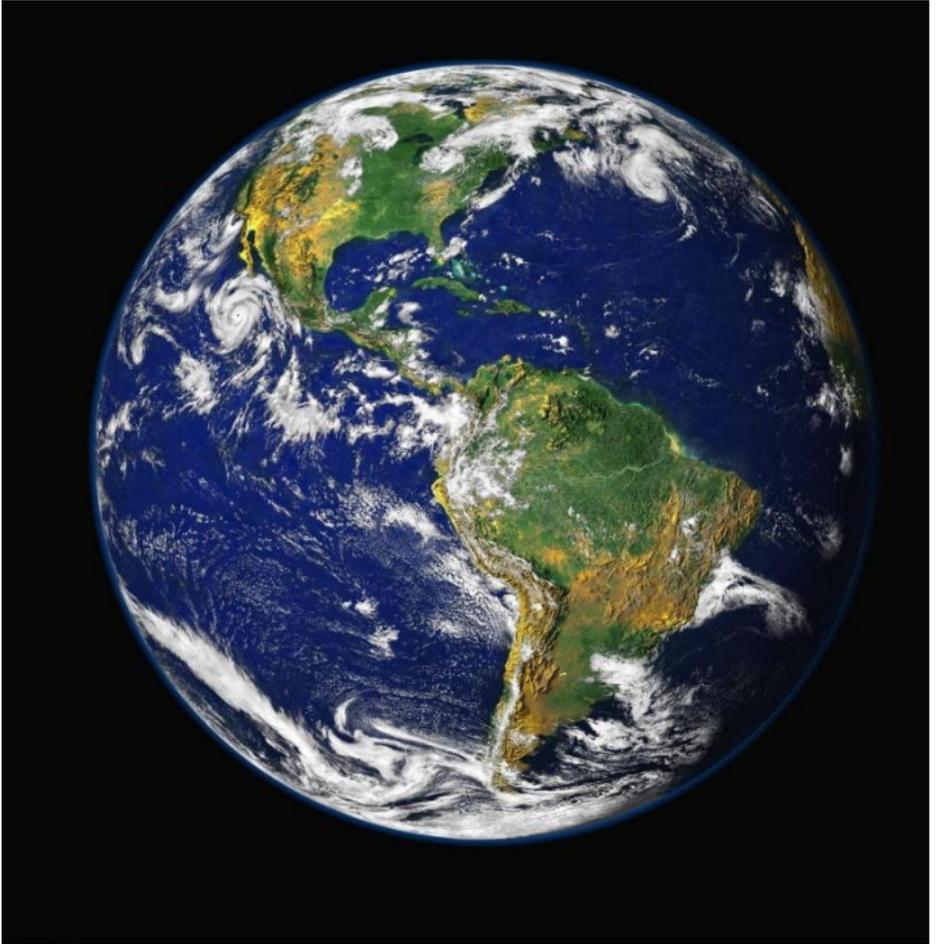


*Why is there evil in the world?*



*This is God's world. Evil is living in  
independence from God*

## *Why is there evil in the world?*

In the beginning God created the universe and all that is in it to reflect His glory and majesty. He created man to represent Him, giving him authority to rule as His agent on earth, and all was very good. Gen 1:1-31

God told Adam, that if he disobeyed Him he would die. *“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.”* (Genesis 2:17) The immediate result of Adam’s disobedience was spiritual death and being put out of the living presence of God; even though man deserved to really die.

As a result of Adam’s declaration of independence in doing what he wanted instead of obeying God, he could not remain in intimate fellowship with the God of light because there can be no fellowship of light with the darkness of man’s rebellion.

*‘Therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the*

*cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.'*  
Gen 3:23-24

Independence from God means losing the light that comes from living with God. *'For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.'*  
Eph 6:12

Three times we are told of God's wise judgment on sinful man to struggle with the powers of this darkness. *'God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity.'* (Rom 1:24) *'God gave them over to degrading passions.'* (Rom 1:26) *'God gave them over to a depraved mind.'* (Rom 1:28) *'For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator.'* Rom 1:25

To understand the problems of the world we must see the cause of the problem is that in the darkness we don't like having God controlling our lives. *"They did not see fit to acknowledge God."*(Rom 1:28) To acknowledge God means God has to be first in all things.

