

# Who Can Dwell With God?

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[ 0 : 00 ] I want to begin with a very basic gospel question. Really, two questions. One question with two parts, whatever. Here's what it is.

What is sin's principal problem and salvation's principal purpose?

And I just want you to think on it for just a moment. What is sin's principal problem? What is salvation's principal purpose?

Of course, that is according to the scriptures. Now, we may be prepared to offer many answers to these questions, but I want you to notice what I'm asking.

I'm not asking about all of sin's consequences. I'm not asking for a list of all the various things that sin does and that results from our sin and from Adam's sin.

[ 0 : 57 ] I'm not asking about all of salvation's benefits, all of the blessings that come from knowing Christ and being redeemed by Christ. That's not the question. The question is, what is the principal issue of sin?

What is the principal aim of salvation? What's it really all about when you get to the very heart of it? Now, let's think of it in relation to the very first sin.

If you can bring your mind back to creation and fall as recorded in Genesis 1 through 3. The principal issue of Adam's fall was not his expulsion from Eden, and it was not his expiration of life or his death.

It was his exclusion from God's presence, his exclusion from a peaceful, intimate relationship with the creator.

And once we understand that, that is the presentation of the scripture. That's not my opinion of what it says. That's actually the presentation of how the scriptures describe this for us and explain it to us.

[ 2 : 13 ] And once we have that understanding, then we can move on to the second part of the question, which is about the principal benefit of salvation and redemption and restoration.

So let's think of it this way. If Adam's most significant consequence was his expulsion from the Garden of Eden, what would then be the chief aim of his salvation?

It would be a return to the Garden. If the principal issue was that he could no longer be in Eden, then the principal aim of restoration would be to bring him back to Eden.

Okay? Let's change the question. If the principal issue, the supreme consequence of Adam and Eve's sin, was death, what then would be the chief aim of their salvation?

It would be life, right? Eternal life. If the principal issue of Adam's sin was conflict with others, what then would be the goal of his salvation?

[ 3 : 31 ] It would be a peaceful marriage. It would be lasting friendship. It would be enduring partnership.

Now, don't misunderstand what I'm saying. Remember, I'm not asking about all the consequences of sin. All of those things are real consequences of sin. Neither am I asking about all of the benefits of salvation.

All of those things are actually benefits of salvation according to the Scriptures. They're benefits that we should rejoice in, but they aren't the principal purpose of salvation.

Since the principal problem of Adam's sin was his separation from God, the principal aim of his salvation is reconciliation with God.

Okay? You follow? Now, I think the vast majority of people, even many professing Christians, do not understand this. In our sinful condition, we focus on every consequence of sin except the principal one.

[ 4 : 50 ] We spend our lives trying to achieve the pleasures of Eden. We think of what would life be if we weren't in a fallen world?

And we live our lives trying to restore that fallenness in some way, or at least the experience of it. We want the pleasure, as much of it as we can possibly get. Or we spend our lives chasing more life, trying to extend life in some way.

But we desire all of those things apart from the presence of God, typically. It's an earthly mindset. It's a carnal perspective, unfortunately, that has influenced the church and its presentations of the gospel message.

So some professing Christians, they speak as if the goal of salvation is heaven and the pleasures that are contained therein.

To think of heaven primarily as a place of worship seems to them a disappointment. We can go to passages like Revelation 4.

[ 6 : 07 ] We see the great throne room of God where all of God's people are gathered around with all of His creatures and all of His angels, and they cast their crowns at His feet. They cry out to Him, holy, holy, holy.

And we think, wow, that's amazing. I hope there's more. Why do we do this?

Why does thoughts of heaven as primarily a place of worship seem a disappointment? Because our thoughts of salvation are fixated on escaping difficulty and experiencing pleasurable ease instead. Little consideration seems to be given to enjoying God who actually is the one who makes heaven desirable. And we seem to miss that.

