ever been disappointed.
        - All have found life—sweet life—life in communion with God as His image.