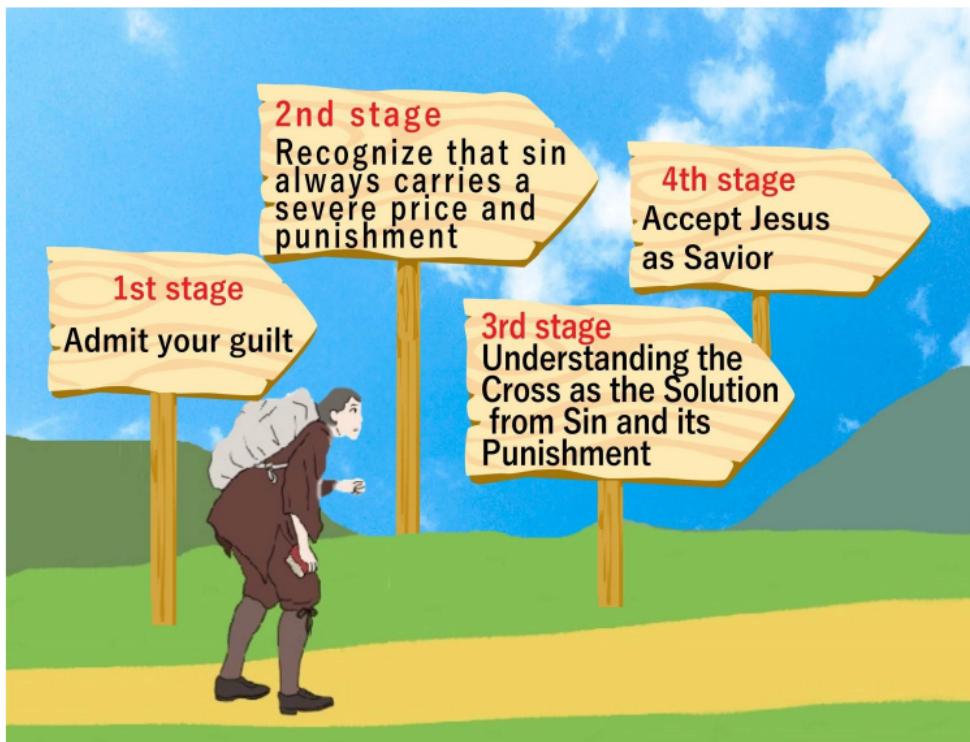


A journey of truth

## The four steps to salvation



## **The Journey Toward Salvation**

### **Introduction (Seeking the Way of Faith)**

The English writer John Bunyan left behind an immortal masterpiece of Christian literature called The Pilgrim ' s Progress.

It describes the journey of a believer who longs for eternity, a pilgrimage that continues until he reaches the heavenly city.

In the same way, every human being has, at least a few times before death, thought seriously about the world after death and about salvation.

Here, we will explain in four stages how a non-Christian person can go through certain processes and changes to finally reach salvation.

#### **Stage 1: Recognizing and Admitting One's Own Sin**

Romans 3:23 – "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

This first stage of salvation is like standing at the starting point of the journey toward salvation.

Until now, some people may never have cared about religion, God, sin, death, or what happens after death.

But at a certain point, they begin to feel concerned about these things.

This is the beginning of an encounter with Jesus.

In the verse mentioned above, how many people does it say have sinned? Half of the people? Or perhaps 80%? No. It clearly says 100% of people—that is, all people have sinned.

There are no exceptions.

No matter how good, respectable, or excellent a person may appear, the Bible says that all people are sinners.

Because of this sin, people are cut off from God.

And so they cannot receive God's glory—things such as grace, blessing, satisfaction, peace, true salvation, and eternal life.

Instead, they suffer.

This is where human struggle begins.

At this point, a question naturally arises: What exactly is sin?

In general, many people think of sin as crimes that are visible on the outside.

We imagine something that involves police or courts.

That is, sin is confirmed only when actions and evidence can be seen.

However, the Bible's concept of sin (SIN) has a much wider meaning.

It includes not only visible sins on the outside, but also invisible sins of the heart.

In fact, the sins inside the heart are the cause, and the sins seen on the outside are the result.

The two cannot be separated—they belong together.

So even hidden moral sins inside the heart, things that trouble the conscience, are also sin.

How much of that inner sin comes out in actions depends on the person.

But the inner sin will always eventually appear outside.

Terrible visible sins such as murder or violence are not the only sins.

Sin already begins with hatred before killing.

It is not only when we steal that we sin—the very desire and evil thoughts in the heart are already seeds of sin.

