

Message Title: "White as Snow"

Date: Saturday, February 20, 2021 Scripture: The Gospel, multiple references

I love the theme of this women's brunch, as you see there on your bulletin this morning. The theme is White as Snow. And when we think about being white as snow spiritually, we're talking about salvation, right? That's what we're talking about. We're talking about being born again. That is, how can someone have their sins forgiven and have eternal life? The great thing is, the Bible gives us that answer.

It tells us how we can be saved, how we can be white as snow, but over the years there have been many people who have given the wrong answer. For example, in a book called Ecumenical Jihad by Peter Kreeft. He says that Catholics, Christians, Buddhists, Muslims and even atheists can go to heaven if they earnestly sought to find God. In fact, he says that God-fearing Christians, Jews and Muslims need to unite together in a, what he calls religious war, against the common enemy of godless secular humanism, materialism and immorality.

Sadly, there's men like J.I. Packer and Chuck Colson, whom you probably heard of before who actually endorsed this book. But there have been other men who have given the wrong answer as well...as to how someone can be forgiven of their sins and have their heart be white as snow and have eternal life. Men like Billy Graham. In 1997 he did an interview with Robert Schuler on the hour of power. And here's what Billy Graham said. He said this.

"I think everybody that loves Christ or knows Christ, whether they're conscious of it or not, they're members of the body of Christ. And I don't think that we're going to see a great sweeping revival that will turn the whole world to Christ at anytime. I think James answered that. The apostle James in the first council in Jerusalem when he said that God's purpose for this age is to call out a people for his name, whether they come from the Muslim world or the Buddhist world, or the Christian world, or the nonbelieving world. They are members of the body of Christ because they've been called by God."

Now listen to what he says.

"They may not even know the name of Jesus, but they know in their hearts that they need something that they don't have and they turn to the only light that they have and I think that they are saved, and that they're going to be with us in heaven."

Robert Schuler goes on and he says:

Robert Schuler: "What I hear you saying, that it's possible for Jesus to come into human hearts and soul in life, even if they've been born in darkness and have never had exposure to the Bible. Is that a correct interpretation of what you're saying?"

Billy Graham responds. "Yes it is. Yes, it is because I believe that I've met people in various parts of the world in tribal situations. That they have never seen a Bible or heard about, or heard a Bible and never heard of Jesus, but they believed in their hearts that there was a God and they've tried to live a life that was quite apart from the surrounding community in which they live."

Schuler then says, "I'm so thrilled to hear you say this, there's a wideness in God's mercy."

Billy Graham responds, and he says, "There is. There definitely is."

I'm here to tell you this morning that the way to heaven is not wide. In fact, it is very, very narrow. Jesus said in Matthew 7:13-14

"Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. 14 For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it."

So how can someone enter in through the narrow gate and be saved? How can this happen? In order to understand how someone can have their sins forgiven -- for their heart to be white as snow -- and to be saved, we have to start at the beginning. But here's the thing. The beginning doesn't start with us. The beginning starts with God. It starts with God.

So we're going to look at our first point this morning, as you have an outline there in your program, you can see the first point there is...

1. God's Holy Requirement. God's Holy Requirement.

What is God's requirement in order for someone to be made white as snow and enter into heaven?
What is God's requirement?

When we think about it, whose heaven is it? It's His heaven, right? So we must know then what He requires. What is it that God requires in order to get into His heaven? Well, the Bible tells us what God requires. And the requirement for you, and I, and for all of mankind is -- ready for this? **Perfection.** That's the requirement. Perfection. Complete perfection.

In fact, 1 Peter 1:16 says "*YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.*" God says that you and I are to be holy because He is holy. He is a holy and perfect and righteous God, and He calls us to this requirement that we must be holy. God cannot allow sin in His presence. It can't happen. His standard is perfection. Complete perfection.

