

What's so bad about a little sin? Jesus warned that one day He will say to those who have sinned, "Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41)." Our sin separates us from God and results in judgment and hell.

Don't we go to purgatory or live life over again to work it all out? The Bible says, "It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment (Hebrews 9:27)." There is no purgatory or second chance to undo our sins.

But doesn't God reward us for our good deeds? The Bible teaches that "All of our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment (Isaiah 64:6)." Even the good things we have done are tainted with sin and displease God.

So then, what's the solution? The Bible says, "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21)." Jesus loves us so much He died for sin and gives His righteousness to those who trust in Him!

How do we receive Christ's righteousness? By faith. The Bible says, "To the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness (Romans 4:5)." We are not forgiven by leading a good life or doing good deeds, but by having genuine faith in the work of Christ. This is a transformation the Bible calls being "born-again."

How do we become born-again? It is the result of God drawing us to Himself so that we call out to Him in faith. Romans 10:9 says, "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved." Being saved, being born-again, begins with calling out to the Lord in faith. Believe what the Bible says about you, your sin, and Christ's death on your behalf. Confess to God that you are a guilty, lost and helpless sinner. Sincerely ask Christ to save you, take His rightful place as the Lord of your entire life, enable you to turn from sin and to live for Him.

Now what? The Bible says, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name (John 1:12)." Those who trust Christ for their salvation are children of God! Get to know your Heavenly Father through prayer, the faithful study of His Word, and involvement in a good Bible-teaching church so that God can use you for His glory and your joy!



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THE STORY OF ST. PATRICK



- ❖ **Did St. Patrick actually drive *snakes* out of Ireland?**
- ❖ **What does St. Patrick have to do with the *Shamrock*?**
- ❖ **Why do we celebrate St. Patrick's Day on *March 17th*?**
- ❖ **What did St. Patrick do that made him one of the most well-known and beloved figures in Christianity?**

THE STORY OF ST. PATRICK

According to church tradition, Patrick was born in Britain around A.D. 385 while the country was under Roman rule. His real name was Maewyn Succat. At the age of 16 he was kidnapped and taken to Ireland as a slave and sold to a local landowner named Meliuc. For the next six years Patrick served as a slave shepherding sheep with little human contact.

Although the country was harsh and bleak, Patrick's childhood faith—learned from his Christian parents—sustained him. He wrote, "The love of God and His fear increased in me more and more, and the faith grew in me, and the spirit was roused, so that, in a single day, I have said as many as a hundred prayers, and in the night nearly the same, so that whilst in the woods and on the mountain, even before the dawn, I was roused to prayer and felt no hurt from it, whether there was snow or ice or rain." Under those harsh conditions, Patrick's childhood faith strengthened and matured and would one day enable him to reform a nation.

Patrick spent six years in slavery before he could escape and flee 200 miles to the south. There, in southern Ireland, Patrick found a ship preparing to sail to Britain.



When Patrick begged to be let aboard, the captain denied his passage. Patrick turned away and prayed for God's guidance. Before he finished his prayer, the ship's crew called him back to sail with them and soon he was in his homeland as a free man!

Yet Patrick's freedom was short-lived. As he was traveling through the countryside, he was captured by bandits and once more enslaved. Patrick's faith still sustained him and he felt reassured by the Lord that he would soon be free. Sure enough, after sixty days God delivered him!

Patrick maintained his humble faith in God and went on to study in a monastery for seven years, eventually becoming a bishop. Though living in freedom, Patrick never forgot his years in slavery. Instead of having bitterness about his trials, Patrick was burdened for the people of Ireland. The Lord wanted him to go back to them and preach the saving message of the Gospel. So in the winter of A.D. 432, Patrick returned to the land of his slavery—but this time as a missionary.

Church tradition records Patrick's boldness with the Gospel. At the time, Ireland was led by Druids. Patrick's zeal brought him before the king. In the king's presence the Druids mocked Patrick's religion. Tradition holds that Patrick plucked a shamrock and said, "Here, there is one stem but there are three leaves on it, so it is with the blessed Trinity. There is one God but three persons stemming from the same divinity." It is thought that this encounter with the brave missionary led the king to become a Christian.

Patrick continued to spread the gospel until his death around March 17th, A.D. 461. The Lord used Patrick's ministry so greatly that much of Ireland had converted to Christ. It is often said that he drove out the snakes from Ireland—usually thought to refer to the Druid pagans. While there are many legends about St. Patrick's amazing life, history is certain St. Patrick was a missionary spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ!



Today, we still need to hear the Gospel! The Bible says that we are separated from a holy God by our sin and will spend eternity apart from Him in hell. But there is good news! No matter how sinful we are, God has made a way for us to be reconciled to Him through faith in His son Jesus Christ. Through this faith in Jesus, we are forgiven and through this faith we become members of His family and citizens of His kingdom!

How did God make this possible? God accomplished this through the death of His Son, Jesus, who died on the cross to pay the penalty for sin. To be truly forgiven by God and to be reconciled to Him, you must return to the Lord in faith. Only when you repent and trust in His payment for your sins, will you receive forgiveness and eternal life.

Why are we separated from God? Romans 3:23 explains, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Everyone has sinned against God and our sins separate us from Him.

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