

Lesson 7

Repent and be baptised

Discussion: If an unbeliever asks “What do I need to do to be saved?”, how would you answer this question?

Previous Lessons Recap – Healing

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Preaching, teaching Jesus Healing all sickness and diseases	The 12 Disciples	The 70 Disciples	Jesus Disciples You and Me
Matt 4:23	Matt 10: 7-8	Luke 10	Matt 28
Matt 9:35			

Mark 16:17-18 He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. 17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.”

1 Our Foundation

In the previous lesson on healing, many churches follow a tradition on what it means to be saved which is different from what we read in the bible. Traditions of men have introduced theology that is not based on the complete word of God. Therefore, many Christians today are living lives that don't really look anything like what we read in the book of acts. They lack a zeal for and obedience to God and remain lukewarm Christians their entire lives.

The foundation on which our lives should be built, is the Bible and not church traditions. People are going to be shocked one day when they stand before God and find out they have been living a lie because of the traditions of men.

2 Knowing God

Matthew 7: 21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

These scriptures show us that people who don't have a personal, intimate relationship with God will not enter into heaven, even if they did good deeds and performed religious acts. God does not call us only to believe in Him but to know Him. The Israelites believed in Him but they didn't know Him. This only happens by spending time with God.

If you continue living in sin, you don't know God.

Can you experience things of God even if you live in sin? Yes, as Matt 7:21-23 states. People cast out demons and healed the sick in the name of Jesus but they didn't know God.

The practice of sin keeps people from a personal relationship with God. We can clearly see on the news that lawlessness and sin are increasing on the earth. Millions of people are being deceived when it comes to the true gospel.

Therefore, there will be many who will stand before God one day and say LORD, LORD!! They will be shocked to find out that they had been deceived and never had a truly personal relationship with God.

3 Living a holy life

1 Peter 1:15 but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,

Living a holy life shows that you know God and are led by the Holy Spirit daily, resulting in transformation into His image.

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

God created man in His image but when Adam fell into sin, he gave that image away. Now we, by being born again through Jesus have been restored to the image of God.

2 Corinthians 5: 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.[a] the old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

4 The Gospel

There is supernatural power that saves lives in the gospel. It transforms people. If you are truly saved, your life will be transformed.

People in many churches, still live in sin. Pastors often get burned out because of those who cannot get free from sin and continually have problems. There are long-time Christians whose lives are unfruitful and Jesus said 'you will know a tree by its fruit'. If these were truly saved, they would have been changed and become fruitful.

We often hear about big crusades in Africa where thousands of people have prayed the sinner's prayer but the cities and towns where these thousands of people were saved, seldom change. These people do not become strong Christians nor go out influencing their villages.

For example, in a crusade, 700,000 people pray the sinner's prayer and assumed to be saved. In Africa, a typical village will have 200 to 400 people and a small town maybe 10,000. Large cities consist of about 500,000 people. In a single crusade more people are "saved" than there are residents in the surrounding towns and villages. Yet crime, witchcraft, poverty, child labor etc. are still rampant and people remain in chains.

The same thing happens here in North America. There are mega churches seating thousands on a Sunday, who aren't impacting society around them.

Discussion: Why is this happening?

Jesus said that a man's house, built on the right foundation, will stand forever. We need to look at the gospel and follow the example set for us.

Approximately 200 years ago, the "sinner's prayer" crept into the church and became the accepted way for people to become Christians. This was never recorded or practiced in the life of Jesus in the Gospels or the disciples in the book of Acts.

When the disciples went to make other disciples, they did things completely different.

5 Salvation

Discussion: When people get saved, what are they saved from?

We all have heard people telling others that they need to get saved so they don't go to hell. They tell them to just pray the "sinner's" prayer and they will be saved. Another approach is to tell them to pray this prayer and Jesus will come and give them a better life.

Scripture however, says that Jesus came to save us from our sins. The wages of sin is death and if we die in our sin, we will go to hell... We are saved from that which will cause our death.