As it says in Mark 7:20–23,

“What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

Thus the Bible says: every person is polluted by sin and evil, and is a sinner.

Sin can also be compared to dirt on the body.

The problem is that dirt on the body can be washed away with water, but sin—the dirt of the heart and spirit—cannot be cleansed by human effort.

Sin only continues to cling to us, and we cannot wash it away ourselves.

That is why sin is the most troublesome problem for human beings.

Why, then, can people not separate themselves from sin?

It is because sin has two faces.

One face of sin is tragedy, destruction, and ruin.

The source of all human troubles in this world—war, murder, fighting, hatred—comes from the sin inside people.

The other face of sin is that it looks enjoyable, interesting, even romantic, and often becomes a convenient tool for life.

This makes people unable to live without sin.

And so sin never disappears.

## **Stage 2: Realizing That Sin Always Brings Severe Consequences and Judgment**

Hebrews 9:27 – “And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment.”

The second stage of salvation is like a person finally taking a first step forward after standing at the starting point of salvation.

Someone who has never cared about death or judgment after death suddenly begins to think about these things.

The verse above tells us that there are already two events appointed for every person.

One is death, which everyone admits.

The other is that after death comes judgment, and through judgment comes punishment.

This means that as a result of sin, there will surely be death and judgment after death.

There is always a severe cost.

This is true even in this world.

Sin does not naturally disappear.

It cannot simply be forgotten or erased at death.

To think so is only a selfish excuse and a false hope.

The Bible strongly denies such an idea.

Earlier we said that one face of sin is cruelty.  
Sin causes cruel suffering to others.  
But not only that—it also comes back cruelly upon the person who commits it.

In other words, sin will eventually return to oneself in the form of judgment, punishment, destruction, and hell.  
That is why sin is fearful.  
And in a certain sense, it is thoroughly just.

For example, sin can be compared to a hunting dog.  
Once the dog sees its prey, it will never let it go.  
It will certainly catch and kill it.

By knowing this cruel nature of sin, we will treat sin more seriously.

Yet why do people continue to sin and refuse to separate from it?

This is like criminal psychology.  
People think, "I will never be caught. I will never pay for my sin."

It is true that sometimes in this world there are crimes that remain hidden.  
But before God, there is no perfect crime.  
There is no way to escape.

Jesus also said in Matthew 7:13,

"Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many."

This verse shows that there are two kinds of people in this world.

The first are those walking on the narrow way with Jesus, in the procession of salvation.

The second are those walking in a long line on the wide road.

This road has no salvation or true life.

It is a line of death leading to the cliff of eternal destruction.

On this road, the devil walks with them.

He disguises himself like an angel, deceiving and tempting people so that they will never leave this path.

He tries to drag them all the way to hell.

Originally, hell was not for humans but for the judgment of the devil.

But the devil struggles to take humans with him there.

The famous Christian scholar and writer C. S. Lewis once said:

"The road to hell is smooth, without sharp turns, without bumps or cliffs. Many people walk this road of destruction comfortably every day."

If you continue to follow this procession of death, you will eventually face the cliff of destruction when you least expect it.

Therefore, you must leave this procession of death and enter the procession of life, salvation, and heaven.

God desires for every person, without exception, to move onto the way of salvation.

Even without realizing it, people are walking on the road of destruction.

Before your life ends, you must move from this line of death into the line of life leading to heaven.

We often think too lightly about hell and its punishment.

In Luke 16, the Bible tells the story of a poor man named Lazarus who entered heaven, and a rich man who was sent to Hades (hell).

The rich man was in unbearable torment and begged for even a drop of water.

But that place was completely cut off.

No one could help him, and he could not help anyone.

Hell is a place with no hope, no escape, no second chance.  
Instead of hope, there is endless despair.  
Instead of opportunity, there is unending regret.  
Instead of joy, there is unbearable pain.  
Instead of true freedom, there is eternal bondage.

This is the real voice of Hades, speaking to you today.

### **Stage 3: Understanding the Cross as the Solution for Sin and Its Punishment**

1 Peter 3:18 – "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit."

The third stage of salvation can be compared to reaching 80 or 90 percent of the journey.

It is a very important step.

When humans sin, they are cut off from God.

As a result, they lose God's blessings, strength, joy, and salvation.

Then, without realizing it, they begin to feel fear of death, fear of life after death, a thirst in the soul, emptiness, and suffering.

To solve this, people try to find their own way of salvation. They struggle by doing good deeds, giving donations, or practicing religious rituals.

The philosopher and Christian Blaise Pascal said that because of this, humans are weak, yet also great.