Not giving God His due place is the original cause for all suffering in the world. dishonouring God is the state of the human mind and heart even though God gave man knowledge of Himself.

*‘That which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.’ (Rom 1:19)*  
*‘For even though they knew God, they did not honour Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.’* Rom 1:21

We don't want God telling us how to live. We want self determination and self adoration. Dethroning God and putting man first was the first sin in the garden. And this declaration of independence is at the heart of all evil today. We do not want to have God in our lives as our Lord and Master. We want to follow Frank Sinatra who sang a popular song “I did it my way.”

Because God is compassionate and kind, He didn't destroy man utterly as we justly deserved, instead, in His mercy, He lets us work out our decision to ignore Him, and

forced us to take responsibility for our unholy behavior. God gave us over to a depraved mind.

Therefore we see all suffering that occurs on earth is caused by Adam's rebellion against God's rule and sovereign authority working out in the lives of mankind ever since. Adam's sin brings suffering through the just judgment of God into every aspect of life on earth, including all our personal relationships. At the time God judged Adam, the whole natural world was cursed as a result of Adam's sin; therefore the perfection of creation was also corrupted just as Adam was corrupted. Where there was once peace and harmony in creation, we now have catastrophes.

When God made man in the beginning, He made him flesh and breathed His Spirit into him, when Adam rebelled he died in his spirit towards God; so now we know death is not just physical, it is also spiritual, and spiritual death is all about man giving meaning to himself in preference to God.

When we turn our backs on God's rules, and make our own way, we open ourselves to the

prince of darkness who manipulates the world to draw us away from God. John 8:44

Our way of thinking reveals where we have placed our trust and hope. The priorities of our thinking show whether we trust in the fleshly life of the world, or if we trust in the spiritual life from God. If our minds are seeking the kingdom of God we are blessed, but if our minds are filled with worldly aspirations against God's wishes, we are under His judgment and condemnation.

*'For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.'* Rom 8:5-8

## **Why does evil exist?**

Evil is independence from God. The only legitimate answer to the existence of evil is that evil enters our lives when we turn from obedient dependence on God, which means

we are thinking we can live without God. In this way we dishonour God, we ignore God; and we become foolish in our speculations about life and happiness. Professing to be wise we elevate ourselves to a position where we think we don't need God who is '*the only wise God,*' (Rom 16:27) "*With Him are wisdom and might; To Him belong counsel and understanding.* (Job 12:13) "*Wisdom and power are His.*"

Dan. 2:20

Evil begins in the heart of man who will not remain dependent on God as his maker. It is not just our sin that condemns; our sins are the result of a heart that is far from God. Neither are the good deeds people hope will save them from the wrath of God of any value. God doesn't want our religious or social service; He wants us to sacrifice our self interest to live for Him. (Rom 12:1) In this case, both disobedience and our good deeds to gain God's favour start off from a heart that is not surrendered to God.

Sin is the result of our declaration of independence. Sin is like having a heart of stone, hard and insensitive to the touch of

God. Sin is the actions of good and bad people doing things in their own strength, depending on their personal ability and according to their own understanding. Prov 21:2

## **God's Judgment is wise**

God has vowed that He will show the wisdom of the world to be a futile exercise in spiritual darkness. *"I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE."*(1Cor 1:19) *'Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.'* 1 Cor 1:25

God's wisdom is always active in the affairs of the world, and He never fails to achieve His purpose. All His works in creation and providence reveal His wisdom and glory, and until we can see it in the experiences of our lives we are not seeing things the way God requires if we are to gain the benefits of His love.

However we cannot recognise God's wisdom in His dealings with the world unless we know what He is working to achieve. This is where many people are wrong in their

thinking. By cleverly misunderstanding what the Bible means when it says that “*God is love*” we think God will close His eyes to our rebellion, because He intends us to have a trouble free life, regardless of our moral and spiritual condition. With the result that when we are faced with the consequences of our failure to be the people God requires because of our independence, we decide that anything painful and objectionable, like illness, accidents, injury, and the suffering of loved ones, must indicate that either God's wisdom and power can't be counted on; or that God does not exist at all.

### **God is conveniently misunderstood**

Many people make the mistake of assuming all of God's righteous judgments lie in the future. It is almost unknown today that God's judgment is taking place in this world right now as a result of the sinful rebellion of man.