And my concern is that many people would be perfectly content with a heaven where God is not actually present. If everything that we know from the scriptures about the nature of heaven, if we were to go to Revelation in particular and we were to grasp the fullness of John's vision, if we were able to see what John saw, the streets of gold, the gates of pearl, the walls of jasper, the sea like crystal, all of the things that we long for, all of the things that will be blessing in eternity, if we could see all of it and if we could have all of it without God, would we be content with that?

[ 8 : 04 ] And I think the answer for many people is yeah, that's actually what we're after. We're after the pleasure.

We're after the ease. We're after the escape from difficulty. And if God chooses not to be there, that's fine as long as he provides the ease. You see the problem.

Of course, this also affects our presentations of the gospel. We present a truncated form of the good news that has as its climax escape from torment and entrance into paradise.

God's role in those presentations is essentially to act as a means to a more fantastic end, which is personal pleasure.

We present the gospel to people that, hey, there's no hope here. Things will be much better in heaven and God's made a way. So if you really just want things to be better, God will make a way for you and you can enjoy better things.

[ 9 : 13 ] Friends, that's not the gospel. You can lead somebody in a wonderful prayer about Jesus, but if their hope is simply pleasure that may or may not be a part of heaven and in their mind is nothing with consideration to the glory of God and the reconciliation with God and the enjoyment of God, you have not presented the gospel and they are not Christians.

Christ's sacrifice on the cross is emphasized as a means to a better life and a future rather than God's plan for restoring fellowship to his creatures.

This kind of gospel message, it would be like going to your wife and saying, you know, the chief aim of our marriage is sexual fulfillment. You're great, I'm glad you're around, but what I really love is the pleasure that I get from you.

And we would say that's a pretty terrible view of marriage, isn't it? Our wives would not be very pleased with us if that were our view of marriage and yet it's basically the perspective that many people bring to the gospel.

I'm glad God's there. I'm happy that Jesus was willing to do so much in order to secure my pleasure, but the thing that I really want, I just want heaven, I want ease, I want the pleasure.

[ 10 : 47 ] Again, don't misunderstand me. I'm not saying that those things aren't realities or that we shouldn't crave those things. They are blessings from God. He gives them to us as a description in His Word in order that He might give us a foretaste of what eternity will be for those who are in Him, but it's not the principal aim.

And what many have failed to realize is that heaven and hell are secondary consequences of one standing with God. He is the goal of salvation, not the means to something else.

And to rightly speak, of the realities of heaven and hell, we must put them in their proper place.

Salvation is not primarily about entering heaven. It is about being reconciled in a peaceful, intimate relationship with the Creator in whom is the greatest possible experience of pleasure and love and joy if we are to believe that what the Bible says is true.

And of course, I do believe it. And the story of the Bible, it's all about God's pursuit of this peace with His creatures.

And the ministry of the gospel is one of reconciling sinners to God through the perfect work of Jesus Christ.

[ 12 : 14 ] Paul says this plainly for us. 2 Corinthians chapter 5. All this is from God. Speaking of salvation. Who through Christ reconciled us to Himself.

And then He gave us, that is the apostles and beyond that, everyday Christians. He gave to us the ministry of reconciliation. And what does He mean?

Well, He tells us that is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself. Not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us, believers, this message of reconciliation.

Therefore, Paul turns to his audience and he says, we are ambassadors for Christ. We're proclaimers of good news. Therefore, God is making His appeal to you through us.

And what's the appeal? He tells us in the very next statement. We implore you, for Christ's sake, be reconciled to God.

[ 13 : 20 ] Can I tell you what my purpose is right now, in this moment, is to be an ambassador for Christ, to proclaim the good news, God making His appeal to you through me.

And therefore, my appeal, I implore you, be reconciled to God. Be reconciled to God. You say, well, why does this have to do with Psalm 15?

I'm saying all of this because it would be quite easy for us to make Psalm 15 about how a person can get to heaven. In fact, early in the week in my study, I was tempted to actually make that the title of the sermon, How to Get to Heaven.