When John the Baptist saw Jesus he said "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"

An angel speaking to Joseph in a dream said:

Matthew 1:21 ...you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from sin.

When sin came into the world, it destroyed our fellowship with a holy God. Jesus came to take away sin and to restore that fellowship.

Some churches preach that God sees Jesus only when He sees us. Therefore, we conclude that we can live in sin and it's not a problem.

We need to build on the right foundation to be saved from our sin.

6 The right foundation

In order for someone to be truly saved, we must share the gospel in such a way that it includes everything they need to do, to be saved.

How did Peter share the gospel? On the day of Pentecost when Peter preached, after the people saw the manifestations of the Holy Spirit they asked Peter “what shall we do to be saved?”

Peter did not ask everyone to bow their heads and close their eyes and say “if anyone wants to be saved just raise your hand. Thank you. I see one hand there and another one over there. Ok now just pray this prayer in your heart”. He did not lead them in the sinner’s prayer believing he’d led people to salvation.

What did Peter do?

Acts 2:38-39 And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”

Peter did this, the other disciples did this and Jesus did this. Today we see a very different result than what they saw.

Peter

Peter talks about three things:

1. Repent
2. Be baptized – for the forgiveness of your sins
3. Receive the Holy Spirit

If we want to build strong theology, we need to look at what Jesus taught.

Jesus

Jesus taught on the three things as follows:

1. Repent

Matthew 4:17 17 from that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

2. Baptize

Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Jesus commanded us to baptize people

3. Receive the Holy Spirit

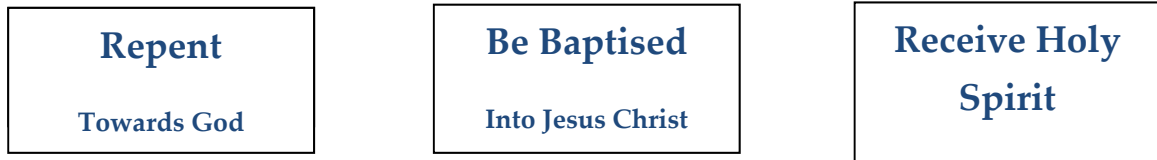
Luke 24:49 49 and behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

Note:

1. What about the robber on the cross? He wasn't baptized. The issue here is that Jesus had not yet ascended nor had he sent the Holy Spirit. We can't compare ourselves to the robber. (We are not hanging on the cross next to Jesus either)

Baptism breaks the power of the law of sin in our lives so that we can live a holy life. Then we can stand in front of God one day and receive eternal life.

Discussion: In light of these scriptures, if an unbeliever asks today, what to do to be saved, what would Peter's answer be?



Many people are trying to be followers of Jesus but have done only one or two of these. They may believe in God/ Jesus and may or may not have been baptized or received the Holy Spirit. They are deceived.

You need the whole Godhead to be an effective disciple of Jesus.

This is what Jesus and the first disciples preached. Why is the church today preaching a different gospel? Is our foundation built on a Catholic, Lutheran or Baptist church foundation or the one laid out in the Bible?

7 Faith

People might say that the Bible teaches "believe and you shall be saved". We are saved by faith but we need to understand what faith is.

John 8:31-32 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

What does it mean to believe in Jesus? Everyone who has seen Jesus, believed in Him when they saw Him. His disciples saw and experienced life with Him for a period of time. So they believed in Him.

Today, 2000 years later, the whole issue of believing in Him is different. It's only belief in the historical figure. If we ask Christians in a church today if they believe in Jesus, they would agree that they believe.

If you ask what they believe, they would say that they believe Jesus once lived and did miracles etc. If you ask if they are living in sin, some would admit it and say yes. However, Jesus said you should repent.

A common answer is that they don't believe that it applies today or maybe He meant something else and come up with a "grace" excuse.

This is not FAITH. Faith is not believing that Jesus once lived. It is believing that the words He spoke were and still are true.