And here's the thing...God cannot lower that standard. He can't lower the standard for us. Why? Why can't he lower it? Because He's a perfectly just God. Not only is He perfectly holy and righteous, but He is a perfectly just God.

Think about a judge in a courtroom. If you were to go and sit in on a trial and the judge is there in a courtroom and he lowered the standard for a murderer. And he lets the guy off just because he's having a good day. You know-- "I got to work on time and had a wonderful breakfast this morning and had my coffee and things are just going really well. So murderer, I'm just going to let you go today."

What do we say about a judge like that? He's unjust, he's corrupt. He's an unjust judge. We would demand that that judge prosecute that murderer to the fullest extent because we want a just judge, right? That's what we want in our land. Especially as we look around today, we want justice.

God is a just judge. He's not only perfect and holy, but He is just and he demands payment for our sins.

Colossians 3:25 says

“For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.”

Without partiality. God is not partial to anyone. God is not partial with anyone. He doesn't show favoritism or partiality. He demands payment for everyone's sins. He demands payment for your sins.

Romans 2:11 says *“for there is no partiality with God.”* God's holy requirement is holiness from us. Because He's a holy and just God. But there's a problem, right? We understand the problem. We know what it is.

It's our second point, problem is that the sinner is ruined.... Point #2

2. The Sinner is Ruined.

Romans 3:23 says *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* Every single one of us has sinned against a holy and righteous God, and we fall short of His requirement, because we've sinned against Him. That sin is like a stain. It's like a stain that you and I can't get out. The sinner's heart is not as white as snow, but it's dark as night. It's filthy, it's unclean, it's full of evil.

That's the condition of our heart, and because of our sin, the Bible says that we are spiritually...you ready for this? Dead. We are spiritually dead.

Let me read Ephesians chapter 2 verses 1-3 for you. Paul says to the church at Ephesus:

“2:1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.”

We're children of wrath. Meaning we are under the wrath of God because we are dead, we're spiritually dead. The state of every person who is not saved is that they are spiritually dead. They are not a child of God. They are spiritually dead, and therefore they are a child of Satan. They're a child of Satan. That's what the Scripture tells us.

You're either a child of God or you're a child of Satan. And when you are spiritually dead, you are a child of Satan. But because of the weight of one sin --even one small sin, one small sin -- we are made sinners and we can't do anything to please God.

If you think about a dead person, can a dead person do anything? Nothing right? I remember preaching in a funeral one time and I was standing in front. And it was an open casket and the guy was right behind me. And there he was. Dead in the coffin. Open casket. Not for a moment did I think he's going to jump up and go boo, right? I didn't think that because I knew he was, what? Dead. He can't do anything. He's just laying there.

And the same is true with someone who is spiritually dead. You and I can do nothing to remove the stain of sin from ourselves because we are spiritually dead. There is nothing that we can do. No good works that we can do to save us, to redeem us. The reality is that the wrath of God remains upon those who

are sinners, who are lost, who have not put their faith in Christ. They are under the wrath of God, living as children of Satan, and they're headed for an eternity of hell.

But some will say, like Peter Kreeft said that "Catholics, Christians, Buddhists, Muslims, and even atheists can go to heaven if they earnestly sought to find God." If they did something in themselves to earnestly go after God, well, then I guess God will let them in. But here's the thing. the Bible says that no one seeks after God. No one seeks after God.

Romans chapter 3:10-12 says

"THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;
11 THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS,
THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;
12 ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS;
THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD,
THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE."

Not one of us. Notice what he says there. The beginning of that passage, he says, no one seeks after God. I hear a common phrase amongst Christians, well-meaning Christians, about unbelievers, and they'll be asked the question, are they a Christian? Maybe talking about their friend or a family member? Are they a Christian? And the Christian will respond like this, "Well, they're seeking."

No, they're not. What does the Bible tell us? That no one seeks after God? No, not one. They're not seeking. Because no one seeks after God. And no one does good, not even one. Man is totally ruined. We are totally depraved. The heart is desperately sick.

