



LESSON 4

**Jesus
Christ—
Our Saviour**

1 Discuss how last week's challenge went.

Introduction

Last week, we looked at the divinity of Jesus—Jesus as Lord. Now we will look at what it means to say that Jesus is our Saviour. We will see the ultimate way in which Jesus, as Saviour, proves God's merciful love for each of us.

2 What kind of things did Jesus do during his public ministry on earth?

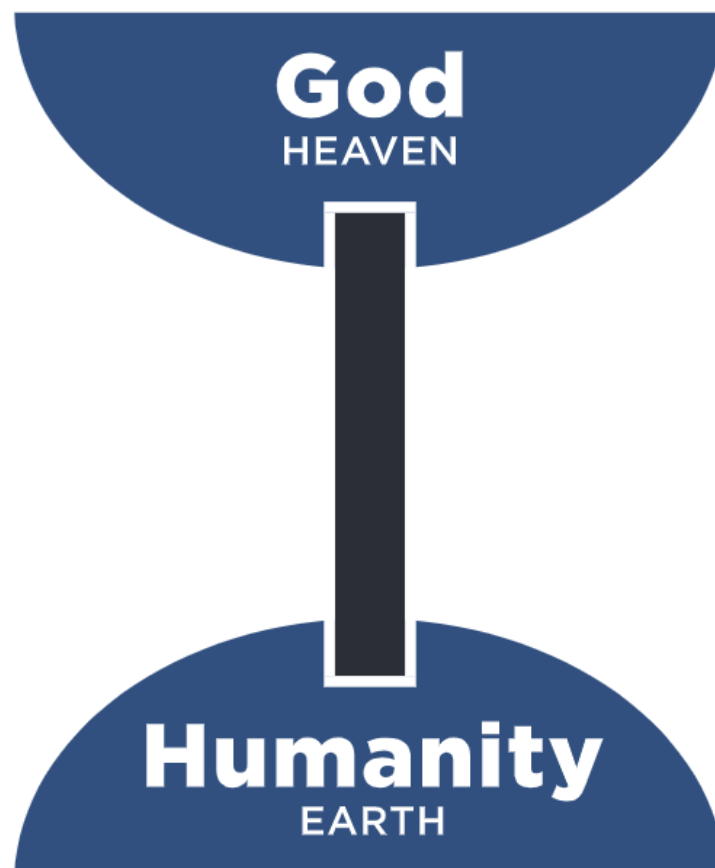
3 What do you think was Jesus' main reason for being on earth?

Bridging Earth to Heaven

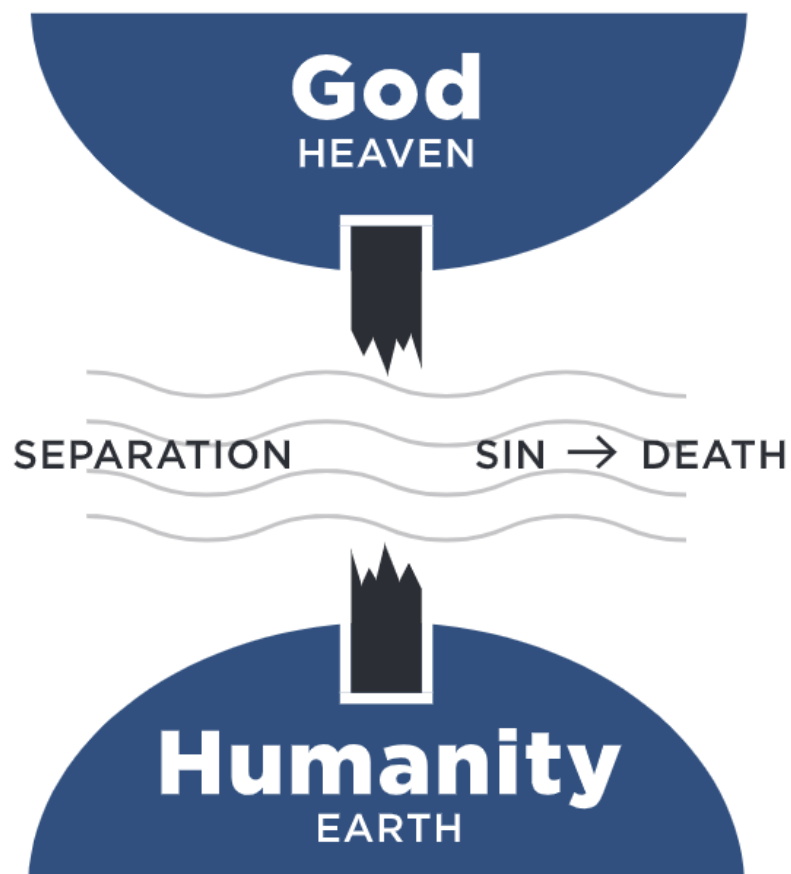
To help us better understand Jesus as Saviour, we will look at insights from St. Catherine of Siena, a Doctor of the Church. In her writings she shares a visual description of salvation which God revealed to her.

St. Catherine describes Adam and Eve and how they were created in God's image. In Eden, they tasted the beginnings of communion with God that would have grown as they spiritually matured, so that eventually, they would have fully known his eternal goodness, tenderness and love.

However, sin created irreparable problems; it caused an impassable division between God and man. St. Catherine describes this separation as a great, raging river that made it absolutely impossible for man to reach God, as much as man might try. This impassable, powerful river of sin leads to death. The picture painted at this point is very bleak indeed.



