

The Christian Faith and Call to Obedience

Congratulations on making the decision to follow Jesus Christ. I pray that as you complete this short and yet important study you will know what it means to be a Christian and be much more informed on the meaning of the decision you made. Baptism is an important and essential part of Christianity. You are following in the footsteps of millions of believers. The example that our Lord gave to us when He was baptized by John the Baptist. Take your time, pray, and read. If you have any questions, make sure you call or ask us. - Pastor Mike Salman, Pastor of Harvest Christian Fellowship.

UNDERSTANDING OUR SITUATION – READ GENESIS 1-3

1. God created the Heavens and the earth and the first man and woman. He told Adam the first man not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve did not obey God and ate of the tree. Adam and Eve were the first to sin. When this happened, they were kicked out of the garden of Eden.
2. Adam and Eve began their life and due to their disobedience sin infected their life. They had two children, Cain and Abel. Cain did not like Abel and his hatred moved him to Kill Abel. Sin became inherited by all of humanity because of the sin of Adam and Eve.
3. Disobedience to God is called Sin. When God asks us to do or not to do something and you do it, or not do it, you sin. Has there been things you were supposed to do or not do and you did not listen? YES or NO
4. God has given us His laws. The 10 Commandments are a part of the whole Law of God. Do you know any of the commandments of God? PAUSE and try to think of some.
READ EXODUS 20:1-17
5. The 10 Commandments in short are:
 - I. You shall have no other God except the Lord. Have you lived your life without God in your life?
 - II. You shall not put anything before the Lord. Have you put other things in front of God? Maybe sports, family, sleep, hobbies, yourself, etc.?
 - III. Do not say God's name in Vain.
 - IV. Honor the Sabbath. Dedicate a day to God.
 - V. Honor your mother and father. Have you ever disobeyed your parents or dishonored them by the things you have done?
 - VI. Do not murder. Have you hated someone so bad that you wished they were dead?
 - VII. Do not commit Adultery.
 - VIII. Do not Steal. Have you ever taken anything that is not yours?
 - IX. Do not lie about someone or something. Have you ever lied to deceive someone?
 - X. Do not covet or desire badly what belongs to someone else. Have you ever wanted someone else's property or stuff or things?

6. Now ask yourself if you have ever broken any of the commandments? The answer is probably Yes, and more than one. Don't feel bad. The fact is everyone has sinned. In Romans 3:23 it says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" This means everyone has sinned and everyone has missed the mark.
7. Romans 6:23 follows up with "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." This means that the reward for your sin and the consequence is death. That means Hell.

THE GOOD NEWS:

1. Could you imagine how many people have sinned and how many people would be destined to go to hell. Everyone one of us would be. Sin requires a payment. That payment is death. It is like getting a speeding ticket, someone must pay it.
2. The good news is that God loves us so much and did not want to see us go to Hell, that He decided to pay for your sins. That is right. God never wanted people to go to Hell, but their decision destined them to hell. God had a plan.
3. He provided the greatest and the only sacrifice that could pay for the penalty of sins and that is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the sacrifice that paid for our sins.

Joh 3:16-17 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (17) For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

4. Think of the love that God has for you. He gave His Son Jesus Christ to die on the cross for you. They crucified Jesus Christ, Buried Him, but on the 3rd day He rose from the dead.

REVIEW QUIZ?

- A. What is Sin?
- B. Who was the first to sin?
- C. Sin has infected everyone? TRUE OR FALSE
- D. What are the Consequences of a person who has sinned?
- E. What did God give to us to follow, and we broke?
- F. Have you sinned?
- G. What did God do for you so that you do not go to Hell?
- H. Do you believe in Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and Rose from the Dead?

THE CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP - If you said Yes, move forward.

1. There are many like you who believed in the Good News, The Gospel. When they believed they asked: Act 2:37-38 Now when they heard this, they were moved by in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do (To Be Saved)? (38) Then Peter said unto them, **Repent**, and be **baptized every one**

of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and **ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.**

You see, these people were like you. They knew they sinned. They did not want to go to Hell. So, they asked the Apostles what they had to do to be saved. Now let us look at how the Apostles answered those who wanted to be saved.

- A. They began with Repent. Repent means to turn away from your sins. To stop sinning. The first step you must do is make the decision to not sin. Are there sins in your life that you need to stop? Are you ready to stop them? If not, STOP HERE.
- B. The second is to start living for God. Are you ready to live for God?
- C. Living for God includes reading the scriptures the bible, going to Church, Praying, and doing good works. Are you ready to do that?
- D. Good Works includes but are not limited to: Living a life of Holiness (set apart for God), Giving, Volunteering, and Witnessing (telling people about our Lord.) This also includes, forgiveness, mercy, and love.
- E. Jesus never accepted everyone who came to Him. He allowed them to make the decision on whether they truly wanted to follow Him. He even said to count the cost and to really understand what it takes. Read the following and think about what Jesus is saying to those who want to be Christians.

Luke 14:25-33 **25** Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, **26** “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. (This means you must love Jesus more than your own family and even more than your own life.)

