

3. BECAUSE WITHOUT HIM I HAVE NOTHING ; BUT WITH HIM I HAVE EVERYTHING

→ *Is this statement true? Is it a bit strong? How do you get people to look at it through an eternal lens rather than a temporary, worldly one, because, of course, the answer then changes somewhat?*

It's possible to be materially RICH and spiritually DESTITUTE ... our socks off, but getting ABSOLUTELY NOWHERE SINCERE and WELL-INTENTIONED, but wildly OFF THE MARK.

→ *Read Matthew 6:19-34 and then discuss the previous statement in that light.*

BEFORE CHRIST we have broken relationship, unforgiven sin, eternal damnation.
IN CHRIST we have glorious salvation, no shame or condemnation, reconciled relationship, eternal security.

BEFORE CHRIST we have shallowness, emptiness, self-doubts + unanswered Qs.
IN CHRIST we have fullness, wholeness, new life / foundation / identity.

BEFORE CHRIST we're lost in religion, works, self-righteousness.
IN CHRIST we have grace, friendship, gift of righteousness.

BEFORE CHRIST we're building our house on sand.
IN CHRIST we're standing secure on the Rock.

BEFORE CHRIST we are limited to what we can do, ignorant of Truth, denied access to His true love.

IN CHRIST we are empowered by His Spirit, enabled by His grace, informed by His Word, filled with His love.

BEFORE CHRIST we have nothing of eternal value: chaff not wheat, wood not gold, filthy rags.

IN CHRIST we have a Saviour preparing a room for us in His Father's house, we have crowns to throw at Lord's feet, we are victors not victims, fruit-bearing rather than rag-wearing, full weight of promises of Heaven, Spirit-anointed Word of life / truth behind us.

BEFORE CHRIST we have all that the world holds dear, but are dead in our sins.
IN CHRIST we have died to world, but are alive in Christ.

BEFORE CHRIST we have nothing.

IN CHRIST we have absolutely everything.

→ *How would you describe 'before Christ' and 'in Christ' to your friends? How's that 60 second testimony going: before, Christ and after?*



The Christian's Answer to Life's Big Questions 3

Why Do I Need God?

→ *Before listening to this message, how do you think you would have answered this question? How might you open up this question in conversation? Do you think people are asking this question already? Have you ever found yourself discussing the issue?*

1 Peter 3:15-16 → *Always be ready to give a LOGICAL DEFENCE to anyone who asks you to account for the HOPE and CONFIDENT assurance that is within you, yet do it with GENTLENESS and RESPECT*

Mark Driscoll: "Jesus lived the LIFE we could never LIVE, died the DEATH we should have DIED, to pay a PRICE we could never PAY, to give us a FUTURE we did not DESERVE."

1. BECAUSE HE DIED FOR ME

4 S WORDS: SIN, SEPARATION, SUBSTITUTION, SALVATION

How do we show people that they're SINNERS, SEPARATED from God and in need of a SINNER?

→ *Try explaining the gospel to one another in 60 seconds, using the 4 S words.*

THE PROBLEM WITH SIN

- * Sin is a very UNPOPULAR concept, considered OLD-FASHIONED and NARROW-MINDED.
- * People don't like the word 'sin,' because it reminds them that they are ACCOUNTABLE to a HOLY GOD with the right to JUDGE.
- * The Enemy LIES and tells us that God's moral code is OPPRESSIVE, when actually it's very LIBERATING.

→ *Why does the word 'sin' seem to have drifted out of vogue? Do you think people in a post-modern, 'post-Christian' world have become desensitised to sin?*

→ *What is moral relativity? How much has it penetrated the way people think, talk and behave?*

THE SIN PROBLEM

Besides its potential to WRECK LIVES / RELATIONSHIPS

Besides its UGLY CONSEQUENCES

Besides the GUILT, SHAME & REGRET

Sin SEPARATES us from God and gives us a huge ETERNAL problem.

* We're all SINNERS ... by NATURE & BIRTH ... by COMMISSION & OMISSION (Rom 5:12,3:23, Prov 20:9, Psalm 51:3-5)

* Judgment is JUSTIFIED, JUST, INEVITABLE, COMING (Rom 6:23, Heb 9:27)

→ *A considerable part of the sin nature is the innate rebellion against God and His ways. What has that lead to? How does that make people react? How does it affect the course of their lives? How does it lead to denial, avoidance or running from God?*

→ *Sin has the power to hold you horribly captive. Discuss!*

There is no Christianity without the centrality of SIN, FALL, JUDGMENT & REDEMPTION.

If you're talking about GOOD WORKS, the very BEST OF HUMANITY, a God of 'HIPPIE-LOVE' and no CONSEQUENCES, you're not talking about TRUE Christianity.

CONSEQUENCES OF SIN

- i) POLLUTION of sin.
- ii) POWER of sin.
- iii) PENALTY of sin.
- iv) PARTITION of sin.

→ *Can you summarise the pollution, power, penalty and partition of sin?*

2 KEY WORDS THAT SUM UP GOSPEL

MERCY = We DON'T GET what we DO DESERVE.

GRACE = We DO GET what we DON'T DESERVE.

There's no more powerful picture than of Jesus as our SUBSTITUTE (1 Peter 2:24, Isaiah 53:6, 2 Cor 5:21).

JESUS = Solution to SIN PROBLEM because

- i) He steps in as our SUBSTITUTE.
- ii) He becomes the SACRIFICE for sin.
- iii) He pays price to REDEEM us from sin.
- iv) He issues FORGIVENESS.
- v) He JUSTIFIES us = declares us now innocent.
- vi) He SETS US FREE from stronghold of sin.
- vii) He ADOPTS us into His own family.
- viii) He gives us NEW LIFE, IDENTITY, SECURITY
- ix) He fills us with His EMPOWERING SPIRIT
- x) Makes His ENABLING GRACE AVAILABLE to keep us from sin every single moment of every single day.

WHY ISN'T THERE A PLAN B? (John 14:6, 3:3, 1 John 3:8, Col2:13-15)

- a) No other religion / god / philosophy deals with the SIN PROBLEM.
- b) There is no other qualifying SAVIOUR.
- c) No-one else could defeat the AUTHOR and FATHER of SIN.

→ *Jesus said, "I am the way." Why is Jesus the only way? How do you answer the people who question the exclusivity of Jesus and thus Christianity? What therefore about the other world religions?*

2. BECAUSE HE TAUGHT ME HOW TO LIVE

Jesus demonstrated that there was a BETTER WAY.

In the way He lived, He EXPOSED the inadequacy of the way of the WORLD (John 10:10).

- a) SHALLOWNESS of consumerist living.
- b) EMPTINESS of morally-relative living.
- c) LONELINESS of selfish living.
- d) UNCLEANNES of hyper-sexualised living.
- e) FALLACY of social media / reality TV living.
- f) HOPELESSNESS of nihilistic living.
- g) SUFFOCATION of overly-busy living.
- h) STRANGULATION of anxious / fearful living.
- i) PARALYSIS of Pharisaic living.
- j) Extreme PAUCITY of life without the presence of God.

→ *Which of that list of ten do you think are the most prevalent? Which ones do you think have people asking the question, is there a better way? Are there any that are tugging away at your soul?*

→ *If those are the negatives, what are the positive? What is the better way, the rich and satisfying, abundant and overflowing way (John 10:10)? Why is this an important part of presenting the gospel / answering the question, 'Why do I need God?' Or is it? Is it really all about eternity? How much does this life matter?*

The best message = TESTIMONIAL, your BEFORE and AFTER.