And it was through the conviction of that that I realized, no, that's actually the problem many times is all we're really concerned about is heaven, but that's not what David's concerned about here.

Heaven's a wonderful implication of this text, don't get me wrong, but it's not what David had in mind when he was writing this psalm. The point of Psalm 15 is to paint a portrait of the one who can dwell with God, the one who has this peaceful, intimate fellowship with the creator.

[ 14 : 43 ] The character sketch, it includes a question, it includes the answer, and then it includes a blessing, and we're going to work through all three of those things, but as we work through these sections, you're going to quickly pick up on a serious problem in black for us.

So at the end, after we have worked through the psalm, we will look to Jesus as the fulfillment of the psalm and the agent of our reconciliation to God.

Okay? First, let's see the question. Look again at verse 1. Here's what David asked. O Lord, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill?

The question David presents here, it's all about who can dwell in the presence of the Lord. In David's context, a tent was a place where someone lived. It was their abode, their place of dwelling. The tent of God, however, in the Old Testament has special meaning. It speaks of a particular place. It speaks of, the tabernacle in David's time where the presence of God was manifested among his chosen people.

[ 15 : 58 ] And this is an important connection in the scriptures. God has always desired to dwell with mankind and for that relationship to be peaceful and intimate as we've said a number of times already.

That was the reality of Adam and Eve's existence before they fell. There seemed no surprise to them that God was willing after their sin to come in the cool of the day to walk with them in the garden.

And we don't know if that was a daily event or if it was multiple times a day. We don't know the nature of it. We just know it was no surprise to them so much so that they hid themselves knowing that God was coming.

There was fellowship, intimacy, relationship between God and his creatures. God desired that. He received glory and pleasure through that.

Of course, that was until their fall. And the Bible's overarching message is about God's plan to restore that. And we see it progressively unfolding.

[17:06] We see these snapshots of it. First we see the tabernacle. God uses Moses, the people of Israel in the wilderness to build it. What was that all about?

It was about God's presence being manifested among his people. Then it was the temple. We read in 1 Chronicles 16 to open the service. What was that psalm?

What was that a prayer for? Was that the dedication of the temple, Solomon's temple? What was happening in that moment? The presence of God filled the temple. It was a manifestation of God's presence among his people.

And then we see it next in the incarnation. John tells us that God tabernacled with us.

He tempted with us to use David's language. How? In the incarnation of Jesus Christ. And then Jesus ascended back to heaven and then what happened?

[18:08] God the Father and God the Son send the Holy Spirit eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son. And what does he do? He dwells within each believer.

And what happens in the end? Jesus returns. Why? So that he might take us to be with him and to dwell with him.

This is the Bible. This is the big picture of the Bible. This is what's happening. That's what David is referring to here. Who can be in your presence in this way God? Who can dwell in your tent?

Who can actually come into the tabernacle? If he had the universal tabernacle in mind of all of God's creation. Who can be in your presence God? That's the question he's asking.

The emphasis here is not on a place. It's on the presence of God itself. But then he uses another statement. He speaks of God's holy hill. That's the second question isn't it? Who shall dwell on your holy hill?

[19:09] Well we've seen this term before. In Psalm 2 in verse 6 Zion is the holy hill from which God rules over all of his creation.

Issuing his judgment against the wicked. Blessing all who trust in his appointed king. And again the emphasis is on access to God's presence to his safety to sweet fellowship with him.

David understood that the deepest longings of the human heart love safety joy all of these things can only be satisfied in God which is a statement he'll make explicitly in the very next Psalm.

Psalm 16 in verse 11 you make known to me the path of life he says in your presence there is fullness of joy David says. At your right hand there are pleasures forevermore eternal pleasures beyond our imagination all of it in connection with God's presence.

