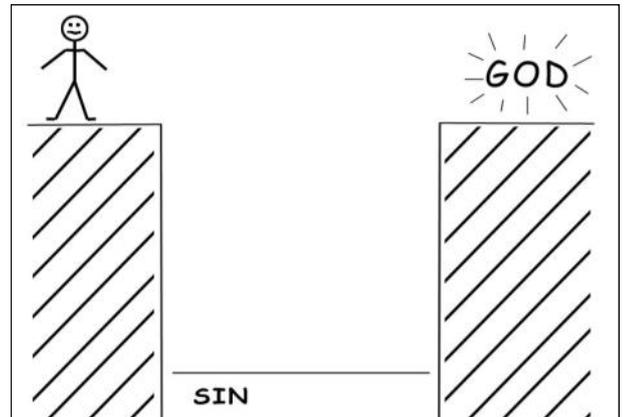


THE BRIDGE ILLUSTRATION – A Simple Presentation of the Gospel

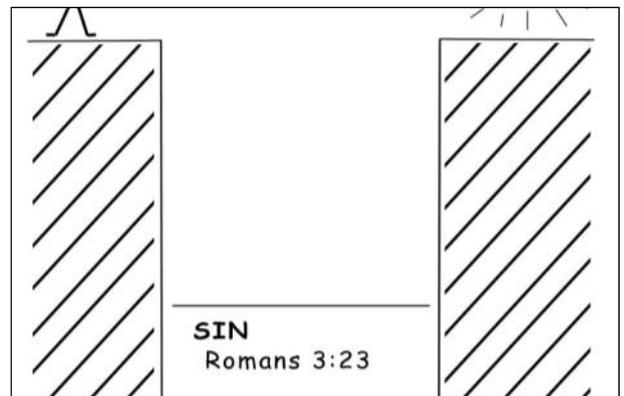
1. Can I draw an illustration that would help explain what we've been talking about much better? Many people have found this quite helpful. This is you (**draw stick person**). And here is God (**write 'GOD' on right hand side**).



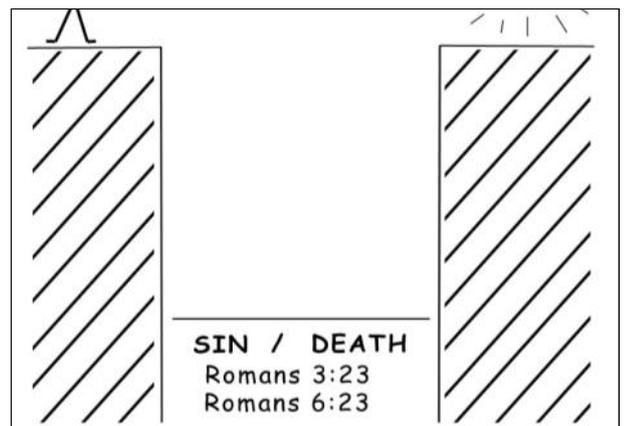
2. Most people would position themselves like this when it comes to God (**draw cliff edges underneath stick person and 'GOD' so that there is a gap**). Most of us feel that there is a space, a distance, a gap between us and God. We're not born to naturally or automatically know God or this world would be a very different place. There's a name for this distance between us and God... the word the Bible actually calls it is 'sin' (**write 'SIN' at the bottom of the gap with a line on top**).



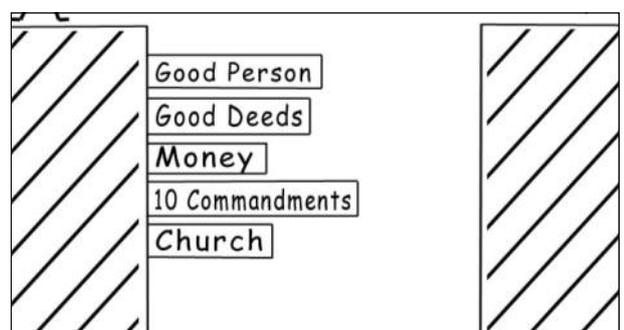
3. There's a verse in the Bible in a book called Romans 3:23 (**write 'ROM. 3:23' underneath the word 'SIN'**) and it says 'for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God'. There's one thing that you and I have in common, in fact, one thing that every person on this planet shares in common... and that is, we're all sinners! We all do things that are wrong from time to time. We all have said wrong things. We all have had wrong thoughts. We make bad choices and mistakes. The Bible says we're all in the same boat... 'for all have sinned'. We've all fallen short of God's expectations for us.



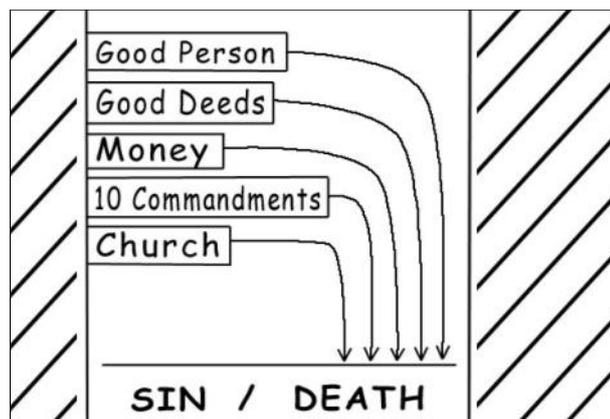
4. Now check this out... there's another verse in the same book of Romans in chapter 6:23 (**write 'ROM. 6:23' underneath the previous verse**) and it says 'for the wages of sin is death' (**write 'DEATH' next to the word 'SIN'**). What is a wage? A wage is something you earn, right? It's something that you are entitled to, or something that you deserve. The Bible tells us that because of sin, because of our bad choices in life, we deserve to die. This more than just physically dying, because everyone dies eventually. It refers to being eternally separated from God... what a tragic and scary thought. Imagine never being able to cross this chasm... ever!



