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those who seek the truth.

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Theme: “What Must I Do To Be Saved?”

Believe On Jesus Christ

The Scripture tells of a man who wanted to make his life right with God, to be forgiven of his sins. He was told: **“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved”** (Acts 16:31). But what does it mean to “believe”? It means more than accepting the fact that Jesus lived, that He taught the word of God or that He was God’s Son. The publishers of the *Amplified Bible* explain: “The Greek word used here means ‘to adhere to, cleave to; to trust, to have faith in; to rely on.’ The words mean to have an absolute personal reliance upon the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.” Saving faith is *trusting* Jesus to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

None of us is forgiven on the basis of how good we are, how kind, how generous or how well-meaning our intentions. It is *leaning on* Jesus, *relying on* Him that makes the difference for all who enter God’s eternal kingdom, who go to heaven. Forgiveness comes by “faith in His blood” (Romans 3:25).

Faith that saves is faith that is active and obedient to God’s commands, for “faith without deeds is dead” (James 2:26). Each “step” is necessary; each is an **expression of sincere faith.**

Is your life right with God? Would you like Him to forgive you? Do you want to go to heaven? These are the things that demonstrate and validate your faith. . . .

— David Tarbet, Minister of Evangelism
Church of Christ, New Milford, Connecticut



Hear the Gospel



Hearing the Gospel is Faith ADDRESSED

“How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?” (Romans 10:14).

I have come to really despise earbuds. Many times I have gotten three sentences into an important conversation with one of my teenagers before I see the telltale white cords dangling from under her long hair and realize she’s not heard a word I’ve said.

I wonder if that’s how God feels sometimes about us. The gospel has more competing noise for our attention than at any other time in history. Radio, TV, iPods and viral Youtube clips. How does the voice of the Good News

that Jesus died for our sins and rose again for our salvation get heard?

Those of us who have heard and obeyed the message of Christ want to throw up our hands and blame the noise, “Everything else is far too entertaining.” Or the people, “Life’s too busy to take time for God.” Or the gospel itself, “The message is too cumbersome for those with thirty-second attention spans.” So, because we don’t preach, they don’t hear and call on the name of the Lord in the water of baptism to be saved (Acts 22:16).

Despite the noise around us, the business of our lives, and our limited attention spans, it is important to hear the gospel. What makes us take out the earbuds that keep us deaf to salvation? **Need.** At some point we realize our sin, question our purpose, or ponder our place in eternity. Perhaps our consciences are stricken by what we have done. Maybe the image of God that we were created in finds no fulfillment in the bottom of a bottle or the images on a screen. Perhaps the death of a loved one makes us realize our own mortality.

Hearing the word of God addresses the need for faith, the nature of faith and the motivation to truly believe.

Just as my daughter comes to me with ears unstopped to ask if I can drive her to a friend’s house or explain a math problem, we need to pull the buds from our ears so that we may hear the gospel.

— Douglas Kashorek, Minister
Church of Christ, Plattsburgh, NY.

Repent of Sins



Those gathered on the Day of Pentecost almost 2000 years ago heard the Apostle Peter preach and were “cut to the heart.” Being convicted of their sin, they asked, “Brothers, what shall we do?” Peter’s response was clear and direct: “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:36-38).

Repentance is extremely important when it comes to salvation. Jesus said, “Unless you repent, you too will all perish” (Luke 13:3, 5). The overall importance of repentance is further stressed in Acts 17:30: “But now [God] commands all people everywhere to repent.” These two verses reveal that, in God’s plan of salvation, repentance is an essential element. If one desires to obtain salvation

found in Jesus Christ, repentance is not optional.

The Greek word translated repent is defined as: to think differently [with regard to sin]; to change one’s mind; to turn from evil, and to turn to the good. *Easton’s Bible Dictionary* expounds: “Repentance consists of (1) a true sense of one’s own guilt and sinfulness; (2) an apprehension of God’s mercy in Christ; (3) an actual hatred of sin and turning from it to God; and (4) a persistent endeavor after a holy life in a walking with God in the way of his commandments.”

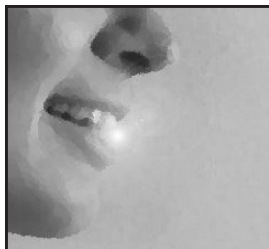
Repentance embraces the life-changing call of Christ required by genuine faith.

Sorrow for sin serves in leading one to repentance, but genuine repentance entails more than merely being sorry. The Apostle Paul provides us with an excellent working definition of repentance: “I preached that they should repent and turn to God and demonstrate their repentance by their deeds” (Acts 26:20). To repent then, is to make a conscious, deliberate decision to turn from sin to God and to confirm this decision by one’s actions.

Mankind’s repentance is of immense importance to God. God’s kindness leads one toward repentance. “He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

-- **Terry Schmidt**, Deacon
Church of Christ, Biddeford, Maine

The Good Confession



**“Jesus Christ
is Lord”
is Faith
CONFESSED**

“Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses” (1 Timothy 6:12).

