

## Illustrations to help explain Christian concepts

Rev1

### Atonement

#### Bushfire

Illustrates: Finding safety from God's wrath and judgement in Jesus

Illustration: A group of bushwalkers realised they were in a very dangerous situation – they were stuck in the bush with a fire coming towards them. This fire was life threatening.

As they looked for a place of safety, they took refuge in a clearing in the bush – a place that had been previously burned out - perhaps by a recent campfire.

The bushwalkers huddled together in the clearing as the fire came towards them. The fire burned all around them but they found refuge in the clearing where there was nothing left to burn. And they survived the ordeal.

This is a picture of what God has done for us in Jesus. The bushfire is a picture of God's right anger that comes bringing judgement on all the sin and horror of this world. We all deserve to be swallowed up by it. But in his love for humanity, God the Father has made a sanctuary where we can find safety in the day of the fire.

God's anger was poured out on Jesus while he hung on the cross, anger due to humanity's sin. God's wrath laid upon Jesus is like the already burnt clearing. God will not burn in that spot a second time - as that would not be just but unjust. Based on God's trustworthiness and goodness we can be confident that if we take refuge in Jesus we will be spared God's judgement.

#### Broken bowl

Illustrates: To atone for something comes at a cost

Illustration: I have just broken my wife's precious bowl through my wilful disinterest. I can apologise but that may not get rid of her deserved anger. What if I pay out of my own money to replace the bowl and it requires some sacrifice on my part to do so.

In doing so, have atoned for the bowl and now there is more for reason for her to forgive me. There still is the disrespect from the wilful disinterest that hurt the relationship in the first place. It is up to her to forgive that bit and I can't do that. Atonement turns aside the anger by a release by way of a costly payment.

### Hangmans noose

Illustrates: Jesus paid the price on our behalf

Illustration: Jesus taking our place is like stepping in and taking our place at the hangmans noose.

## Holy Spirit

### Lighting Man

Illustrates: Holy Spirit's role

Illustration: The Holy Spirit is like the lighting man in a stage show - his job is to sit in the loft and direct the spotlight onto the character on the stage. He does not turn the spotlight on himself. Similarly the Holy Spirit directs the spotlight onto Jesus as he does not want to be the centre of attention.

### Word and Holy Spirit

Illustrates: God's word and the Holy Spirit are a unified instrument

Illustration 1: **Speaking / Breathing** - The Holy Spirit and God's word go together like when a person speaks a word aloud. They speak and they breathe out together.

The word spoken represents the Bible, the breathe represents the spirit.

Illustration 2: **Hammer and Nail** - You could throw nails at a wall but it won't go through the wall, the nail needs a hammer to perform it's job. The Holy Spirit gives the word its weight and power to drive the word into people's hearts and minds like a hammer drives a nail into a wall.

## Batman and Robin

Illustration: The Holy Spirit is like the butler in Batman and Robin. His role is to support the works of the main two characters and focus our attention on them. In His case it is Jesus.

## Auction stand

Illustration: In an Auction, a priceless work of art is put on display to be admired. That masterpiece is held in place by a stand. The Holy Spirit is like the stand, focusing our attention on Jesus.

# Sin

## Living moral lives

Illustrates: Is living a moral life sufficient to be on the right side of God?

Illustration: Imagine a daughter or son who does everything right at home - keeps their room clean, does some cooking and always clears up the kitchen afterwards, fills the car with petrol when he/she borrows it, mows the lawn. BUT he/she never speaks to their parents, doesn't listen to them, is never thankful - completely ignores them. How offensive!

That's what it's like when we live good, moral lives, doing good, but ignoring God - never acknowledge Him, never thank Him, never look into what he would have us be doing with our lives. It's very offensive.

## Seriousness of sin

Illustrates: How seriously God views sin, and we typically do not.

Illustration 1: **Rabbit** - looks cute / harmless, but is a menace in plague proportions, sin is the same very easy to underestimate.

Illustration 2: **Banana / Egg** - can't unpeel a banana, can't unscramble an egg, can't undo sin, it can't be reversed.

Illustration 3: **Not that bad / good enough** - when people are asked if you died tonight and God asked you why he should let you into heaven people often say; I'm not that bad or I've been more good than bad so should be ok, but that is the mindset of sin talking. Sin has blinded us to the perfect standard of God, we can't see it and therefore feel we measure up ok.

God isn't sloppy like we are sloppy in our standards. that's actually offensive to God.

### **Life without sin**

Illustrates: The extent to which sin impacts the world we live in

Illustration: To understand some of the all pervasiveness of sin lets do a thought experiment where all sin is gone. What would life look like?