However, it is a biblical fact that God continues to judge people on earth, and many of the results of that judgment are painful experiences in our daily lives. God does not

leave everything to the final judgment day of the Lord at the end of worldly time.

Because God loves us, He lets us know of His displeasure now, so we can have a change of mind if we have eyes to see His hand at work in our disagreeable world. He is calling us to repent through experiencing His judgment because He cares for us, so He takes action to bring us to our senses so that we can repent and return to Him.

To see God's handiwork in action we need to consider the description of this process in Romans chapter one verses eighteen to twenty-five. In this passage God tells us that in rejecting the authority and sovereignty of our God, people chose to follow their own passions and desires. In response to this willful disobedience, God let us have our way to wake us up, and the good God intended in our lives cannot happen. He gives us over to our lusts and our foolish speculations. He allowed us to live as we want so we can taste the fruit of our ignorant foolishness.

By going our own way, we ignore God's instructions about how to live in loving relationships, and we make up our own rules in complete arrogant and rebellious defiance. In His divine wisdom, God lets us do as we wish. He allows us to put into practice a lifestyle that is bound to go wrong because it starts from a false assertion bought on by pride; because we are not equal to God. He allows us to behave in a way that stimulates the worst things in the world, so that we can come to see we are actually spiritually blind.

Because we have ignored God and decided on going our own way, we, the people of the world, are responsible for the world being in such an appalling condition of evil. Then we, in our ignorance, wonder if there's a God at all. As a result of our lack of true knowledge, we invent the idea of an absentee God, saying that a loving and powerful God could not possibly allow the world to be as bad as it is.

We are deceived so much we cannot see we are the cause of our problems. However, if God was to give us what we really deserve, there wouldn't be any of us left to complain.

His abundant mercy lets the world be as bad as it is so we will turn to Him in order that we can all be blessed as holy children of a holy God. But we don't want Him as our God; we don't want to be holy, so He gives us up to our choice, and we forfeit our ability to have peace and love in the world.

*'And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.'*  
(Rom 2:2) And none of us can claim to be innocent bystanders. *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."* Rom 3:23

It is therefore clear that any idea of God's intention to make us comfortable in the world is a complete fallacy promoted by the forces of evil. God's wisdom is not, and never was, a promise to keep sinful mankind happy in the world of darkness controlled by Satan. God's love means He will never want to make us comfortable in our ungodliness so we would have no reason to turn our backs on the dark wisdom of the world. God never promises Christians who have repented, that they will have a trouble free life, rather the reverse; He says we will have tribulation. (John 16:33)

Indeed God calls us out of the world of darkness in order to know the peace that comes by living with Him. John 15:16

True happiness is not about having a good comfortable life; the happiness of those who are totally dependent on God is not about what they have in the world, or even that they have God's gift of forgiveness, real happiness is that we have God to enjoy forever.

No one born since Adam is excluded from the consequences of sin. Before anyone receives the grace of God in believing in Jesus Christ, they were unbelievers, and because God loves the world of disobedient man, He still desires all unbelievers to repent and believe in and obey Jesus Christ to receive forgiveness of sins. Therefore God is at work for the benefit of all mankind. *'The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.'* 2 Pet 3:9

What is God working to achieve by giving man over to his sin? He wants people to repent and come to Him as the Father of the living to enjoy eternal life. What does He

want to accomplish for His people? *‘For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son.’*

Rom 8:29

## **God’s wisdom works through our troubles**

In His eternal wisdom God gives us over to our depraved minds that we might finally turn to Him and repent of our declaration of independence, therefore *“In the world we will have tribulation.”* In order to know how to deal with these disturbing and trying situations, we need to see God's purpose at work in tribulation for our benefit. We need to acknowledge God is at work in all things, we need to be asking ourselves, what does God require of us in this situation?

We need to seek God's face to gain the wisdom He promises so that we can know peace in a troubled world.

*‘Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who*

*gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given o him.'* James 1:2-5

From Paul's experience of the thorn in the flesh, (2 Cor 12:7-9) we can understand difficult times and people are the instrument God sent to make us humble so we rely totally on Him, and our trials give us an opportunity of showing the power of Christ in our lives. (2 Cor 11:23-27) When we see that our trouble are sent to us to enable us to trust in God so we glorify Christ, we can accept it is by the grace of God's wisdom, and even rejoiced in it, because God gives us grace in all our own troubles, so we become like His Son.