But can people really find the complete way of salvation by themselves through such efforts?

Are good works, donations, or religious practices truly the way of salvation?

The Bible clearly says that people cannot create the perfect way of salvation on their own.

Many think that people are saved by doing good works.

But in Ephesians 2:8–9, it says:

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

Good works are not the condition of salvation, but the result of salvation, an expression of thanksgiving.

In fact, a society or family based only on good deeds may be the harshest place for humans.

Because true salvation does not come from good deeds.

Humans are not recognized because of doing good things. Rather, true happiness comes from being loved and forgiven regardless of deeds.

If people who cannot do good and suffer from sin are told again that they must do good works in order to be saved, that itself is a contradiction.

That is not true happiness, salvation, or healing.

It is only a heavier burden.

So the conclusion is this: by human strength, we cannot create the way of salvation.

Therefore, the God of the Bible had to make the way of salvation Himself, to save humans from sin and its judgment.

As 1 Peter 3:18 says, Christ died on the cross, not for His own sins, but for the sins of the unrighteous.

He took our place.

Through this, our sins are forgiven.

We can move from destruction to eternal life.

And not only did Jesus die for our sins, but He also rose again on the third day.

This resurrection proves that Jesus is not a man ruled by death, but the true God who rules over death itself.

Therefore, those who believe in Jesus will not end in death. They will also rise again like Christ and enter heaven.

This is eternal life—the life that continues even when the body dies.

In this world, death seems to have the greatest power, making everything powerless.

But the resurrection of Christ is the ultimate power that makes death itself powerless.

The important truth is this:

God put Jesus Christ on the cross to die for your sins, so that you could be forgiven and saved.

Jesus paid this precious price so that you could be saved.

To understand the meaning of the cross is to come very close to salvation.

But this alone is not the completion of salvation.

Finally, you must receive Jesus Christ into your heart as your personal Savior.

By expressing your faith in this way, you will truly enter into salvation.

## **Stage 4: Receiving Jesus as Your Savior**

**John 1:12 – “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”**

As we have said, the way of salvation through Jesus Christ is already prepared before you.

Through the cross of Christ, you can move from the line of destruction to the line of life and heaven.

It does not depend on your works.

This salvation is a gift from God, freely given by His grace.

In John 1:12, it is written that those who receive Him—that is, who believe in His name—are given the right to become children of God.

This is because Christ, on the cross, bore your sins and died, opening the way for reconciliation with God.

One day in a Sunday school, little children were asking their teacher many questions.

Finally, one child asked a tricky question:

“Teacher, how can I go to hell?”

The teacher was quite troubled.

But the child was listening very seriously.

The teacher realized the question was not meant to mock, so she thought carefully.

After a while, the teacher finally answered:  
"If you do nothing, you will go to hell."

Indeed, while we live in this world, unless we take steps of faith, we cannot move from the line of destruction to the line of life and heaven.

To move from death to life, you must receive Jesus Christ—the only perfect solution for your sins and punishment—into your heart as your Savior.

When you do, Jesus will enter into your heart.  
You will become a child of God, and you will be saved.

I strongly encourage you to make this decision, to move into the line of eternal life and salvation.

If you feel ready, let us pray together the following "Prayer of Receiving Jesus."

Confess your sins, repent, and choose to turn from this world to Jesus.

If you have this desire, please join in the prayer below.

Of course, if your heart is not yet ready, you may wait until another time.

Do not feel forced.

Only those who wish to pray, please do so with a sincere and reverent heart.

Read the following prayer slowly as you pray:

### **Prayer of Receiving Jesus**

Lord Jesus, I now know that I am a sinner.  
I confess my sins, repent, and turn my life in a new direction.  
Please have mercy on me and forgive me from my sins.

Now I welcome Jesus, who became the perfect solution for  
my sins and punishment,  
into my heart as my Savior.

Please come into my heart.  
Lead my life from now on.

I pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

### **Conclusion**

What choice have you made?  
If you prayed to receive Jesus, you have made the greatest  
decision possible in this life.  
Congratulations from my heart.

Jesus promises in Revelation 3:20:

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me."

When we repent of our sins and receive Him as our Savior, He comes into our hearts.

Then we are given the right to become children of God.

This means you are saved and have become part of God's family.

Let us now help this newborn faith and eternal life grow into rich fruit.

If there is a church near you, please join worship.

Also begin reading the Bible personally and praying.

Surely, your life will change completely from what it was before.

It will become a life full of richness and overflowing with hope.

May God's blessing be upon you.

The Path to Salvation: Four Stages

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