

LESSON 16: CHRISTIANS BELIEVE THAT YOU MUST BE BORN-AGAIN

(Part 1)

Together read the Gospel of John Chapter 3, find where Jesus talks about being born-again and discuss it together.

HOW TO RECEIVE JESUS

We live in a difficult world, in difficult times. Everyone it seems, has an opinion, and it's not easy to figure out what to believe about life, why we are here, and what is the purpose of it all. We have our inner moral compass, and just when our instincts tell us we may be on the right track, someone we may look up to is caught in some area of moral failure, or a spiritual leader falls to the temptation of the world.

Well, I found out the hard way, that there is really only one uniform source of truth, and that's the Holy Bible. This tract is not to convince you of the veracity of the Bible, but instead is for folks who are past that step, and just don't know what to do with what they know is in the Bible.

Before we get into the practical steps which lead you into receiving Jesus as Lord and Savior, let's look at some simple but profound facts, using the Bible as our standard of truth, otherwise this all would just be one person's opinion. I know that the Bible seems to have contradictions and inconsistencies, but really, that's only how it appears on first look. No man can really know the truth of the Bible without 2 prerequisites:

- 1) We must be open and honest, so that we can be led of the Holy Spirit. The Bible is understood by Divine revelation, not by intellect alone.
- 2) We must receive the revelation in steps, as we live out the principles of the Bible in his daily life.

As you are led into what you need to know by the Spirit, and live out that which you discover, the seeming contradictions and inconsistencies seem to fade away, and the true harmony of the "whole counsel of God" becomes evident.

So...the first revelation you need is of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. After that get ready for the rest of your life, as God produces in you the character and attributes of a true Christian.

Here's a few other concepts to grasp before we begin:

- 1) Don't get religion, get relationship. The first step is not about churches, personalities or organizations. It's about getting right with God. After that God can place you in a fellowship of believers where you can grow.

2) Don't judge Christ by Christians. Christians are just people. Leaders fall and fail, but you don't hear that much about the ones who serve God faithfully, never cheat on their wives or husbands, never get in trouble. Believe me, these far outnumber the ones you hear about. Billy Graham is a phenomenon to have been so faithful and well known with never a hint of scandal. Get your eyes off of men, and look to God for your answers. If you approach Him with an honest, questioning heart, He will satisfy your need to know. (Seek and you will find....)

3) Don't wait to get your life together before you get right with God. This is a "come-as-you-are" party. Jesus loves you right where you are. It's only he who can affect real change in your life, because real change only comes from the inside out. Our attempts at self-improvement usually are usually working from the opposite premise, and that kind of change seldom works, and NEVER works on the eternal level.

4) Don't make the mistake of thinking that you are too evil for God to forgive. The Bible says that "when we repent, He is faithful and just to forgive, and cleanse us from ALL unrighteousness. If you are truly repentant, there is nothing that cannot be forgiven. Jesus loves YOU, no matter what your past.

5) Don't think that if you become a Christian, that you won't have fun anymore. Hollywood, TV, books etc., have in general painted Christianity to be something for a bunch of losers..dried up prunes of people who have lost their zest for life.

Not true. God will change your mind about what you think is fun, but true Christians have real joy in their lives and really know what real fun is. I'm glad the days of partying down and "having fun" without remembering what happened to me because I was passed out are over. What kind of fun is that?

Let's move along, with a few more facts to consider:

1) Everyone in the world has missed God, and needs to be saved. No matter who you are, without Jesus in your life, you are lost. No matter how good a life you may lead, you are lost without Christ. Men have fallen from godliness and need to have relationship with God restored, which can only happen through the cross of Calvary.

2) Your salvation cannot be earned. This is something God has done for us, we can't earn it, we must just receive it.

3) Your salvation cannot be learned. You don't need to go to Bible school to be saved. Wouldn't it be unfair if only theologically literate people could get right with God? No, God made this so simple that a 10 year old child can receive Jesus as savior. He truly made it so simple that "the foolishness of God would confound the wisdom of the world." It's a matter of faith, not intellect.

4) You must recognize your need. You ARE a foul depraved Godless person, as we all were before receiving Jesus. Even the good things you do have a selfish agenda if you really be honest. You must be willing to call sin, and turn from it, change your lifestyle completely, pick up your cross and follow Him. Difficult club to join, you say? Yes, and I want you to know it isn't always pretty. It's losing your life for His sake that you may gain it back. It's suffering

sometimes because you do the right thing. It's not easy. Don't join if you're looking for an easy way. Yet, at the same time this life is filled with joy and satisfaction. Think of the life that Jesus led. Full of suffering, rejection and pain, and yet Jesus was the happiest most well-adjusted person who ever lived, because He did it God's way.

5) You must receive Him by faith. You won't know all the answers, you may not even have thought of many of the questions. It's a matter of knowing in your heart that what Jesus said is right, then acting on it.

What did Jesus say?

1) "I am the way, the truth, the life. No man shall see the Father if not through me. He didn't say, as many gurus and spiritual leaders do that He knew a way to get truth, He said He WAS the way the truth, the life. He also said He was the ONLY way. (A hard one for a lot of people, but I didn't say it, HE did.)

2) They that call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Self explanatory.

So.. How do I receive Him?

It's so simple you may have a hard time believing it. No costly seminars to attend, no years spent in Bible school, only a simple prayer of faith.

Here are the steps, (not a formula, but steps)

1) Repent. Recognize your sinfulness and turn from your ways. Be willing to change what needs to be changed.

2) Receive His forgiveness. He died on the cross so that you may be forgiven. Your forgiveness was purchased 2000 years ago. Receive it now.

3) Don't wait for a bolt of lightning. Most conversion experiences are not dramatic. You may or may not experience an emotional release, it doesn't matter, we walk by faith, not sight.

4) Pray words to this effect: "Jesus, I need you in my life." I've not been tremendously successful without you, and so now I'm going to try it your way. I repent of every wrong thing I've ever done, and receive the forgiveness that You offer. I believe that You are God, and that you died on the cross and rose from death to conquer all the works of darkness. I surrender my life to You this day, and pledge to do my best to be obedient to You from this day forth. You have made me a new creation, and I am now "born again" of the Spirit of God. Because of You, I will go to heaven when I die. I pray all this in the Name of Jesus."

What now?

1) Go tell somebody! "If you confess Me before men, I will confess you before my father. I'd love for you to let ME know. E-mail me, or fax me, or whatever, I'd love to hear what God did for you.

2) Get a Bible..Read it a little every day.

3) Go to church! *"Don't forsake the assembling of yourselves together."* God's got a home for you.

4) Pray daily. Talk conversationally to God. The Spirit that is within you will put you in touch with Him. He does speak to us today, but you have to learn how to hear His voice.

Pray for one another by name. Pray for others. Pray for your school.