27 And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. (This means that sometimes you have to suffer for the things of God. That it will not always be easy.)

28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has *enough* to finish *it*— **29** lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see *it* begin to mock him, **30** saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish’? (He is talking about someone who starts something and does not finish it. Jesus says, don’t be the person who says YES to all but then later turns away.)

31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? **32** Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. (This means a person really thinks about the battle ahead.)

33 So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.

- 2. As you can see this is not just a simple yes and a prayer but a true heart decision. Many people today say they have believed but truly never thought about what it means to be a Christian and the sacrifices.
- 3. If you are ready to move forward, it is time to declare it to all. This is done by OPEN BAPTISM. To be baptized is to declare your love and commitment to follow Jesus Christ openly and to say, I have considered, and I am ready.

- A. Baptism is a sacrament given to us by God to follow. It enters us into a grace and commitment with Him.
- B. When you are baptized you symbolically and spiritually follow Christ in His sacrifice. Just as Jesus Christ died, was buried, and rose from the dead, so will you through Baptism.
- 1. **YOU DECLARE THAT YOU RECEIVE JESUS CHRIST:** This means your old ways are dead and you are crucified with Christ.
- 2. **YOU ARE DUNKED UNDER WATER:** This means you are buried under water like Christ was buried.
- 3. **THEN YOU ARE RAISED FROM THE WATER:** Just as Christ rose from the dead so you also are raised from the water a new person living for God. A Baptized Christian Believer Living for God!
- C. So, **ARE STILL READY TO MAKE THIS COMMITMENT?**

NOW here are somethings to remember - THE LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN

- 1. A Christian is someone who lives for God. What does it mean to live for God? Read the following versus and answer the Questions. The example given to us of what Christians do is found in Act 2:41-42 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: (Became Christians) the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. (42) And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.
 - A. Look at how they received the Word of God. They were happy or glad.
 - B. What did they do when they received the Word of God?
 - C. What did they continue in all the time?
- Now that they were Christians, they followed the 4 things below as all true Christians should follow:
- I. **Apostles Doctrine:** These are the teachings of Christ. This is equivalent today to reading the Bible. As a Christian it is important that you spend time reading the bible.
 - II. **Fellowship:** This is going to Church. As a Christian you need to spend time with other believers in Church, in Studies, and be taught and encouraged and encouraging others in Christ.
 - III. **Breaking of Bread:** This is helping, sharing, and being there for people. You should find out where you can be used by God to provide and help the work of God.
 - IV. **Prayer:** This is spending time with God. It is not hard to pray. Just talk to God like he was sitting next to you. You can ask him things. Tell him what you need and ask him what you can do to serve Him. There is no right or wrong way to pray. Don't be afraid to ask him whatever is on your heart and how you can be His servant. Pray for family and friends and don't forget your Church and leaders in your life.

So, the believers did these things, and they are examples to us of what a Christian does. There are a lot of people today who say they are Christian but do not follow the example. This is not right and should not be. Do not follow their example. Instead follow the Apostles and the First Christians.

2. Here is something else that will help you live for God. HOLINESS AND OBEDIENCE:

There are a lot of things you will have to learn in your life as a Christian. Things that are not all covered here but will be covered by your Christian Pastors and Teachers. There will be times when you will be doing very well, but there will come times when you fail.

You will make mistakes; you will say and do things that you know you should not have done. It is during these times you go back in prayer and ask God to forgive you and then start living your life the way you should.

Remember no matter how many times you fall and get back up, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is able to forgive you and pick you back up.

The greatest thing is that God gives you the Holy Spirit who will guide you. He will show you what you need to do. He is that small voice in your heart and mind that reminds you that He loves you and to do the right thing. Listen to Him.

When life gets hard always remember that it is all about Jesus Christ and remember to talk to God. There might be something God is trying to tell you.

Holiness means you live for God and not for the world. Maybe you have some bad habits or clothing, or things that are worldly. It is important you look around in your house, car, room, mirror, and such and remove anything from your life that does not reflect the Christian living. Remember you belong to the Lord now and not the world. Just like you would not want your spouse to be wearing their former boyfriend or girlfriend letterman jacket, or keep their pictures or gifts, so God does not want you to hold on to the world.

SO, ARE YOU READY TO GET BAPTIZED NOW? ONE LAST THING:

ONCE YOU MAKE the decision to follow Jesus fully there will be many things that will try to stop you from being obedient. Don't let them stop you from going to Church, from praying, reading the bible, or being obedient to God. There were people during the Apostles times who believed and were baptized but they went back into the world and stopped going to Church, praying, and following Jesus. Look at what the Apostle Peter says of them:

2Pe 2:21-22 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. (22) But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

He calls them dogs that return to their vomit. Pigs that after being washed go back into the mud. Don't be like them. They will not be saved even if they had believed and been baptized because they did not continue.

Just remember that God loves you and it is in Christ are we saved.

If you finished this packet and are still ready to move forward Congratulations. It is the best decision you will ever make in your life!

LOVE JESUS BECAUSE HE LOVES YOU SO MUCH!