These opening questions they reflect the deepest longing of David's heart and the hearts of all who will seek God to dwell in his presence where there is eternal security and blessing that's that's his desire here but David's also fully aware that sinners cannot dwell with God.

[20:39] We've seen him talk about this already. Psalm 5 verse 4 you are not a God who delights in wickedness evil those who commit it may not dwell with you.

So who then can gain access to God's presence and dwell in his safety and love? Well that's what the psalm seeks to answer which brings us to the answer.

We've seen the question now let's see the answer. And what follows in these verses verses 2 through 5 it's a character sketch. It's a portrait of the person who has access to God who enjoys perfect fellowship with the creator.

And here's how I'd like to break it up. I want to break it up by every two lines that we've talked before about chiasms a literary structure that is common in the psalms. There's no chiasm here. What we have here is parallelism. You don't have to know that word. You know it from your poetry classes in high school. It's a rhythm. It's a prose and to poetry.

[21:43] Right? And as we work through this every two lines you find a parallelism. But here's the point. No matter how you break this apart, as many or as few characteristics as maybe you decide to do, the primary point here that I want you to see is that moral perfection is what qualifies a person for God's presence.

Moral perfection. Okay? Let's work through it. Look first at verse two. Who can do this? He who walks blamelessly and does what is right.

He who walks blamelessly and does what is right. This first set of characteristics, it's a summary heading for everything else that follows. When the scriptures, as you probably are aware, when they speak of walking, it's a reference to a person's way of life.

David asserts here that one who can dwell in peace with God must have a totally blameless way of life. That is, his inner integrity always reveals itself in outward righteousness.

He's without blame in both his inner spirit and his outward actions. Always doing what's right. Now, you may look at that and say, you know, I've got a piece of that together.

[ 23 : 01 ] I pretty much always do what's right on the outside, but you know your heart. You know it's not true on the inside. That's not the case for this man. What's the next one?

Again, verse two. He speaks truth in his heart who does not slander with his tongue. You feel the rhythm of that, right? And speaks the truth in his heart, does not slander with his tongue.

Again, the pair begins with the inner person, ends with outward behavior that reflects the nature of his heart. We know this is how life works.

Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks, Jesus says. The Proverbs tell us that you ought not follow your heart because it will end in destruction. It's deceitfully wicked.

Who can know it? We're told. Well, this person, his outward behavior is always a reflection of his heart and it's always good. In his heart, this individual is completely trustworthy, reliable, a lover of truth.

[ 24 : 12 ] He's the opposite of the foolish one who Solomon said gives an answer before he hears. truth. It's Proverbs 18, 13. Instead, he loves truth.

He seeks the truth. He always acts according to what is true. Says Spurgeon, such will not lie even in the closet of their hearts for God is there to listen.

They scorn double meanings, evasions, equivocations, white lies, flatteries, and deceptions. And the truthful nature of this person's heart means that he's never guilty of slander.

That's the second part of the parallels, isn't it? It calls out slander. But what is slander? It is to deceptively damage another person's reputation by misrepresenting them to someone else.

We learn to do this from our youngest age. When we very quickly run to our parents to tell on our brother or our sister, misrepresenting an entire situation in hopes that we will be seen as a victim and they will be seen as an abuser.

[ 25 : 20 ] And a wise parent, as they inquire into the actual event, find that perhaps it's actually quite the opposite. He doesn't go about looking for ways that he might accuse someone.

He doesn't spin a story to exalt himself by tearing someone else down. Next, verse 3, he does no evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend.

Does no evil to his neighbor, takes up no reproach against his friend. Now, this pair of traits, it focuses on how one treats the other people in his life, whether they are just merely acquaintances or friends to whom some level of loyalty is expected.

To perform evil would be anything that falls short of Jesus' command, to love your neighbor as yourself. It's Matthew 22, 37-40.

When someone asked Jesus to then define who is my neighbor then, that's when he told the parable of the good Samaritan. And what was the meaning there?