Jeremiah 17:9 says "*The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it?*" The answer: no one. We can't even understand our own heart. Because it's ruined. The heart is stained. It's stained with sin.

There's a detergent, maybe you've heard of this detergent called Vanish. Anybody heard of Vanish before? It's supposed to help get the stains out, right? I read on their website what their detergent is all about. Here's what they say. First of all they tell us about stain: "Stains have the habit of striking without warning and ruining your clothes, and eventually your day. And even more so if they target your favorite clothing."

Day is completely ruined. Some stains are tougher than the others, but why? Well, they give you the answer. "Stains can be categorized into four different groups. Enzymatic, Oil-based, Oxidizable, and Particulate --with many stains falling into more than one group -- combination stains." There you go. That's why you get stains in your clothes. In case you were wondering.

It goes on... "Irrespective of the type of stain. Washing detergent alone does not have the power to remove it completely. It will only help in making the toughest of stains fade. You may encounter the below-mentioned stains in your daily or weekly wash. But they will need more exertion to get out, something laundry detergent won't be able to handle alone. But, you ready for the answer? "By combining vanish with your detergent"...and here's what they tell us..."you have more chances to remove the stain." More chances to remove the stain. What did Vanish promise us? Nothing, right? Except "Buy our product." That's all they want. They just want you

to buy their product. They promised nothing. You have more chances to remove the stain. But they're not going to promise you that the stain is removed.

Well, what about our stain of sin?

In our hearts, here is the amazing thing God doesn't tell us "just to try Him, and maybe there will be a chance that you'll get into heaven." God doesn't tell us "to do good works, and maybe if you do enough good works, well... maybe there's a chance, then you might be able to make it into heaven."

No, God gives us a promise that is sure, a promise that is true, a promise that is trustworthy. And here's the amazing thing. God does not put the burden of salvation of removing that stain, upon us -- to save our own selves, because we can't do it. We are full of, what? Sin. We can't do it. But the good news is God has done something.

God has done something to save sinners like you, and I, so that we can be saved -- so that stain of sin can be removed, so that our heart can be washed as white as snow.

Which leads to our Third Point... Point #3.

3. God's Offer of Redemption.

God's Offer of Redemption. What has God done so that you and I can be saved?

Romans 5:8-9 says this:

"8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved..." (are you ready for this?) "... from the wrath of God through Him."

We are all under the wrath of God, but we are saved from the wrath of God -- through Christ. What did God do? God sent His only son. His son is the perfect payment for our sin.

Remember I told you that our sin needs to be paid for. Christ made the payment. He made the payment for our sin. He made the payment that you and I could not make. God made the payment for us so that stain of sin could be removed. God has done it for us. He sent His son to come and to live a perfect life that you and I could not live (it's impossible... we can't live that life.)

But He lived a holy life. He lived a holy life that you and I are required to live. But we can't because of our sin. And then what did Christ do? He went to a cross, to make the payment for us. He gave up His own life, and what He did on the cross --- is He took the wrath of God, upon Himself. And all those who believe in Him are covered by His blood and will no longer have the wrath of God remaining upon them.

Christ gave up His perfect life so that sinners like you and I could be saved. Christ made the way to heaven. But here's the thing. It's the only way. It's the only way. He lived a perfectly righteous life and then He died as a perfectly righteous man. And He took the wrath of God upon Himself, so that all who would believe in Him would no longer have God's wrath abiding upon them.

He paid the price so that your sins could be forgiven, and so that your heart could be washed as white as snow. And not only did He die -- often times when you hear the Gospel presented, that's what you hear

-- the death of Christ. But we can't stop there. He died and then He rose again to life. And because He lives today, He offers life to all of those who believe in Him.

Romans 5:10 says this

"10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

He is a living God, and He's alive today. He's not dead. He died to make the payment for us, but He's alive today. God sent His son to die, and to be buried, and to rise again, as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. And He offers redemption. He offers salvation to all of mankind.

