

Simple Evangelism Series #13
Make It Possible To Be Saved
By Bill Denton

INTRODUCTION

A. I sometimes use an illustration that helps me stay centered between extremes

1. It goes like this: a person can fall off the log at either end
 - a. technically, a person can fall off a log at any point on the log, but the point is that a log has two ends, and each represents the extreme of the other
 - b. extremes are seldom correct; truth lies between them, actually using a balance between two things
2. I think there are two extremes among unsaved people that make salvation very difficult
 - a. the first is that some people think they are too good to be saved
 - 1) they don't understand sin, or think their sins are all that bad
 - 2) they frequently compare themselves to others, and come out looking alright
 - 3) they can't figure out what all the fuss is about, and simply do not see themselves as all that "lost"
 - b. the second is that others think they are too bad to be saved
 - 1) they are overly sensitive to sin, guilt, responsibility, etc.
 - 2) you would think that is a good thing, but the key words here are "overly sensitive"
 - 3) they easily recognize themselves as having a problem but they can get to the point they don't think anything can be done about it
3. The two extremes (and minor versions of them) make it hard to reach people with the gospel
 - a. one person can't figure out why you're in such a dither to get them saved
 - b. the other can't figure out why you think God would ever want to forgive them

B. This brings us to one more element in our series on simple evangelism

1. Simply stated, we must learn how to make it possible to be saved
2. If you prepare to help people at each extreme, you'll probably help a lot of people somewhere in the middle

I. MAKING SALVATION POSSIBLE FOR PEOPLE WHO THINK THEY ARE TOO GOOD TO BE SAVED?

A. Teach them about the problem of sin

1. 1 John 3:4 -- 4 Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. NASU

- a. God's universe operates on the basis of laws
- b. when John wrote about sin, he defined it as lawlessness, that is, living outside God's law, or as if there were no law at all
- c. some think that ignorance of God's law makes their behavior permissible, that's not true – a law broken in ignorance is still a broken law (even when mitigating circumstances are considered)

2. The law of sin is sometimes stated as the "law of sin and death"

a. Romans 8:2 (the reality of the law stated)

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. NASU

b. Genesis 2:16-17 (this is the law in the garden of Eden)

16 The Lord God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; 17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die." NASU

c. James 4:17 (not just what you do, but what you don't do)

17 Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin. NASU

3. Don't discount the usefulness of the 10 Commandments

a. Exodus 20:2-17

2 "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

3 "You shall have no other gods before Me.

4 "You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. 5

"You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

7 "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.

8 "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath of the

Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. 11 "For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the

seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.

12 "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you.

13 "You shall not murder.

14 "You shall not commit adultery.

15 "You shall not steal.

16 "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

17 "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor." NASU

- b. don't worry about the "big" sins, the truth is that people don't escape the "little" sins like taking the Lord's name in vain, stealing and lying

B. Here's the point, when it comes to those who think they are too good to be saved, you have to help them see the problem

- 1. And it's not just the fact that they are sinners, it's the result of sin that they must see

- a. Isaiah 59:1-2 -- 59 Behold, the Lord's hand is not so short That it cannot save; Nor is His ear so dull That it cannot hear. 2 But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear. NASU

- b. Ezekiel 18:4 -- 4 "Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins will die. NASU

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

- 2. For those on the extreme thinking they are too good to be saved, this is a huge problem to overcome, but it can be done

- a. 2 Timothy 2:24 -- 24 The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, NASU

- b. it takes time, effort, a bit of wisdom, and God's help, but you can help these people understand the need to be saved

C. It might sound a bit backwards, but if you're going to make salvation possible for a person who thinks they're too good to be saved, you have to start by showing them what a serious problem they have, then show them how God solved it for them

II. MAKING SALVATION POSSIBLE FOR PEOPLE WHO THINK THEY'RE TOO BAD TO BE SAVED

A. People at the other extreme have a much different problem

1. You actually don't have to talk much about sin, guilt, condemnation, etc.
 - a. these people already know their problem – they've kept a running record of all their wrongs
 - b. instead of not seeing what the fuss is about, they take the fuss and turn it into an eternal crisis, something beyond help
2. These people are filled up with terrible negatives
 - a. they are afraid (ex. of lady in emergency room, heart attack, but too afraid to die)
 - b. they are sometimes hate themselves, loathe themselves
 - c. their guilt is so keen, to them there is no remedy

B. These people need patient teaching on the love of God, the grace and mercy of God, and they need to focus on the effectiveness of Jesus' sacrifice

1. John 3:16 -- 16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. NASU
2. 1 Timothy 1:15-16 -- 15 It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. 16 Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life. NASU
3. Romans 10:13 -- 13 for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." NASU

C. A person who thinks they are too bad to save must learn to trust Jesus

1. It's the only way to be saved for any of us, but for these people it's even more important
2. A person who thinks they can't be saved doubts Jesus in one or both of two ways
 - a. they either think he can't save them
 - b. or they think he doesn't want to save them
 - c. both ideas are wrong: Jesus wants to save and can save anybody

CONCLUSION

A. You've just got to know which kind of person you're talking to

1. Most people will fall somewhere between the two extremes, probably, but they will likely tend toward one or the other
2. Some will need more emphasis on sin, others less
3. Some will need more emphasis on love, grace, mercy, forgiveness, while others will need to know about these things, but with less emphasis

B. Learn how people think and then do your best to make salvation possible

1. You don't want those who think they're too good to be saved to miss out on salvation just because they misunderstand their problem
2. You don't want those who think they're too bad to be saved to miss out on salvation just because they are overly guilty and think there's no answer

C. Invitation