[ 26 : 32 ] That our neighbor, to whom we should extend loving compassion, is those who would even otherwise be considered an enemy. That's the man of Psalm 15.

Christopher Ash said that reproach here is a strong word in the text. It means a personal attack, a cutting criticism, something that destroys a person's good name, which the Bible says is of great value.

To take up a reproach goes further than simply uttering criticism. It carries the sense of latching on to something you've heard from others, giving currency to it, and then passing it on to other people.

We call it gossip usually. In the context of this verse, in Psalm 15, this kind of action, it isn't taken against just anyone. It's taken against someone who is known to be a friend and a companion.

David says, one who can come into God's presence and enjoy fellowship with the Lord is blameless regarding these things, not guilty of it. Verse 4, in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but who honors those who fear the Lord.

[ 28 : 02 ] Meditate on that. In whose eyes a vile person is despised, but who honors those who fear the Lord. Who does a person tend to esteem and honor?

And what kind of person does he tend to despise and disapprove of? If you'll allow me a moment to meddle. There is a cancerous trend among evangelicals, and we're being called out on it by the world.

they see the inconsistency here. Christians actively esteeming a vile political figure, musician, athlete, so on.

And at the same time aggressively condemning the faithful pastor down the street with whom they have only secondary disagreements. Jesus tells us that the world will know that we are his out of our love for one another.

Of course, there's command there for loving everyone. The emphasis and the impact of the statement is for those who are in the faith. And yet, many times in our lives, it is those who are in the faith whom we are most hateful towards.

[ 29 : 26 ] those who are characterized by the vileness of the world and its philosophies and its systems who we tend to defend and give approval.

But to walk in the footsteps of the blessed man of Psalm 1 means that one will not esteem the counsel of the wicked or the way of sinners or the seat of scoffers.

The portrait of Psalm 15 is one who has never found guilty of doing what Paul condemns in Romans 1 which is when he says in verse 32 though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them, they give approval to those who practice them.

Finding some kind of justification for it, esteeming what's vile, condemning those who actually fear the Lord, imperfectly maybe.

But fear the Lord. Again, Christopher Ash says the one here described thinks little of a vile person because he knows that such a one is abhorred by God.

[ 30 : 36 ] That is in the sense of judgment. This will not stop him loving him, showing kindness and compassion to him, but it will prevent him looking up to the vile person as an example to be emulated.

On the contrary, he honors those who fear the Lord, no matter how unimpressive they may be in the eyes of the world. Again, verse 4, who swears to his own hurt and does not change.

Simply, if he's made a promise and later discovers that the promise is not working to his advantage, he perseveres in the promise anyways. He doesn't go back on his word even when it is to his harm.

Harper and I had a discussion about Psalm 15 this week. I often practice on my family before I preach. We were sitting at the table and I said, Harper, have you ever made a promise and you went back on it because you realized that that promise hurt you instead of helped you?

I've done that before. Ashlyn and I had a similar conversation in Belk yesterday. Ashlyn, have you ever led somebody along, made them think one thing, and then when you realized that it wasn't the best thing, you kind of pulled back and it was damaging to them?

[ 31 : 53 ] She said, yeah. You know what, Ashlyn, I've done it. I've done it. Done it many times. The one who can come into God's presence has never done that.

His yea is always yea, his nay is always nay, according to Jesus. Verse five, who does not put out his money at interest, does not take a bribe against the innocent.

God is central focus here is it's a trait of greed and covetousness, taking advantage of others' personal gain without any regard for their well-being.

the Bible routinely condemns using financial power to manipulate and abuse others, especially the poor. It doesn't condemn interest entirely.

We need not get the wrong picture here. There are times where the Bible actually recommends for good stewardship that you would have good business practices, but it does condemn this fiscal manipulation that takes advantage of other people's misfortune and vulnerability.