No police, courts, PIN, security systems, locks, car keys, passwords, no solicitors, less trauma doctors, no divorce, family violence, separation, foster kids, no drugs, alcoholism, gambling addiction, family fight.

No lack of self control, no pride, selfishness, meanness or impatience.

More sharing, less greed, more contentment.

### **Archery**

Illustration: The word sin is originally a military-archery term for 'missing the mark'. This helps us understand how sin is falling short of a standard, a standard determined however by God not us.

### **Throne**

Illustration: The essence of sin like sitting on the throne. Buckingham palace throne. Not hurting anyone is not relevant but rebellion. When Jesus came and pointed out we could not sit on this throne he was silenced he was killed.

## Pirate Ship

Illustrates: To show that the essence of sin is rebellion or defiance against God, and that this can show itself in different ways in different people, even in people who seem to live a “good life”.

Illustration: Imagine you are a navy officer looking out to sea with a telescope, and you zoom in on a ship. On the deck of the ship you can see a sailor. As you watch him you get the impression that he’s a fantastic member of his crew. He works hard. He scrubs the deck, he keeps his uniform tidy, he helps other sailors with their jobs, he repairs things which are broken, he quickly obeys his captain’s orders, and he looks for ways to contribute to the ship before his captain asks him. In every way he looks like a good sailor ready for promotion.

But, when you zoom out a little you notice the flag that’s flying on the ship. It’s the skull and crossbones. This is a pirate ship. A ship full of rebels, thieves and murderers. The sailor that you’ve seen, far from being good, is a rebel, and the better he does his job on the pirate ship, the more of a danger he is.

So, sin is not necessarily about whether the life you live looks good, but that your allegiance is not with God.

## Self Rule

Illustrates: The true nature of self rule

Illustration 1: **Throne** - Sin is like pushing God off the throne and placing ourselves there. We get to then decide what is right and wrong, good and bad, without sitting under the authority and judgement of another.

Illustration 2: **Lord of the Rings** - The ring represents self rule. To carry it you carry the power to self rule. It is very powerful in that way and may be regarded as a treasure as Gollum calls it. It is however a treasure that corrupts, as self rule will also. Self rule will corrupt a human heart and lead to it’s downfall, just as Gollum clung to it as they threw it into the lava - his treasure destroyed him.

## Dirt in eye

Illustrates: Why sin is so offensive to God.

Illustration: Dirt on our hands is not such a concern. Dirt on our hands is often among other dirt so it seems not that bad, we can even get used to it. But put that same spec of dirt in your eye and it becomes unbearable because the eye is pure. Sin to a pure, holy God is so offensive.

## Justification

### Courtroom and Judge

Illustrates: how Jesus' death on the cross enables God to show forgiveness to sinners, while also meeting the demands of God's justice.

Illustration: Imagining a courtroom scene. The defendant is an 18 year-old who is guilty of driving 60kph over the speed limit. The judge reviews the laws and issues the appropriate sentence. He is given a \$50,000 fine or, if he cannot pay, 3 months in prison. He is 18 years old, and can't pay the fine. But the judge also happens to be his father, and no father wants to see his son go to prison. So the father removes his judges wig, walks over the court clerk, and pays the fine for his son.

This illustration can be used to show:

The judge needs to punish the crime, he can't just let the sinner off - that would be corrupt

The judge is motivated by both justice and love

The judge pays the price for the guilty – the innocent Jesus pays our price for sin

### Magnifying Glass

Illustrates: Jesus bearing the sin of all humanity

Illustration: Imagine a magnifying glass, focusing all sin of all time into one point, the cross.

# Faith

## Faith / Trust

Illustrates: The object of our faith is what saves us, not our faith.

Illustration 1: **Abseiling with dental floss** - It's not faith that saves, it's the object of our faith that saves. No matter how much faith I had, if I tried to abseil down a cliff with dental floss it won't uphold me. In contrast, the smallest amount of faith in proper equipment will uphold me. While we need faith, it is also crucial we have our faith in the correct thing.

Our faith is the instrument that connects us to the the thing that has the power to save. Jesus is the strong rope that saves.

Illustration 2: **Thin ice / thick ice** - Which is safer - having lots of faith in thin ice or a little bit of faith in Thick ice as you step on it?

Obviously your safety is less about your faith and more about the thickness of ice to hold your weight. Similarly, what matters is whether Jesus can deliver on his promises. The Rich young ruler obviously didn't trust that he was able to do what he promised. So faith in Jesus is about appreciating the trustworthiness of Jesus. He is thick ice and you only need enough faith to rest your weight on him.

## Elevator

Illustrates: Faith

Illustration: If I stand on the ground floor of a 27-floor building and press the button for an elevator, I am confident (I have faith) that the elevator will arrive. Indeed, it does, and the door opens.

