

# God's Forgiveness and Sorrow for Sin



## SABBATH—MAY 30

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Isaiah 64:6; Hosea 6; Acts 3:18, 19; Exodus 34:1–10; Romans 5:8; Matthew 22:1–14.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “But if we confess our sins, God will forgive us. We can trust God to do this [forgive]. He always does what is right. He will make us clean from all the wrong things we have done” (1 John 1:9, ERV).



God's people went to Aaron's tent and asked him to make a statue they could worship.

**THE ISRAELITES** wondered when they would get to the Promised Land. The Israelites camped under the tall cloud on the desert plain. Many days ago, Moses went into the thick, dark cloud that covered the top of the mountain. No one saw him since. Was Moses dead? Did he starve to death in the cloud? Or did he die in the fire on the mountaintop? The crowd who left Egypt with the Israelites was unhappy. They were upset that they had to wait so long in the desert. They were ready to move to the land filled with milk and honey. A few days before, God's people promised to obey Him. But now they wanted a God or leader they could see. So, they went to Aaron's tent and asked him to make a statue they could worship. Aaron was afraid the people would hurt him if he didn't help them. So, he agreed to do what they wanted. In Exodus 32–34, we read what happens next in this sad story.

This story teaches us about confessing our sins and God's forgiveness. Think about the memory verse as you read each day's study. Yes, we sin. But God made a plan to save us. Thanks to Jesus' death on the cross, God offers to forgive us. But we must confess our sins first. We also must ask for the Holy Spirit's help to stop sinning.

## A BUSY LIFE (Isaiah 64:6)

A young mother had many chores to do before Sabbath. But so many things got in the way. On Sabbath morning, the young mother woke up early. She noticed the bathroom was dirty. So, she cleaned it real fast. She also saw that her young son wet his bed. So, she put his sheets into the washer with other dirty laundry. Then she made breakfast. She remembered that she didn't make any dessert for Sabbath lunch. So, she baked banana bread. Her husband needed a shirt ironed for church. So, she did that, too. Then she folded some clean clothes and took out the trash.

Then the young mother thought, "What am I doing?! It's Sabbath! I love this day better than any other day! But I'm letting all these things get in the way of coming close to God in my heart. That's what Sabbath is really about."

For just a few seconds, the young mother started to make excuses for her behavior. All those chores needed to be done, right? Or did they really? She knew that she was behaving the same as Jesus' friend Martha. Martha "became angry because she had so much work to do" (Luke 10:40, ICB). But Jesus said to Martha, " 'You have troubles in your mind [are worried] about many things. But only one thing is really important. That is what Mary has chosen to do. Nobody will take it [what she chose] away from her' " (Luke 10:41, 42, EASY). **One thing is really important:** spending time with Jesus. But not just on Sabbath. We must spend time with Him daily. The young mother loved God. But she forgot that He gave her the Sabbath as a gift to make their relationship strong. Tears fell from her eyes as she stood in the kitchen.

This story is not about what we should or shouldn't do on the Sabbath. This story helps us remember why we must not let anything break our relationship with God. When our hearts feel pain from sin and separation, Jesus is very close (Psalm 53:2). Jesus holds white clothes in His hands. Jesus sees our tears. He knows we feel sorry for our sins. Jesus takes away our sins, the same as dirty clothes. Then Jesus puts the clean white clothes around us. These clothes are an example of how Jesus obeyed God. Jesus' perfect life covers us the same as white clothes.

**What do Isaiah 64:6; Zechariah 3:4; and Isaiah 61:10 promise us? Why must we hold on tight to these promises? What do these verses teach us about Jesus' perfect life of obedience? Why is this life so important to us?**



**Jesus puts the clean white clothes around us. These clothes are an example of how Jesus obeyed God. Jesus' perfect life covers us the same as white clothes.**

## THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK IN OUR HEARTS (Hosea 6)



“Every sin we do nails Jesus back on the cross again.”

A husband thought about the problems between him and his wife. The man knew he hurt his wife badly. He said some mean things that he was sorry for. But his next thought was, “It was her fault! Didn’t she behave badly, too?”