John 3:16, probably a familiar verse for many of you here, says

16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

All who believe in Christ, will not perish, but have eternal life. And so what must we do?

If God made the way, if Christ made the payment for us, what then must we do? Leads to point #4 ...

4. The Sinner's Response.

1. First you must repent of your sin. You must repent of your sin.

Did you know that the very first word that we have recorded that Jesus preached? You know what the word was? Repent.

Matthew 4:17 says:

17 From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Christ came and He preached repentance, and He called for people to turn away from their sin. What does repentance mean?

It means agreeing with God that you are sinful. Confessing your sin to Him. And making a conscious choice to turn from your sin. It means humbling yourself before God and recognition that you are not a good person. No one is good, not even one. We have all sinned against God. We have sinned against a holy and righteous God, and we must acknowledge that. But it takes humility. We've got to humble ourselves before a holy and righteous God.

Did you know that God loves humility? God loves humility.

James 4:6 says:

"...Therefore it says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE."

He's opposed to the proud. If you think that you can work your way into heaven, you are a proud person. And you must humble yourself before God. And God will show you Grace. God's opposed to the proud. You must recognize that you're a sinner and you must turn from your sin. And so the first thing we do is we repent of our sin.

2. The second thing we do is, you must place your faith in Jesus Christ.

Now let me be very clear about this. I didn't say... notice I didn't say "place your faith in God." What did I say? Place your faith in Jesus Christ. It's in Him alone.

Jesus says in John 14:6

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

It's faith in Jesus Christ alone. There are many people who say that they have faith in God. The Jews would say that. The Catholics would say that. Even Muslims would admit that they have faith in a god. But salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

In Jesus Christ alone. Jesus says in John 8:42 He's confronting the Jews when they were saying that God was their father, Jesus has a confrontation with them. And here's what Jesus says to the Jews, God's chosen people. This is what Jesus says in John 8:42. He says,

"If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me."

Faith in Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven. Pretty narrow gate, right? Isn't that what Jesus said? It's narrow. And few will find it. It's in Christ alone.

When talking about salvation and the sinners response, I like to use the illustration of a coin. In fact, I did this with one of my sons the other day. And I talk about this coin. I pulled out a coin and I said. It's like two sides of one coin. One side is repentance and the other side is faith. They have to go together. It's repentance and faith.

We must acknowledge that we're sinners and turn from our sin and place our faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. Two sides of one coin, and then he said, "wow, that's so great dad. When you go and and share the gospel with people, all you need is a Bible and a coin. And you got it." That's right. Two sides of one coin, repentance and faith.

Listen, if you haven't done that today. If you have not repented of your sin and put your faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. Do that today. Don't leave from this brunch here this morning without repenting of your sin and putting your faith in Jesus Christ alone. He is the only way and he is come to make the payment for your sin. And He calls you to Himself and He says, *"come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."* Come to Jesus Christ and put your faith in Him this morning.

So what happens then when someone does, when someone does repent of their sin and put their faith in Jesus? Their sins are forgiven and their heart becomes white as snow. God forgives all of their sin. Their past sin, and their present sin, and their future sin. God forgives it all. And He cleanses their heart.

And they receive the free gift of eternal Life, which Romans 6:23 says *“for the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* It's in Him.

But it doesn't end there for Christians. Life for the Christian at that point begins, and there's a responsibility that we have then as Christians, which leads to our final point.

5. The Believer's Responsibility.

The believer's responsibility.

Jesus said in Matthew 28:19

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

What is the responsibility of believers of Christians?