I am now presented with a vehicle that, I am confident (I have faith), will take me to the top of that building, provided I step into it. When I do, my faith in that elevator takes the form of personal trust.

I step into it, and it does the rest. My faith in the elevator does not empower the elevator, it trusts in the elevators power to take me to the floor I want to go to.

Faith is simply stepping into Christ, trusting in His power to save me

## Chair

Illustrates: Faith is connected to action

Illustration: Faith can be demonstrated in the way we use a chair. We can look at a chair, walk around a chair, recognise it for what it is, a chair, but it is not until we have sat on it that we have put our faith in that chair. Sitting on it is a sign that we believe that the chair will fulfil its job/purpose - to hold us up off the ground.

In the same way, for us to demonstrate our faith in Jesus, it takes action in our lives that demonstrates we believe he will fulfill the promises he has given us. Faith is connected to action.

## Christian Living

### Christian living like a marriage

Illustrates: A picture of Christian living

Illustration: Living as a Christian isn't just about blindly following arbitrary rules. It more like a marriage where you seek to honour and live in step with / in partnership with Jesus.

### Lost on a bushwalk

Illustrates: The cost of repentance

Illustration: Not following God can be likened to getting lost on a bushwalk. To return to the path - or repentance, has a cost - that is you need to follow the track back until you get back on the right track that God intends for us.

Repentance / or coming back to God is costly. Not repenting is far more costly. Repentance isn't cheap or easy, but it is worth it.

## Two Dogs

Illustrates: Conflict between Spirit nature and flesh / sinful nature

Illustration: A farmer was in his yard with a mate, in front of them were the farmer's two dogs fighting. His mate asked him which one of the dogs wins, to which the farmer replied the one he feeds the most.

Like these two dogs, a Christians Spirit nature and flesh nature are in a daily battle. A bit like spiritual warfare, where for the Christian, the side that comes out on top is the side they feed the most.

## Wedding Ring / Baptism

Illustrates: The symbolic nature of baptism

Illustration: Like a wedding ring, baptism is a symbol - a symbol of being a Christian. A wedding ring is an outward sign, communicating to others you are married. In the same way, baptism shows to others your commitment to following Jesus as your Lord and saviour as well as reaffirming it to yourself.

Again they are similar in that if one removes their wedding ring, it does not mean they are then not married, likewise a Christian without baptism can still be a follower of Christ.

And again, if you merely place a ring on your finger, you are not then married, Baptism is not some magical path to God's Kingdom.

## Crash tackling / Suffering

Illustrates: God allows suffering but always for a greater good

Illustration: A Father violently crash tackles his child to the ground takes on a different complexion when we learn his child was about to step out in front of a car.

What initially seemed bad for the child was ultimately in his best interests.

## Law of Moses / School principal

Illustrates: The old testaments relevance to us today

Illustration: The Law of Moses is like a school principal. While we are in our school years, our principal is authoritative and commanding. A couple of years after leaving school you meet your old principal. There is a different feeling altogether as you are no longer under his authority.

However, assuming he was a good principal, you would still be interested in his thoughts and opinions. The Law of Moses is the same, we are not under its rule, but we can still learn things from it, take some guidance from it.

## Bible

### Bible as a letter

Illustrates: How the Bible works as a communication from God to us.

Illustration: A lot of people assume that the Bible is like a rule book that we have to follow. But it's more like a letter to us from someone who loves us. During World War 1 (100 years ago), if your brother or son or father went to fight in the war, you couldn't talk to him by phone, or SMS, or email. You had to write letters to each other. When you got a letter from him he'd probably tell you about what he was doing, how the fight was going, how he was feeling himself, and he'd probably also ask you to look after your family, and help with the war effort where you could. And he'd probably tell you he loved you and missed you. And the purpose of your letters to each other would be to sustain and build your relationship with each other.

The Bible is like a letter from God to us. In the Bible God tells us what He's doing, what He's like, what His plans are and the part we play in them, including how He wants us to live. He tells us He loves us and shows us what He's done for us – especially through Jesus. And the purpose of the Bible is so that we can have a proper relationship with God - to know God, and trust Him and love Him in return.

## Unsorted

### Fish bowl

Illustrates: This world is temporary.

Illustration: This world and age that we live in now is like a fish tank with a hole, slowly draining. It is beautiful and great fun, but it will not last.

## Jargon busters

### Tradition of the Elders / Sandy Feet

Illustration: Let's assume the commands of God were : 'there is to be no sand in the house'. The tradition of the Elders were rules like - 'you need to bang your feet before getting in the car' (or donkey). They were created to help them abide with the commands of God.