Do you think and feel this way sometimes? It’s easy for us to feel sorry for our bad behavior one moment and then try to blame someone else for it later on. Of course, saying “I’m sorry” when we do wrong isn’t always easy. But saying we are sorry is so important. Saying sorry helps heal our broken relationships and makes them strong again.

The same is true for us and God. The Holy Spirit helps us to understand when we sin. The Holy Spirit helps us to confess our sins to God. So, we must pay attention to Him when He talks to our heart. We must not make excuses for our bad behavior. One of the Holy Spirit’s jobs is to tell people “the truth about sin” (John 16:8, ICB, also read verse 7). The Holy Spirit is a wonderful gift from God! For sure, we need the Holy Spirit to help us to heal our relationship with God when we let sin separate us from Him.

**Read Hosea 6. What does God invite His people to do in this chapter? Also, what does God say about Himself?**

The Holy Spirit helps us reconnect to Jesus, the Vine (John 15:4). “We often feel sorry when our bad behavior causes us to suffer. But this sorrow isn’t the same thing as feeling sorry for hurting God because we sinned. Real sorrow for sin is the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. The Spirit shows us that we aren’t thankful enough to God. When we hurt the Savior, the Holy Spirit helps us to come back to Jesus. Every sin we do nails Jesus back on the cross again. . . . The Holy Spirit helps us feel sorry for sins that cause Jesus fresh pain. When we feel sorry for our sins, we will give them up and reject them.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 300, adapted.

For sure, our relationship with God can’t grow when we hold on to sin in our hearts. When the Spirit shows us our sins, we must give them up with His help (Ephesians 4:30).

**When was the last time you answered God’s invitation to give up sin and reject it completely? Spend some time right now in prayer. Ask God to open your heart to what He says to you this week in the Bible.**

## REAL SORROW FOR SIN (Acts 3:18, 19)

Popular advice today tells us to do whatever we want. God's advice is different. God invites us to serve Him. God asks us to empty our hearts of pride (Matthew 5:5) and to reject sin. That's what Jesus and John the Baptist tell us. John says, " 'Change your hearts and lives because the kingdom of heaven is coming soon' " (Matthew 3:2, ICB; also read verse 1). What did Jesus say? " 'The time has come,' he said. The kingdom of God is here. Stop your wrong ways, turn back to God and believe the good news' " (Mark 1:15, WE; also read verse 14 and Luke 24:46, 47). The kingdom of heaven was near. So, Jesus and John told people to reject sin. Do you think this message is important to us today?

**Why is rejecting sin so important to spiritual growth? Read Acts 3:18, 19 for the answer. Verse 19 talks about "the time will come when the Lord will make everything new" (NIV). What is the time of making "everything new"?**

God's love causes us to reject sin (Romans 2:4). Rejecting sin has two parts: (1) We feel deeply sorry for our sins. (2) We decide to get rid of sin completely. In the Bible, sorrow for sin almost always is connected to forgiveness (1 John 1:9; Revelation 3:19). Before Jesus comes back, God gives us time to confess and come back to Him (2 Peter 3:9).

Jesus suffered, died, and woke up from the dead for us. When we reject sin, He can work a miracle in our lives. Popular wisdom today tells us we are fine just as we are. But God asks us to reject sin and come to Him in faith (Acts 20:21). He will change our lives. Then we can share His love with people (John 15:2, 8; Matthew 3:8).

"When you are sorry for sin, you will become a new person in Jesus. Do you want Jesus' perfect life of obedience to cover your sin? Then you must confess and reject that sin first. Jesus' perfect life of obedience will change your heart and control your behavior."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pages 555, 556, adapted.