[ 33 : 04 ] We're all prone to doing this. It's in our nature. The one who can dwell with God is blameless in his dealings with people. He doesn't manipulate or abuse others for his own advantage.

So we have the question. The question is, Lord, who can enjoy access to your presence? Who can have the safety of dwelling on your holy hill? Who can enjoy you, have the blessings that come from knowing you, being with you?

And the answer is this sketch. And then it finishes with a blessing, an amazing blessing. Actually, look again at verse five. He who does these things shall never be moved.

That's amazing. It's a wonderful promise, actually, isn't it? Whoever meets the conditions of this portrait will not only be welcomed into God's presence, but will be eternally secured in God's presence.

wonderful. To be moved is to have stability taken from your life so that all the promises of the text are stripped away from you.

[ 34 : 13 ] And essentially what David is saying is if you meet the conditions of the portrait and if God brings you to his holy hill and you dwell with him, he will not remove that blessing from you.

You will not be moved, he says. Wonderful. That absolute eternal assurance is precisely what God offers here.

At least for all who qualify according to the description that David gives. Which brings us to the final application of the text. Psalm 15, it really is an incredible song of worship.

It presents the very real possibility of enjoying God in the safety of his presence. It echoes God's promise that all who find refuge in him will never be moved from it.

Not only can this be a reality for us, according to the psalm, it's an eternal reality, not a temporary one. This is a glorious psalm. But surely you see the tension here.

[ 35 : 23 ] surely you feel the tension of the text. Though it contains these unbelievable promises, the qualifications for dwelling on God's holy hill are impossible for us to meet.

So we need to conclude with four critical questions. Question one, who of us has met these conditions?

Who of us has met the conditions? clearly none of us have. Not one. Even the best of us has not met this portrait.

We may have the outline of the portrait, but it's marred. It's destroyed by our fallen nature, our sinfulness. Who of us has lived blamelessly, always doing what's right?

Who of us love us? Always is committed to truth. Always loves others as we love ourselves. Always esteems the righteous above the wicked who's never taken advantage of someone to benefit themselves.

[ 36 : 36 ] Who of us meets this description? Not one. one might argue that really what the psalm means to say is that if your life is generally categorized by this kind of righteousness, it's enough to be accepted into God's good graces.

That's a very real argument. Perhaps maybe it's something you're even dealing with now as we're working through this text. Well, he's not speaking in absolutes here. He's speaking in generalities that if your life is characterized by these things more than it isn't, then that's enough to kind of bring you into God's good graces.

A logical approach to the scriptures refutes that idea though. Just think for just a moment. It took one offense against God.

For Adam and Eve, to be expelled from his presence. Only one. And we could look at that and say it wasn't a big deal.

They ate some fruit. We've done way worse, haven't we? All of us have. And I'm sure they continued to. But it only took one.

[ 37 : 57 ] Who are we to think that it will take a hundred or a thousand or ten thousand offenses for God to judge us in the same way.

Is that not the pinnacle of pride and arrogance? To say that I'm so much better than Adam and Eve that God will not judge me as severely as he will judge them or has judge them.

The fact is it's impossible to support moralism as a means of reconciliation with God. Present goodness cannot atone for past sin.

It's just not logical. Second question. Why is the standard moral perfection? None of us meets the description here.

Why does God set the bar so high? It doesn't actually seem very fair. God didn't expel man from his presence because he's full of hate.

[ 39 : 03 ] That would be some conclusions. I don't think that's what we are able to discern from the scriptures. He did so because he's absolutely holy.

psalm 5 and verse 4 I quoted it a moment ago. It affirms that sinners can't dwell with God but why is that? We shouldn't understand the relationship of sinners to God the same way that we might understand the relationship of kryptonite to Superman for you comic nerds.

Sometimes we equate it that way. That's not the way we need to think about this. Sin isn't a disease that God can catch. It's not a weapon that can destroy him.

Sinners can't harm God. But they can't enter his presence without him harming them. Moving to swift eternal judgment.

