

THE STORY OF ST. PATRICK

Patrick was born a Briton around 385 AD while under Roman rule. His real name was Maewyn Succat. When he was 16 he was kidnapped and taken to Ireland as a slave. He was sold to a local landowner named Meliuc who put him to work as a shepherd. For six years Patrick shepherded the sheep with little human contact. The country was harsh and bleak but his childhood faith gave him encouragement. 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."

After six years he felt led by God to go south and 200 miles later he found a ship in Wexford sailing for Britain. At first the captain denied him passage, but he turned away, praying for God's guidance and before he finished the prayer a member of the crew called to him to come with them.

While traveling home through Britain he was again captured by brigands, who planned on returning him to slavery. But Patrick was reassured by God that he would soon be free. Sure enough, after sixty days God delivered him from their hands.

Wanting to know God's will for his life he studied for seven years in a monastery and

eventually became a Bishop. It was during this time that his name was changed to Patrick.

He then felt a burden in his heart for the people of Ireland and knew that this was God telling him that he needed to go back to Ireland to preach the saving message of the Gospel. So in the winter of 432 Patrick and 25 other Christians arrived in Ireland.

At that time the Irish were pagans mainly led by the Druids who opposed the Gospel. So Patrick knew that he needed to enlist the support of the High King of Tara, the most powerful man in Ireland. He approached The



Royal Court of Tara singing a hymn that is still known as the Breastplate of St Patrick. In the king's presence the Druids mocked Patrick's religion. 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." The king was impressed with Patrick's gentleness and humility and gave his blessing to Patrick.

Until his death on March 17, 461 he shared the good news of the Gospel and much of Ireland was converted to Christianity. The pagans were symbolized by the snake and since so many of them converted to Jesus Christ it is said that Patrick drove the snakes out of Ireland.

What was the Gospel that Patrick preached then and that we still need to hear today? He said:



"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" – Romans 3:23.

Everybody has done something wrong. It could be an action or attitude such as lying, watching pornography, stealing, hatred, bitterness, anger, or deceit. But doing wrong can also be not doing something that we should do: helping the opposed, going to church, reading the Bible, or giving to the needy. Any of these wrong acts are called sin and everyone has committed at least one sin in their life.



"For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all." – James 2:10

The dilemma for us is that God does not grade on a scale. He does not weight our good deeds against our bad deeds. God is perfect and Heaven is perfect and so the only way for us to be with a perfect God in Heaven is for us to be perfect also.



So even one sin, no matter how small, is enough to corrupt us. It is as if we have a pure glass of water and we put a very small drop of arsenic into it. Even though there is still more water than poison it is still undrinkable. One sin corrupts us. So what is the consequence of sin?



“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” – Romans 6:23.

Sin is a crime against God. It is breaking His holy and righteous laws. But because God is infinitely holy the penalty for each sin is an infinite penalty. However, we are unable to pay this penalty. In ourselves we are hopeless and helpless. Are we all then lost?



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

Because Jesus was fully God and fully man He was able to bridge the gap between God and man that sin created. When Jesus was crucified on the cross He, being infinite God,

was able to pay the full penalty for all of everyone’s sins. It is a free and complete pardon. So how do we receive this pardon?



“That 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.” – Romans 10:9.

By believing the Gospel (good news) through faith we are born-again and forever forgiven of all of sins.

May the road rise to meet you,
May the wind always be at your back,
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
The rains fall soft upon your fields and,
Until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.

**Would you like to learn more?
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Did St. Patrick actually drive snakes out of Ireland?

Why do we associate St. Patrick with the shamrock?

Why do we celebrate St. Patrick’s Day on March 17?