**When we confess and reject sin, God fills us with His life. Do you want your relationship with God to grow strong? Then you must do three things: (1) Give your whole life to God. (2) Confess and reject sin. (3) Allow God to remove sin from your life. Which part is hardest for you?**



**God asks us to empty our hearts of pride (Matthew 5:5) and to reject sin. That's what Jesus and John the Baptist tell us.**

**ALL WE NEED ARE GOD’S LOVE AND FORGIVENESS  
(Romans 5:8)**



**Jesus stands at the ‘door’  
of our hearts and knocks  
(Revelation 3:20).**

Does your heart sometimes feel heavy from the guilt of all your sins? Allow the Holy Spirit to lead you to the foot of the cross. There, ask for God’s forgiveness. Remember, “The LORD is kind to people and he forgives them. He is slow to get angry and his love always continues” (Psalm 103:8, EASY). God Himself said these same words in Exodus 34:6 after His chosen people sinned against Him.

**Read Exodus 34:1–10. What important truth do you read about in these verses?**

The Lord is filled with love and forgiveness. He is kind and patient. These are the reasons Jesus died on the cross. Jesus died to fix our broken relationship with God.

But first we must be willing to confess our sin. Then Jesus can remove our sin from us. He waits for us to say, “ ‘God, have pity on me! I am a sinner!’ ” (Luke 18:13, NLV). Before we cry to Him, Jesus is already working in us and for us. Jesus sees the heavy load of sin we carry in our hearts. He removes it from us at Calvary. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who goes looking for us. He stands at the ‘door’ of our hearts and knocks (Revelation 3:20). Why stay far away from God? Run to Jesus! Exchange your heavy load of sin for His life of perfect obedience (Zechariah 3:4).

**Slowly read the verses below. Write in your own words what they tell you about God’s love for you:**

**“If you serve sin as your master, it will pay you with death. But if you belong to our Lord Jesus Christ, God gives you a gift! That gift is life with God for ever” (Romans 6:23, EASY).**

**“God’s gift makes people right with him. . . . As a result [because God is kind], they will have life with God for ever, because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done” (Romans 5:21, EASY, also read verse 20).**

**“But God showed His love to us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8, NLV).**

**THE MOST EXPENSIVE CLOTHES (Matthew 22:1–14)**

People often wear nice clothes to show that they are rich. But in heaven, one thing matters: our relationships (Matthew 6:19–21). Who we are must be connected to who we know: Jesus and His life of perfect obedience.

**Read the picture story in Matthew 22:1–14. What messages do you read about in this picture story?**

Do you see that Jesus names this man ‘friend’? So, Jesus and this man have a relationship. The man knew about the wedding clothes. But he chose not to wear them. The wedding clothes are a symbol for Jesus’ life of perfect obedience. Jesus offers us this life as a gift. God gives His people “clothes to wear that are bright and clean. These special linen clothes show the good things that God’s holy people have done” (Revelation 19:8, EASY). These clothes have “no stain or wrinkle or any other flaw [spot or sin]” (Ephesians 5:27, NIV).

Jesus gives the wedding clothes “to everyone who accepts Him with faith as their personal Savior.”—Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 310, adapted.

Before Adam and Eve sinned, they wore white clothes made from soft light. After they sinned, they lost these clothes (Genesis 3:7). So, God made them something to wear. An animal needed to die so that God could make them clothes. In the same way, Jesus died so that we can put on His perfect life of obedience, the same as clothes. “Adam and Eve knew that they weren’t wearing clothes. They felt ashamed. So, they tried to replace their clothes made from light with clothes they sewed from fig leaves. . . . We can’t make anything to replace the clothes we lost in Eden. We can’t wear clothes made from fig leaves or any other cloth. Not when we sit down with Jesus and His angels at the Lamb’s marriage supper. God can accept us only when we wear the covering Jesus made for us. Jesus will put this covering on us. But we must be sorry for our sins and believe in Him. Then we can stand in front of God.”—Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 311, adapted.

**We must put on Jesus’ life of perfect obedience, the same as clothes. Why must we put on these ‘clothes’ daily? What does this symbol really mean? How do we do this?**



**The man knew about the wedding clothes. But he chose not to wear them.**



**A farmer breaks the ground, plants, and picks crops. In the same way, we must get the 'dirt' of our hearts ready for the Spirit to fall on us, the same as rain.**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** The Bible often uses symbols about farming to explain our spiritual growth. Hosea 10:12 shows us an example of a farming symbol. This symbol explains what we learned this week:

“Be like [the same as] a farmer who plants good seed. Plant things that are good and right.