So we need to understand that God's inerrant holiness and perfection. It demands that he judge sin and those who are guilty of it.

[ 40 : 16 ] It demands it. If he is not just in judging sin then he is not holy himself. And yet we know he's holy and we know he's just.

We also need to understand that God's holiness is in relation to his loving grace. You can't have one without the other. Think again. Adam and Eve.

He could have just simply killed them. I mean why not start over? Why go through all of this? They ate the fruit. He said they would surely die.

Why not just destroy them and start over? But he doesn't do that. They go on to live very long lives, fruitful lives. Have you ever wondered why that is?

It's God's loving grace at work. God cast Adam and Eve from his presence because for them to remain in his presence as sinners would require immediate judgment.

[ 41 : 19 ] But God in his great love and grace gave them life, time for repentance and restoration. Moral perfection is not one of many options and God just happens to choose that and apply it to our situation.

No, there actually are no options. It's the only possible standard there could be because God is perfectly holy.

Third question, is there any hope for us? Is there any hope? If we take Psalm 15, on its own, it's bleak.

It's very bleak. We can't take Psalm 15 on its own. We have to look at it in relation to the whole Bible. And the good news of the gospel is that we don't actually have to earn our way into God's presence.

This is, I think, more wonderful than sometimes we allow ourselves to feel. we feel the weight of the sinful part. We feel the weight of the fact that we have sinned against God in our very nature.

[ 42 : 36 ] We deserve His judgment. We feel that, but then it's almost as if sometimes we don't allow ourselves to feel the wonder of this part, which is that you don't have to earn your way to His presence.

He has made a way. He has opened the door. We didn't even ask for it. He just did it. Why? Because He loves us. Because He loves you.

He's made a way. He's opened a door. And then He invites you to turn from that rebellion, to walk in His way by faith. What is the way?

What is that door? It's Jesus. John 14 6, Jesus says it right away. I am the way. I'm the truth.

I'm the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. Now notice, going back all the way to the beginning of the sermon, notice what Jesus doesn't say. He doesn't say no one comes to heaven except through me.

[ 43 : 42 ] He doesn't say no one experiences pleasure unless they come through me. Those things are true. That's not what He says.

What does He say? No one can get to God's holy hill. No one can sojourn in His tent. No one can be at peace with Him unless they come through me.

I'm the way. And then He says in John 10, I'm the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved.

This is a promise, even more than it's an invitation.

salvation. Jesus states fact. I am salvation. If you come to me and you come to God through me, you will be saved.

There's no question. You don't have to wonder. You don't have to look at your life and say, well, did I do enough? You don't have to look at your life and say, well, was I too bad in this area or I still messed it up?

[ 44 : 42 ] No. Your goodness isn't the door. Jesus is the door. And he says, if you will walk through his door, you will be saved.

It's a guarantee. It's good news. It should come as no surprise to us then, based on our study of these first 15 Psalms, that only the blessed man of Psalm 1 and the anointed king of Psalm 2 and the exalted man of Psalm 8 perfectly fulfills Psalm 15.

What is it that I'm always telling you? The scriptures, they're all about Jesus. They all take us to Jesus. Why?

Because he is the way. He's the way. And while who, in Psalm 15 1 is generic, embracing every person who matches the portrait, we know that only Jesus has done so to perfection.

And indeed he has. Only he meets the qualifications here. And it is only through him that we can be reconciled to God.

[ 45 : 59 ] You say, how can we know that Jesus actually did enough? Well, great question. I know that my Redeemer lives.

And all my life is bound to his. That's the answer. It's in the resurrection that we know the answer. You ever known anyone else to be raised from the dead because they perfectly fulfilled the law of God?

No. Because it hasn't happened except one time. And it was Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, born of a virgin, who lived a perfect life, who lived the life we were meant to live, but failed to live. And then died the death that we deserve to die so that we might be saved. Don't you see? Don't you see?