4 In light of this description and what you have already learned in Lesson 2, what are the results of sin?



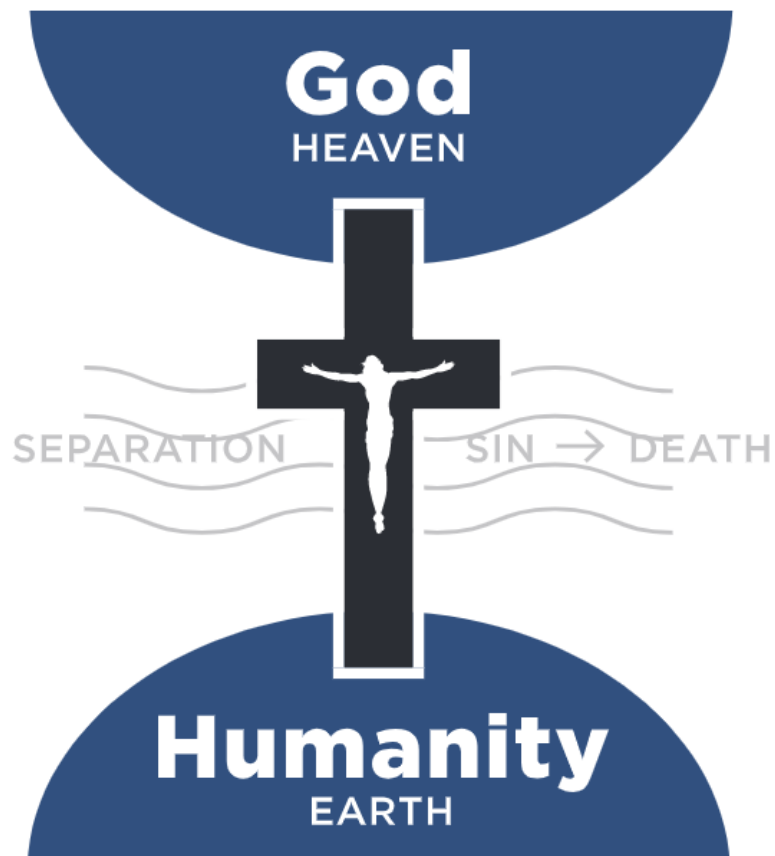
God the Father deals with the problem of sin by sending his Son into the world. Through his death on the cross, Jesus becomes a bridge so that we can reach heaven.

“ So I gave you a bridge, my Son, so that you could cross over the river, the stormy sea of this darksome life, without being drowned....And how foolish to choose to drown rather than accept the remedy I have given!...And why should he have made of himself a roadway? So that you might in truth come to the same joy as the angels. ”

St. Catherine of Siena: The Dialogue, p. 58-59

“ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross. ”

Colossians 1:19-20



5 How did Jesus' death on the cross deal with the problems sin created?

JOHN 1:29

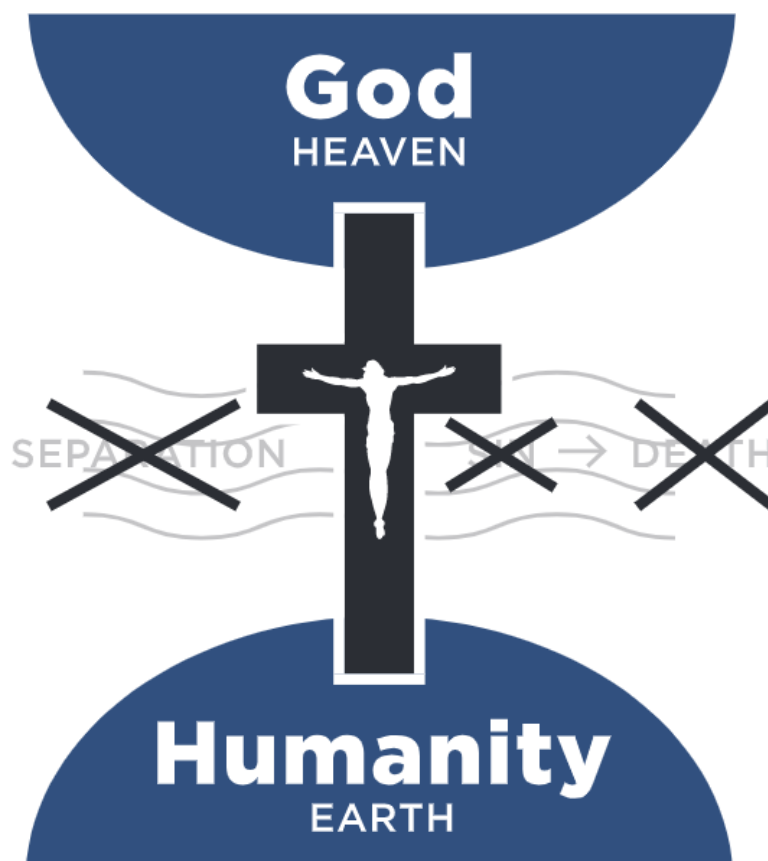
The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

ROMANS 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:18-19

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.



Why Jesus?

6 Read Romans 5:16-19. In light of these Scripture verses and the bridge illustration, why was humanity in need of God's help? In other words, why did we need Jesus to die for us?

And the free gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. If, because of the one man's trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

7 Jesus' death and resurrection restores our relationship with God. What prevents us from grasping how necessary Jesus is?

So far in the analogy, the bridge is in place but humanity and God remain separated. We have not yet crossed the chasm. In the next lesson, we will discuss why it is important to God—and vital for us—that we make it across the bridge to God's side.

Summary

Jesus Christ is the revelation of God's love and mercy. His love is capable of rescuing each of us from slavery to sin and death.

“ He alone makes it possible for every human person to share eternal life. ”

St. Pope John Paul II,
Message for World Mission Sunday 2005.

Living It Out

CHALLENGE

Share the bridge analogy with someone this week.

MEMORIZE ROMANS 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.