### **God's wisdom gives grace to all people**

Even during this period of ongoing worldwide judgment, God shows grace to all people all the time, regardless of their attitude towards Him. His grace can be better known as the underserved love and consideration of God. This undeserved grace shows God's favourable attitude toward all His creatures, not only toward those who obey Him. "*The Lord is good to all; He has compassion on all He has made.*" (Psalm 145:9) Jesus said God causes

*“His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”* (Matt 5:45) and God *“is kind to the ungrateful and wicked”* (Luke 6:35) *“He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; He provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy”* Acts 14:17

In addition to His compassion, goodness, and kindness, God also shows His patience for both the repentant and the unrepentant. God still exercises His *“longsuffering”* toward those who ignore Him. (Nahum 1:3) Every breath that the unrepentant man takes is an example of mercy and love of our holy God.

God’s underserved grace on all mankind also means that God, without renewing a person’s heart, exercises personal influence in a way that even an unsaved man is given the ability to perform good deeds toward his fellow man. As Paul said of unrepentant Gentiles, they *“do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law.”* (Rom 2:14) If God had not restrain evil in the hearts of all people by giving the capacity to do some good, (Jeremiah 17:9) humanity would have destroyed itself long

before Jesus Christ came for our salvation. But because God works through what is called common grace which is given to all men, God's sovereign plan for history is not prevented by evil hearts.

### **God seeks repentance from independence**

God uses both miracles and judgments to prompt our repentance. When Jesus did miraculous things in the land promised to Abraham, it was a sign that God was working personally in their communities. These miracles should have prompted everyone to look to their own hearts in the light of the glory of God working for their favour. Jesus began His call on peoples' lives by saying: "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.*" (Matt 4:17) But instead of being confronted by their sinfulness in the sight of the glory of God and repenting, they mocked Him who was God in the flesh who came to die for their sin.

*"But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market places, who call out to the other children, and say, 'we played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a*

*dirge, and you did not mourn.’ For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon!’ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.” ‘Then He began to denounce the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent.’*

Matt 11:20

They did not repent. Mankind in general is not concerned about sin, but only about the pain to be experienced from the unpleasant consequences sin brings. Man is mostly interested in finding comfort and enjoyment in the world, not for a moment giving thought to the one who made the heavens and the earth he wants to enjoy. Man does not naturally have an interest concerning the seriousness of his sin. He cannot keep himself pure and has no natural desire to do so.

Rom 8:7-8

As a means of giving us the education we need to see what God is doing, the book of Revelation shows us the ongoing judgment of God on a sinful world when He authorises great calamity; and even in the worst condition that should get man’s attention and

turn men back to God; Revelation shows there is a complete reluctance to repent. *‘The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.’*

Rev 9:20-21

The world came under the sever judgement of God, and still refused to repent and bow down before Him; so once again Revelation tells us about the stubborn hearts of man. *‘The fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun, and it was given to it to scorch men with fire. Men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him glory.’* (Rev 16:8-9) As it is was written. *"For they shake their fists at God, defying the Almighty."*

Job 15:25

The divine judgment of sin that Paul speaks about in Romans chapter one is not eternal judgment. As long as men live, God provides opportunity for their salvation. This is the

amazing good news of God's mercy and grace. Despite His righteous wrath against sin, God is patient toward all sinners, *"not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."* 2 Pet. 3:9

## **In love God promised a Divine Saviour**

From this point on, we see in Scripture our true need for the Messiah, the one who saves, Jesus Christ. And because of God mercy this promised Saviour will bless the whole world.

Gen 3:14-15: Gen 12:3

The Saviour was the Word of God who came to save. *'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.'*

John 1:1-4

*"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. He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."* John 3:16, 36

The wise working of God in handing man over to the consequences of his sin presents us with the opportunity to worship and obey God who is revealed to us in Jesus Christ. Jesus is God with us, so we can trust Him absolutely in whatever testing situations cross our path while we walk on Earth. Earthly life is the proving ground of trials that reveals those who actually live by faith in the one true God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*'Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old gained approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible. And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.'* Heb 11:1-3, 6

The fallen world under the judgment of God faces us with the temptation to look for what we need in the creation rather than the Creator. Our faith is proved only when we are looking to the Creator and resisting the attraction of the world. Evidence of being chosen by God is found in those who believe

that Jesus Christ is the only way to life and peace, while they obey Him in all things as God's dependent children. It means giving Him our life so that He can live His life through us by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit whom He gives to all who will obey Him.