Faith in Jesus consists of believing in who He is, what he said and obeying Him.

Example: Let's say you were standing in the middle of the road and a big truck is coming towards you. You don't see it but someone you don't know, who does see it, yells at you to get out of the road. Believing in that person doesn't mean you merely acknowledge their existence but act on their words.

If you believed that person, you would get off the road.

Jesus said we should repent, be baptized and receive the Holy Spirit. Are we faithful if we neglect any part of this?

We are saved by faith and it is in our obedience to His words that we live our faith.

8 Saved from Sin

True salvation includes the following:

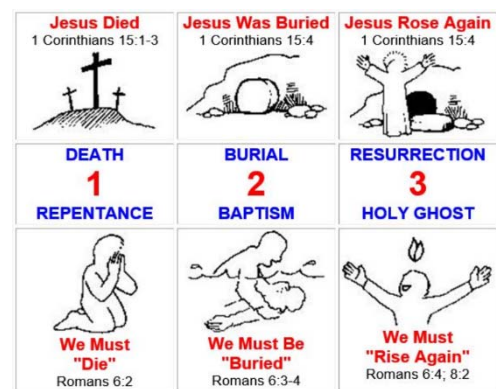
1. Repentance towards God; our decision to turn away from our sin and moves God to give us a new heart and a renewed conscience in place of a stone heart.
The renewed conscience will convict you when you are about to commit a sin.
2. Baptism in Water; Baptism washes us clean from our sins. Ananias told Paul, stand up and wash away your sins. Baptism breaks the law of sin over our lives.
See Romans 6.
3. Baptism with Holy Spirit; He gives us power to enable us to live holy lives.
(These topics are discussed further in later lessons)

Looking at these three actions together, one can illustrate it this way:

Repentance towards God is the start of a new life.

Baptism in water washes away our sins and (the old "man") our old sinful nature dies in the water. When we come up out of the water, we are resurrected with Christ into a new life.

In order to live the new life, He gives us the power through the Holy Spirit.



9 The Book of Acts

Philip, in chapter 8, was a new believer and did not yet know the full gospel. When he preached the gospel, many people were saved and baptized into Jesus. Later when Peter arrived, he recognized that these people were still missing the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Then there was Simon who saw the people receive the Holy Spirit. . What did Simon see and what did Peter not see?

The same is still true today. Many people have repented and have been baptized in water, but have not yet received the Holy Spirit.

The infilling with Holy Spirit is always accompanied by speaking in tongues. This manifestation is a supernatural language given to us by Holy Spirit with which we communicate with God.

In some cases people receive a gift of speaking another known language, like in Acts 2. God provided this, so that the gospel could be preached to other nations in their own language. This happened then and it is still happening today.

When Philip meets the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8 he shares the gospel and the eunuch's response is: "here is water, what stops me from being baptized?"

In Chapter 9, Saul gets saved and baptized in the middle of the night and then received the Holy Spirit.

In Chapter 10, Peter preached in the house of Cornelius and they received the Holy Spirit. How did Peter know that they received the Holy Spirit?

Then Peter said "what stops them from being baptized since they had received the Holy Spirit?"

In Chapter 16, when Paul and Silas were with the jailer, the jailer asked them what he should do to be saved. The disciples told him that he should believe in the Lord Jesus and he and his entire household shall be saved.

Many people stop reading right here but the disciples went home with the jailer and explained further and everyone in the jailer's home was baptized that night.

In Chapter 19, Paul is in Ephesus and meets up with some disciples. These disciples had not yet received the Holy Spirit and Paul laid his hands on them and they received.

In the same way many Christians today, believe in Jesus and acknowledge the Holy Spirit but have not yet been baptized with the Holy Spirit.

Discussion: What foundation are you going to build on?

We are not going to stand in front of Moody or Finney or Martin Luther but in front of Jesus and he will ask you, who did you believe?

Romans 10:9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

You need to confess Jesus as Lord regardless of what other people say or what church tradition says.