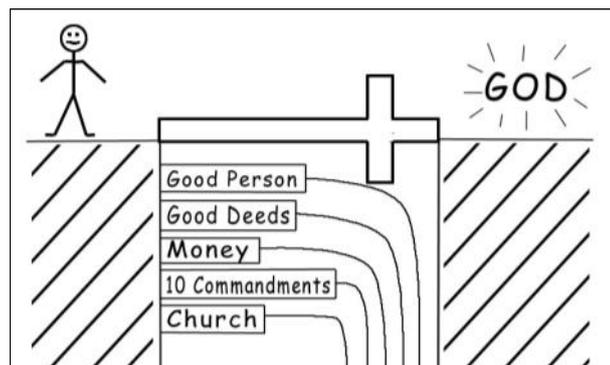
5. I think most people have this sense that they want to know God, and want to feel connected to this higher power, and have a need for eternal life. So they try to cross this gap by doing things like (i) being a good person; (ii) doing good deeds; (iii) giving money in the offering plate; (iv) follow the ten commandments; (v) going to church, etc (**for each one draw a bridge line from man toward 'GOD' and write the name above it**).



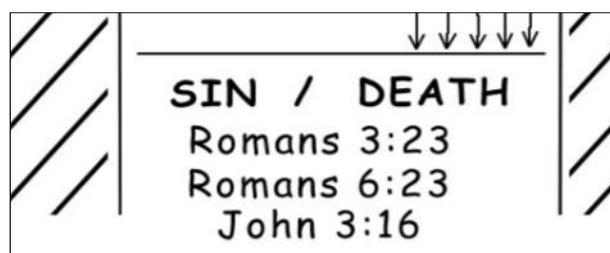
6. We try to do all these religious type things in order to cross over the gap, but the problem is that the Bible tells us that 'we all fall short of the glory of God'. We can never go to church enough, we can never follow the ten commandments faithfully enough, we can never give enough money, we can never do enough good deeds, we can never be a good enough person to cross the gap (**for each one draw an arrow that leads down to the word 'DEATH'**). No matter how hard we try, you can't be good enough to make your way into heaven and know God.



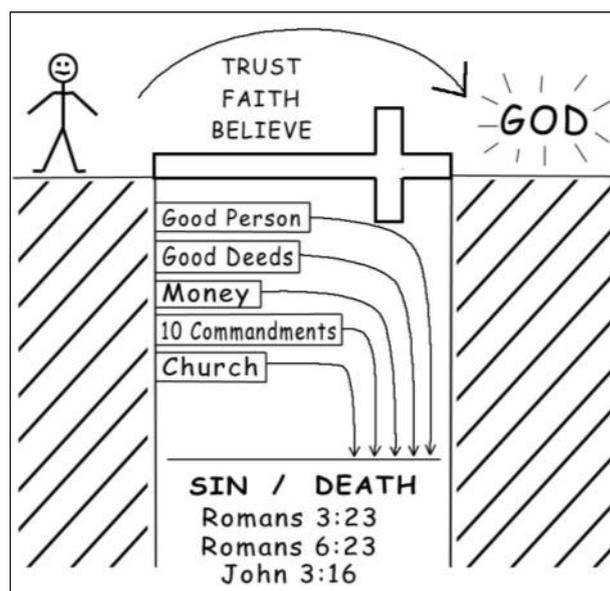
7. Now, this is where the story gets good! The way to cross over this chasm, in fact, the only way to cross over is through... Jesus Christ (**draw a large cross sideways bridging the gap**). You see, when Jesus died on the cross, He died to bridge that gap between us and the Heavenly Father. He knew there was no other way that we could do it. When Jesus died on the cross, He died for my sins... He died for your sins and it bridges that gap.



8. The most well-known verse in all of the Bible... perhaps you've heard this one – John 3:16, "For God so loved the world (for God so loved YOU) that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (**write 'JOHN 3:16' underneath the previous verse**).



9. So the way to cross over that bridge is by... we'll use the word in that verse... by believing in Jesus Christ (**write 'BELIEVE' above the cross**). Or you can use the word, faith (**write 'FAITH' above 'BELIEVE'**). Or you can use the word, trust (**write 'TRUST' above 'FAITH'**). We cross over (**draw arrow from man to God**) when we trust... not in our own goodness, not in our good deeds, not in these religious things we try to do because that stuff is not good enough... but when we trust in Jesus and what he did for us on the cross for me. Through that I get forgiveness of my sins, through that I get eternal life. By faith I take that free gift from God. I can't earn it... I certainly don't deserve it... but I can receive it by trusting Him to come into my life when I ask Him. That illustration is pretty much the whole story of the Bible, right there.



10. Now, let me ask you a question. Where would you position yourself on this picture in regards to where you stand with God? (**Let them draw their position on the illustration and this will help you gauge where exactly that person is and will determine what you should do next, ie. Perhaps they might now be ready for you to help lead them across the line of faith; or, they might need more time to think about what they've just heard**).