Cupcake, where have you been? You're filthy!" Jenny said to her puppy. Cupcake was covered in mud and sticktights. Jenny scooped him up and took him straight to the bathtub. "Time to get you clean."

Jenny put lots of puppy shampoo on Cupcake and scrubbed and scrubbed. After the bath, she brushed his fur and removed all the sticktights. "Now, don't do that again," Jenny said as she cuddled her puppy.

"Mom, look at all the sticktights I got out of Cupcake's fur. He was covered in mud too. Boy, was he a mess!"

"He sure looks clean now. His fur looks as white as snow. You did a good job cleaning him up." Mom grinned. "I think you might need a bath now though."

Jenny looked down at her wet clothes and laughed. "I think I do."

Mom was in the kitchen getting lunch ready when Jenny walked in after her bath. "Boy, that feels better. When Cupcake gets dirty, he makes me dirty too!"

As they ate their lunch on the back deck, Jenny asked her mom some questions about what she had learned in Sunday school that week. "Mrs. Nelson taught a Bible lesson on sin and salvation, but I didn't completely understand all that she was talking about," Jenny said.

"Well," said Mom, "just like Cupcake needed the mud and sticktights cleaned off him today, we need to be cleaned of sin. Cupcake couldn't clean himself--he needed you to give him a bath and remove the burrs from his fur. What would have happened if you hadn't cleaned him up?"

"He would still be dirty--and miserable!" Jenny replied. "He'd be getting poked by the sticktights stuck in his fur."

Mom nodded. "Our sin does the same thing--it brings pain and sorrow into the world and separates us from God, and it eventually leads to eternal death. Romans 6:23 tells us, 'For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.' God offers us the free gift of salvation through His Son, Jesus, who paid the price for our sins on the cross. When we trust Him as our Savior, He removes our sin and makes us clean so we can live with Him forever."