His atonement is sufficient. He has made peace between God and man.

[ 47 : 12 ] It's done. Nothing else is left. And he just says, come. He says, come.

He invites us to be reconciled to God. God. And how do we do that? Stop pursuing your moralism. Stop pursuing Christianity as a thing.

Turn from your sin, or at least your disposition towards sin, and come to him. Trust that what he's done is sufficient.

Follow him as Savior and Lord. no one whom God has not regenerated in heart will do that. And you may feel the tug of that now.

It's not because you're just finally getting it. That's the work of God in your life. Don't ignore that. Come to him.

[ 48 : 21 ] Fourth question, importantly. do these qualities still matter if we're safe in Christ? Do the qualities still matter if we're safe in Christ?

So, one argument might be, well, grace, salvation, and forgiveness that comes from Jesus is for the sins that I've committed, the sins that I am committing, and the sins that I will commit.

And to that we say, amen. Yes, that's true. Some would look at that and they would then conclude that, well, then I don't have to be really all that concerned about sinning.

That's not what the Bible presents to us though, is it? We need to see Psalm 15 first through the lens of the gospel. But that doesn't mean that we shouldn't strive to attain something of the portrait of holiness that's painted here.

Our acceptance with God is based solely and entirely on the righteousness of Christ. But he desires to conform his people to the image of his son.

[ 49 : 36 ] You say, well, what's the image of Christ? Psalm 15 is. You're saying, God wants me to try to be like that? Yeah. Not as a means of earning your way into his good graces, but because you're already there.

because he's already saved you. Hebrews chapter 12 and verse 14 is so helpful here. Here's what the writer says. Strive for peace with everyone, he says, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

I want you to think about that. strive for the holiness! We might say, without which no one will dwell on his holy hill, without which no one will sojourn in his tent.

Here's what the writer does not mean. He does not mean that we must reach a measure of holiness to see the Lord. He's acknowledging that positionally that holiness has already been applied to those who are in Christ.

His instruction then is that we continue striving to live up to the holiness that has been credited to us by grace.

[ 50 : 56 ] Isn't that helpful? What does salvation do? It makes you free to do righteousness because you're already positionally righteous in Christ.

That's not what's at stake here. And the writer says, so here's what we do as believers. We strive to live up to that. Not as a means of salvation, but because we want to honor our Lord.

Because we want to please him. Because we want to be like him. Though we'll never reach perfection, we must if we are to be obedient.

be as holy as possible. Which is why Paul says this to the Philippians in Philippians chapter 3. He acknowledges not that I have already obtained this, this measure, this stature of holiness, and it's not that I'm already perfect, but I press on to make it my own.

Because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Oh, do you see it? it's the same thing the author of Hebrews is saying. Paul says, Christ has made me his own.

[ 52 : 11 ] He's cleaned me up without any merit on my part. And since he's made me his own, I want to strive to be like him.

Brothers, I do not consider that I've made it my own. He's not where he wants to be. But one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind, straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on.

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. And now notice what he says, Christian, let those of us who are mature, spiritually mature, let us think this way.

If we are going to live as spiritually mature Christians, we will pursue holiness, not justify worldliness. If you're in Christ, God has blessed you with the most amazing gift.

It's the indwelling presence of his Holy Spirit. David asked, who will dwell with you, God?

[ 53 : 25 ] The New Testament tells us God still dwells with us. And he dwells in us, those he's redeemed.

Here's the blessing. Do you know what the Holy Spirit does? The Holy Spirit, he's freed you from the bondage of sin.

You're free. Truly free. And he's working in you to transform your affections day by day.

He is enabling your righteousness. He has given you power to live according to Psalm 15.

Therefore, keep in step with him. That's what Paul says. Keep in step with the Spirit. Walk in the Spirit, he says, and you will not satisfy the desires of the flesh, but you will live according to what God has saved you to live.

[ 54 : 31 ] Thank you.