Faith comes from hearing by the word of Christ (Romans 10:17). The moment a seeker arrives at faith, he asks, “What must I do to be saved?” Scripture speaks of making the “good confession.” What is this confession?

The apostle Paul provides us with guidance in understanding this term. He wrote: “If you confess with your mouth, ‘*Jesus is Lord*,’ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved” (Romans 10:9-10). The “good confession” is not a confession of one’s personal sins, but of the Lordship of Jesus.

One who is convicted in his heart of the risen Lord Jesus, and says “Jesus is Lord” with his mouth, has confessed his faith. He has made the “good confession.”

The “good confession” is more than just words. We know this is true because of what Jesus said: “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21). Without sincere and obedient faith the “good confession” is meaningless. A seeker compelled by obedient faith must place himself into the possession of the Savior for a lifetime.

This good confession was made by Timothy in the presence of many witnesses. The value of publicly making the “good confession” that Jesus Christ is Lord is the example it sets for all believers and non-believers of the power of Christ and His Word. One’s baptism (immersion) into Christ for the forgiveness of sins follows immediately upon making the “good confession”.

When one takes this “step” in God’s plan of salvation, he is ready for the next “step of faith”: baptism (immersion) for the forgiveness of sins.

—**Kirk Israel**, Minister
Church of Christ, Castleton, Vermont

Be Baptized



**Baptism
is Faith
EXPRESSED**

Is baptism necessary for salvation? Many people have made the claim that baptism does not save you, that it is a non-essential command. It is taught that faith alone saves. It is further taught that the very sins that can potentially separate one from God eternally are removed before obedience to the command to be baptized. What is overlooked is that scripture teaches the faith that saves is the faith that *obeys*. “Faith without deeds is dead” (James 2:26). *Faith expresses itself in obedience*. There are no non-essential commands in God’s plan of salvation!

With those thoughts in mind, let us travel back to the time when Moses led God’s people from the bondage of Egypt. The children of Israel spent much time complaining and murmuring against God and Moses. Several times God’s anger was kindled against the Israelites. On one such occasion

He sent venomous snakes among the people (Numbers 21:6). Many were bitten by snakes and died. The camp was struck with fear which led the Israelites to repent and turn to God. *They believed in God’s power to rescue them*. Did this mean that they were automatically saved? The answer to this question is no!

The LORD said to Moses, “Make a (bronze) snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can *look at it* and live” (Numbers 21:8). Would there have been any question how they could be saved from the result of their sins? I cannot imagine anyone refusing to obey God’s simple condition *to look at* the bronze snake and live! Imagine if someone said: “All I have to do is just *believe* that God can save me and I will be saved.” The next question that could be posed to such a person would be, “Where would you like to be buried?”

In the New Testament Jesus said: “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved” (Mark 16:16). The Bible teaches: “Baptism now saves you also — not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (I Peter 3:21). Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit” (John 3:5). If you want to be saved eternally, you must “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:38). Since baptism re-enacts the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, *baptism is faith expressed in the atoning sacrifice of our Lord* (Romans 6:3-4).

— Shane Belanger, Minister
Church of Christ, Tilton, New Hampshire

Be Faithful



**Being Faithful
is Faith
POSSESSED**

When one obeys the gospel of Jesus Christ by hearing the word (Romans 10:17), believing in Jesus (John 3:16), repenting of sins (Luke 13:3), confessing Jesus as Lord (Romans 10:9-10) and being baptized by immersion (Acts 2:38), he receives forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. God adds him to the number, the church (Acts 2:47). As a new Christian he now enjoys every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3). He has been rescued from darkness and brought into the kingdom of God's Son (Colossians 1:13, 14).

We are commanded to be faithful even to the point of death to receive a crown of life (Revelation 2:10). A new Christian is a "babe" in Christ, and like a new baby, he needs to crave pure spiritual milk, that he may grow in salvation (1 Peter 2:2, 3). Every new believer is to

grow spiritually by seeking divine knowledge (2 Peter 1:3, 4).

Being faithful is not a onetime act; it is an everyday life style. When the apostle Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus he addressed his letter to the "faithful" in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:1). The eleventh chapter of Hebrews is called "Faiths' Hall of Fame" because it mentions a number of men and women who showed spiritual faithfulness.

Attending worship is part of being faithful. "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another- and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25).

When one is baptized he rises to walk in "newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4). Baptism is not the end of one's spiritual journey; it is the beginning. There are moral and spiritual choices to be made for the rest of one's life. Remaining faithful to Christ, serving Him in His church, shows that faith has taken control of one's entire being, for *faithfulness is faith possessed*.

Just as we are brought to Christ by obedient, active faith, so we continue to stay with Christ by obedient faith. It is possible to lose salvation unless we "continue in your faith, established and firm" (Colossians 1:23). Are you committed to remaining faithful to Christ?

— **John Kurpiel**, Minister
Church of Christ, Lawrence, Massachusetts

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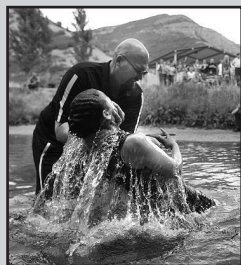
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