1. Our first responsibility is to go and make disciples. We must go and make disciples. Go and tell others the bad news about their heart's condition, and then the good news of what Christ has done to offer them salvation. We've got to give them the whole thing. You've got to tell them their condition -- that they are dead spiritually, but God came to give them life. We've got to go and make disciples and tell others of the good news of our Savior.
2. And second, we must live in obedience to Christ. We must live in obedience to Christ. In fact, that's what Jesus is telling the disciples. In verse 20, he says, *“teaching them to observe all that I commanded you.”* Observe means to obey. Teach them to obey everything that I have commanded you. We need to be living in obedience to Christ.

Jesus said in John 14:15 *“If you love Me, you will...”* what? *“...keep My commandments.”* You will keep My commandments. And this means that Christ becomes Lord of your life. Sadly in our culture, and in our churches today, there's a false gospel that's being preached that says that one can believe and not have a changed life.

In fact, I received an email from a lady this week. She's in another state. I don't know how she got my email address, but somehow she did. She found my email address and she sends me an email and here's what she says. She says, please pray for my son, Derek. He's an alcoholic and suffers from depression. Please pray he will surrender his life to Christ and commit to a four-month Christian rehab facility. Derek is a believer, but not walking with the Lord. Thank you. And she signed her name.

Notice. What does she say here? He's a believer. But he's an alcoholic and he's not walking with the Lord. That doesn't square with God's Word and the truth of the gospel. But sadly there are many people who believe this -- He is a believer...but he's a drunkard. He's a believer, but... and they go on and on about the sin that he's in that this person is in. And people are claiming to have a saving faith. And yet there is no change in their life. But this idea is found nowhere in Scripture. Nowhere is it found in God's Word.

When someone is born again, their life is changed. Their heart is changed, because their sins are forgiven and they submit to the Lordship of Christ. And they desire to live an obedient life to Him. Now does this mean that Christians are perfect? No. We're not. We need Christ daily, right? We need Him

daily, but Christians desire to live in obedience to Christ in every area of their life. That's the desire of the heart of a true believer, that they desire to live in obedience to Him.

John MacArthur says this "Genuine saving faith changes behavior, transforms thinking and puts within a person a new heart. Implicit in that change of heart is a new set of desires. A desire to please God, to obey, and to reflect His righteousness. If such a change does not occur, there is no reason to think genuine salvation has taken place."

Where is your heart? Do you desire to live in obedience to Christ? Look, I know we all fall. We all fall short. And we will fall into sin. But the heart of a true believer is to repent of that sin to come before God and ask Him to remove that sin. To beg and plead with Him for forgiveness. And He will forgive us. Because He's a God that offers forgiveness to those who sin.

You see, true salvation leads to total submission to Christ. And those who are truly saved desire to live in obedience to Christ. Listen ladies, the greatest message in the world is this message. This is the greatest message that you could tell anyone ... this message here. The gospel. That sinners are ruined, but Christ came to give them life.

That's the greatest message and we are to tell them that Jesus is the only way. He is the only way to heaven. He is the only one who can take a filthy sinner like you and I, and change our hearts and make us white as snow. That's the message of the gospel, and that's what Christ has done for us. We're called to live in obedience to Him now. Let's do that.

Will you pray with me? Father, thank You for this amazing message. The greatest message in the world is this message of the gospel. Father, we know what Your Word says, that it is true, that we have all sinned against You and fallen short of Your glory. But we thank You for sending Christ to be the payment for our sins, so that our hearts can be cleansed and we can be washed as white as snow. If it wasn't for You, we would all be damned to hell. But because of Your great love for us, You have offered Your son... Jesus Christ, Your only son, who lived a perfect life, died on a cross as the payment for our sins, and rose again on the third day, and offers us eternal life with Him. We thank You for this message. We thank You for the work that You have done in our hearts, in saving us. And Father, I pray that if there's anyone here this morning that doesn't know You, I pray that You would draw them to You, that You would open up their eyes to see. Give them ears to hear this truth of Your Word. That they would come to you in repentance and faith. That they would call upon you for salvation. Thank you for being a saving God. You are good. You are wonderful. You are gracious. You are merciful. And we love You and we praise You in Jesus name. Amen.