Then your harvest [crops the farmer picks at the end of the growing season] will be [the same as] faithful [dependable] love.

Plough [plow] the hard ground and prepare it [get it ready] for the LORD to bless you.

It is time for you to turn back to the LORD.

Then he will bless you with good things, like rain that falls on the ground!” (EASY).

A farmer breaks the ground, plants, and picks crops. In the same way, we must get the ‘dirt’ of our hearts ready for the Spirit to fall on us, the same as rain. God helps get our hearts ready. But a relationship with God is a partnership (read Philippians 2:12, 13). So, we must come to God. We must hold on tight to Him. He will do the rest.

What does it mean to hold on tight to God? The Bible explains this idea: “You saw for yourselves what the LORD your God did at Baal-Peor. He killed every person among you who worshipped Baal there. But each of you who continued to trust the LORD your God is still [continues to be] alive today” (Deuteronomy 4:3, 4, EASY).

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① “Do not let us agree to do wrong things. Keep us safe from Satan” (Matthew 6:13, EASY). Jesus taught His followers to pray this way. But do we do it? How often do you ask God to protect you from sin and Satan?
- ② How do we put on Jesus’ perfect life of obedience, the same as clothes? How would you explain this idea to a non-Christian and a new Christian?
- ③ How does putting on Jesus’ perfect life of obedience, the same as clothes, help you to understand how God forgives us? How does this symbol help us to understand Jesus’ work in heaven for us right now? How well do you understand the beauty of this Bible truth?

## HEARING GOD WHILE COOKING PORRIDGE

**M**iriam was a 41-year-old mother in Zambia. She didn't feel well. Her head hurt. Her body ached. She was very unhappy.

With a sad heart, Miriam went to the first night of a week-long Bible program in the city of Livingstone. At the meeting, Miriam met a Seventh-day Adventist woman named Majorie. Miriam and Majorie became friends. Miriam told Majorie all about the pain she suffered. Miriam asked Majorie to pray for her.

Then something strange happened. The next day, Miriam was stirring a pot of corn porridge on a fire outside her house at 11 A.M. Lots of Zambians cooked outdoors because of a power shortage in the country. The shortage left many homes without electricity. As Miriam stirred, she heard a voice say, "Go read the Bible right now. Leave your pot and read the Bible."

Miriam didn't know what to read in the Bible. She went inside the house, opened her Bible, and read the first chapter she saw. The words touched her heart. She believed that God talked to her personally in the verses. Miriam closed the Bible and finished cooking the porridge outside. Then she went inside and read another chapter. She believed God was telling her, "Believe that I will always love you. Live how I want you to live."

Joy filled Miriam's heart. Her body aches went away. Her head pain was gone. She knelt down and prayed, "Forgive me, God."

Miriam went back to the Bible meeting that evening. She told Majorie what happened. Tears filled Majorie's eyes when she learned that Miriam heard the voice telling her to read the Bible at 11 A.M. At that exact time, Majorie prayed for Miriam.

Majorie told Miriam, "Spend time reading the Bible every day. Remember to pray all the time. The Bible and prayer are God's answer for everything."

Many months later, Miriam continues to read the Bible and to pray every day. She no longer feels sick. God replaced the sorrow in her heart with sunshine and joy. Now Miriam wants to live for God. Miriam says, "The Bible fills my heart with hope. God works through the Bible. If the devil tries to confuse my mind, I pray and ask God to keep His Bible promises to me."

This mission story shows part of the "I Will Go" plan for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which says: "Jesus met with people. He showed them love. He helped them. He took care of their needs. He won their trust. Then He invited people to follow Him." This plan teaches us to show interest in people, lead them to Jesus, and invite them to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Read more at [IWillGo.org](http://IWillGo.org). Watch a short YouTube show about Miriam at: [bit.ly/Miriam-IS](http://bit.ly/Miriam-IS).

## INSIDE *Story*



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**Miriam**