

\$10 Words: Churchy Terms You Always Wanted to Know but Were Afraid to Ask.

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The Good News (gospel) of Jesus is a simple truth! Allow me to paraphrase a verse from the Bible:

“God loved you so much that He sacrificed His son so that you could simply believe and accept that act and live with Him forever in Heaven.”¹

Then why do people make this truth from God’s Word so complicated? Well, obviously, the Creator of the universe is in many ways far beyond our comprehension. We will spend eternity exploring and learning the “deep things” of God. Fortunately for finite-brained people like me, living in the here and now, the important parts of the Bible are quite simple. *The main things are the plain things, and the plain things are the main things.*²

There are daffodils in full bloom along our driveway this morning. I could spend several years studying the physiology that allows them to photosynthesize carbon into sugars or dwell on the complexities of plant pollination and reproduction. It would take a lot of technical terms to discuss these scientific concepts. For the moment, though, I think I’ll just forget about those hidden processes and simply enjoy the beauty of daffodils.

In much the same way, I can accept and appreciate the “main thing” of the gospel: *Jesus’s sacrifice (his death on the cross) allows Him to become Lord of my life and save me from sin and the punishment I deserve.* If, however, I want to dig deeper into what Jesus did for me, the Bible has a lot to say about that as well. Most of these actions are not easily observed. They happen in our inner self or are changes in God’s relationship with us. It’s often difficult to comprehend things we can’t see or touch, but as we grow in faith, it’s good to know these as well. Here are some of the terms used to describe these “deeper” truths...

Salvation – I was born with a sinful nature. I selfishly choose to do some bad things and not to do some good things. In God’s perfect realm, a rebel like me would really mess things up. God can’t allow me to mess up Heaven. Since I am an eternal being, the only other eternal place for me is Hell (a place separated from God, prepared for the devil.) **Salvation** is Jesus “saving” me from this situation.

Redemption (paid for) – We often hear of how one who has committed a crime now owes a “debt” to society. Justice demands that the criminal pay back that debt at some price (typically time served in prison). My sins resulted in a debt that

¹ John 3:16

² Alistair Begg

I owed to a perfect God. Although the love of God could overlook that debt, the justice of God demanded a suitable payment. Sadly, my finite resources would never be enough to pay for sins against an infinite God. Jesus's death *redeemed* me. His act of **redemption** paid my debt to God.

Reconciliation (made right with) – My sins *and* my sinful nature made me an enemy of God. Even though he still loved me, my relationship with him was broken. Jesus's sacrifice **reconciled** me to God. I am no longer God's enemy but His friend!

Regeneration (made alive) – In my sinful state, I was “spiritually dead.” Just as a dead man can't respond to the living, there was no way my dead spirit could respond to God's living Spirit. When I made Jesus my Lord and Savior, His sacrifice **regenerated** me by bringing my spirit to life.

Justification (declared not guilty) – Because of my sins *and* my sinful nature, I was guilty in God's sight. After believing and accepting Jesus as my Lord and Savior, God placed my guilt on Jesus and placed Jesus's righteousness on me. (A very unfair trade!) While Jesus was on the cross, God saw my sins ON HIS SON and justly punished Him for them (and those of the rest of humankind). When God considers me, however, he sees only the perfect righteousness of His Son, Jesus.

Adoption (made a legal child) – We often hear, “We're all God's children!” True, all humans are derived from Adam and Eve who were creations of God, but there is only one way to be a true child of God—accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Sanctification (being separated from sin) – The moment of my salvation, God saw me as justified, redeemed, reconciled, forgiven, adopted, and regenerated. However, I was not instantly righteous and sinless. Since that point in my life, God has been in the process of making me more and more like Jesus.

To “sanctify” literally means to “set apart” or to “separate from.” God uses life experiences to set us apart for His purposes and to separate us from our sins. The word “sanctify” is related to the word “holy.” God is altogether holy and wants His children to be, also. Sometimes, my sanctification is slow because I am still selfish and rebellious. The Holy Spirit constantly helps me to be separate from these sins. I have the promise that someday in Heaven I will be “wholly” holy just as God is!

I'm so thankful that the gospel of Jesus is simple enough for a 10-year-old boy to understand! I'm equally thankful that God gives me glimpses of all the complex changes He initiates and accomplishes in building an eternal relationship with me. I'll spend an eternity experiencing more and more of His love and nature.

How Can I Be Saved?

God loves you and desires to have a relationship with you forever. The problem, however, is that we are born under the curse of the Fall. We sin (fall short of God's requirements for righteousness) because we are sinners, born with a fallen nature that cannot know holy goodness. Our sin has separated us from God. We are not able to know him personally or experience his love. Scripture tells us, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). It also says, "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). This spiritual death forces a separation from God and leaves us to continue on our way to an eternity in hell.

But because of his perfect and undeserved love, God created a way to save us by sending his son to pay the price for our sin. "God showed his own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). This is our only hope! Jesus said "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

It isn't enough that we know these truths, we must individually place our trust in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. By turning from our sins and trusting Christ's sacrifice, we can know God personally and experience His love. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

You can receive Jesus by faith "If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart, one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation" (Romans 10:9-10).

Scriptures with More Information...

Salvation

John 14:6 - Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

1 Thessalonians 5:9-10 - For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him.

Redemption

Romans 6:23 - For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Peter 1:18-19 - For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

Ephesians 1:7-8 - In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us.

Reconciliation

Romans 5:10 - For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

Regeneration

Titus 3:5 - He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 5:17 - Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Adoption

John 1:12-13 - But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

Sanctification

Philippians 1:6 - And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 - Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.