

Do we want God to **help us**, or are we willing to allow Him to **save us**?

This may at first seem like a silly question, but it is far more serious than we might imagine. Can our **fallen condition be reversed** by getting **more power from God to live a good life**, or do we need to **start over from scratch** like Jesus said?

*The same came to him by night, and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that **you are a teacher come from God**, for no one can do these signs that you do, unless God is with him."*

*Jesus answered him, "Most certainly, I tell you, **unless one is born anew, he can't see the Kingdom of God**." (John 3:2-3)*

**Insisting that we can't change** or be healed is the **spirit of anti-christ** – one who is against Christ.

*Beloved, don't believe every spirit, but **test the spirits**, whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. **By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit who confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh** is of God, and every spirit who doesn't confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God, and this is **the spirit of the antichrist**, of whom you have heard that it comes. Now it is in the world already.*

***You are of God**, little children, and have overcome them; because **greater is he who is in you** than he who is in the world. (1 John 4:1-4)*

***Who is the liar** but he who **denies that Jesus is the Christ**? This is **the Antichrist**, he who denies the Father and the Son. (1 John 2:22)*

Why is this spirit **so dangerous**? Because Christ was **sent by God to save us** from the power and authority and **control of sin** in our life, and more importantly to **displace Satan as representative** of the human race in the assembly of the sons of God in heaven. Part of this expulsion was accomplished by the Son of God **taking on the form of humanity**, fully identifying with us, experiencing life **under the law of sin** and death among us, thus **earning the right to give us a new identity in Christ** that displaces our old identity as sinners.

*But what does it say? "**The word is near you, in your mouth, and in your heart;**" that is, **the word of faith**, which we preach: that **if you will confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved**. (Romans 10:8-9)*

**Jesus indeed is Lord** and overcame sin and death by His willing death at the hands of rebellious sinners, all the while **forgiving and loving** them to the end. In doing so **Jesus was legitimized** as our perfect savior, **Christ**, and **representative**. Yet this salvation plan **requires willingness** on our part to **believe what He says about us and about God, over any other opinion** or feeling or belief. By **choosing to believe** and confessing with our mouth, we give **permission** for His Spirit to dwell in us give Him **Lordship** over our heart. This **authority** must come through the exercise of our own **choice to believe what Jesus says** over every contradicting voice we hear in our head.

*For indeed **we have had good news preached to us**, even as they also did, but the word they heard **didn't profit them, because it wasn't mixed with faith** by those who heard. (Hebrews 4:2)*

**Resisting belief** in God's power to save is a **subtle** way by which Satan is **allowed to block God's power** that can transform and heal us. It **inhibits** the saving **Word from getting down to the heart** level where it can flourish and **counteract the spell of darkness**, fear, shame and doubt.

**Unbelief** insists that the **status quo condition just has to be accepted** and **even normalized** instead of overturned. Its attraction is its **familiarity** more than admiration, for despite admitting that sin makes us miserable, **we fear letting go of control** over our lives because **we resist believing** God has something far better than anything we can imagine.

This is what Paul refers to as **living according to the flesh** instead of according to the Spirit.

*For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death, but **the mind of the Spirit is life and peace**; (Romans 8:5-6)*

*Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "**The Spirit** who lives in us **yearns jealously**"? But he **gives more grace**. Therefore it says, "**God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble**." **Be subject therefore to God**. But **resist the devil**, and he will flee from you. **Draw near to God**, and **he will draw near to you**. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. (James 4:5-8)*

***If Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is alive because of righteousness**. But if **the Spirit of him** who raised up Jesus from the dead **dwells in you**, he who raised up Christ Jesus from the dead will also **give life to your mortal bodies** through his Spirit who **dwells in you**. (Romans 8:10-11)*

The spirit of antichrist, **resisting trust that God can save us** by the **healing power of His word** (rather than simply helping us work to get better) this spirit can even move us into **excusing our sinful condition** and behaviors as being **part of our design makeup** instead of seeing sin as dysfunctional **aberrations of our creation design**. We can **seek to normalize our sinful condition** as acceptable to God instead of viewing it from His perspective, as tragic damage **distorting our perceptions** and reflections of His love, of reality and what life was meant to be like.

***Who is the liar** but he who **denies that Jesus is the Christ**? This is **the Antichrist**, he who **denies the Father and the Son**. (1 John 2:22)*

*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are children of God. For you didn't receive the **spirit of bondage again to fear**, but you received the **Spirit of adoption**, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The **Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God**; (Romans 8:14-16)*

This **spirit of antichrist**, **resisting the Word of God**, **kidnaps** the authority of **our will**, leading us to **withhold the permission God needs** to rescue, heal and restore us to a condition far better than we can ever achieve for ourselves. **God does not offer help** for us to **work up enough righteousness** to be **accepted** by Him. **Begging God to help us** be a better person is a **prayer of unbelief**, and only adds confusion and encourages depression. God wants to **save us** from our sins, not help us save ourselves.

*For being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, they didn't subject themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the fulfillment of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. (Romans 10:3-4)*

*Because by the works of the law, no flesh will be justified in his sight. For through the law comes the knowledge of sin. But **now apart from the law, a righteousness of God has been revealed, being testified by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ to all and on all those who believe....** (Romans 3:20-22)*

Jesus asks each one of us a **pivotal question**. Are you **willing to believe**? Are you **willing to confess the truth** about God, about your identity, about His fresh revelation of reality **that contradicts nearly everything we have known** our whole life?

*A certain man was there, who had been sick for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that **he had been sick for a long time**, he asked him, "**Do you want to be made well?**" The sick man answered him, "Sir, **I have no one to put me into the pool** when the water is stirred up, but while I'm coming, another steps down before me." (John 5:5-7)*

Despite the fact this man **ignored Jesus' direct question**, Jesus **ignored his proposed solution** for his situation and cut **straight to the point**. Are you **willing to believe** the word of God, to step into a radical new reality, a life of freedom, joy and love? Believe the Word, **act on the Word** and you will be healed. **Faith unlocks heaven's resources** giving us access to everything we need for life.

*Jesus said to him, "**Arise, take up your mat, and walk.**" Immediately, **the man was made well**, and took up his mat and walked. Now **it was the Sabbath** on that day. (John 5:8-9)*

This man was **made whole by choosing to believe and act** on what Jesus said to do. It was **not** this man's **faith that saved** him, but rather his faith unlocked his heart to receive the healing and saving **power of God's love** that defeats all sin, all disease and all fear. But the man was **free to not believe** Jesus and **cling to his own reality** if he gave more credence to his doubts than to the offer of Jesus to **step out of his old patterns** of thinking. Sadly this happened even in Jesus' day, and especially among those who knew Him the longest, in His hometown of Nazareth.

***He could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people, and healed them. He marveled because of their unbelief.** He went around the villages teaching. (Mark 6:5-6)*

*Therefore I didn't even think myself worthy to come to you; but **say the word**, and my servant will be **healed**. For I also am a man **placed under authority**, having under myself soldiers. I tell this one, 'Go!' and he goes; and to another, 'Come!' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turned and said to the multitude who followed him, "I tell you, I have not found **such great faith**, no, not in Israel." (Luke 7:7-9)*

*So, then, my beloved brothers, let every man **be swift to hear**, slow to speak, and slow to anger; for the anger of man doesn't produce the righteousness of God. Therefore, **putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with humility the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not only hearers, deluding your own selves.** (James 1:19-22)*