Acts 5:32

We should never have the idea Adam had of personal independence, thinking that we can manage our life with Christ, as if there is some sort of dual partnership involved with God as our equal. The only way to be faithful to God is to surrender to His management of our life, so His light and life can live in us. Jesus Christ is to be our Master who determines all things, and we are His faithful servants who follow the leading of His Spirit who lives in us to give us the life of our Master.

*'And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He*

*also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.'*  
Rom 8:28-30

## **How are we to live as God's children?**

If we have to deal with adults who demand independence from God, we hand them over to God, and He will hand them over to their desires according to His perfect wisdom. Where the law of the land is violated, that law must be called upon; for this is also part of the perfect wisdom of God. 1 Pet 2:13-14

God makes adults responsible for children, if we don't exercise adequate guardianship with children in our care, to train them in self control and dependence on God, then we hand them over to Satan who will exercise his control. Evil is independence from God.

When we struggle with people we love who refuse to humble themselves before God, we need to show God's mercy, because they are already suffering under God's judgment, mercy can open their eyes to His glory. God is the only one who has authority to condemn anyone for their rebellion, so we hand them

over to the only wise God who hands them over to their sinful desires.

In dealing with everyone we know, we remember it is because of God's judgment in everyday life that we don't water down the need for humble repentance. When people suffer we can tell them why. If a person has come to the end of their independence under the judgment of God, and realises they have fallen short of the minimum He requires, they can know that the innocent Son of God paid their death penalty by dying for their sins; so they can know the eternal life of God as their own.

If guilty people think God's judgment is harsh in bringing them to repentance, they need to look to the innocent Son who died for all mankind for all times. By His death on the cross in our place as a witness of God's love, the Lord calls on everyone to repent for the kingdom of God's divine rule and authority is at hand. God isn't interested in supporting our addiction to the world; He is all about separating us from the world and having holy

children who will reflect His life in the image of Christ.

The miracles of Jesus Christ weren't done to make people comfortable in the world, they were evidence of God working in the fallen world dominated by sin, and should have brought people to repentance as they realised their unholy state before a Holy God.

Even the repentant that have seen the unholy condition of their hearts and returned to God are not free from the outworking of God's judgment in the world. While we have God's indwelling Spirit, we still suffer as a result of the sins of the world, and indeed, if we sin ourselves, we will have to suffer the consequences of our actions. *'There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek.'*

Rom 2:9

Ultimately, one coming day, God's patience will run out and He will destroy this evil world. He will create a new heaven and earth where there is no evil. But for now people will often ask, "Why doesn't God destroy evil?" "Why doesn't He do it now?"

If we only knew what we ask; if God was to destroy evil in the world, He will have to destroy all the evil people in the world who claim independence. *‘Thus says the LORD, “Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind and makes flesh his strength, and whose heart turns away from the LORD.”* Jer 17:5

If we live according to our own understanding, God is not our God but our imagined puppet. Good people who do things their way independently of living with God daily, spread the lie of the puppet God who has to accept human efforts that allow people to enter heaven on their own terms, instead of following the example of Jesus Christ by believing in Him and obeying Him in all things. *‘And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.”* Luke 9:23-24

Listen to Jesus who has all authority to give life and to take life. (Matt 28:18) Although He was God in the flesh, He lived in dependence on the Father in heaven; saying: *“I can do*

*nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”* (John 5:30) Jesus is the one of whom the Father said: *“This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!”* Matt 17:5

If the Son of God was dependent on God, so should all humanity be dependent by following His example. Listen to Jesus: *“To those who listen to My teaching, more understanding will be given, and they will have an abundance of knowledge. But for those who are not listening, even what little understanding they have will be taken away from them.”* Matt 13:12

Jesus said: *“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me”* (John 14:6) The only way is the way of Jesus Christ in giving up our independence, just as the apostle Paul said. *‘I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.’* Gal 2:20

Evil is independence from God

# **Living Water Resources Come to the River**



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